

Strategy Engagement Breakfast – the morning in brief

Our thanks to Tim Bishop who spoke eloquently about the story so far with Siemens Enterprise Communications and their quest to re-build employee confidence around an exciting growth strategy for the business.

We heard about the highs and lows and some of the key learning from the experience, for example, how to engage and build buy-in from the head and heart of the Senior Executive Leaders and then the Top 150 Leaders in the business. He also described the challenges of creating a simple but compelling vision for the company and the ambitious plans to cascade the Strategy to all SEN employees in 3 months!

For those of you who couldn't make it, here are some highlights from his speech:

'One Mission, many meanings' - People see what is most relevant to them within a Strategy and that's OK.

- For some, strategy is all about targets, for others the vision for the company or the steps needed to get there – a Whole Minded view of strategy is key to ensure you engage as many as possible

- This happens at the most senior levels as well as deep into the organisation, however getting the senior team properly engaged and buying in is a key success factor
- Moments of truth come when the senior team become visible to the organisation as a collective and are then seen to be walking the talk at a local level
- A key point was the CEO explicitly saying “this is our Strategy and it's the reference point for how decisions will be made in future e.g. R&D, investments etc.”



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‘Red Thread’ - Joining the dots for the senior team and the organisation at large provides the emotional engagement and personal relevance / commitment to the bigger business goal.

- Getting to a consistent expression of the strategy took many inputs but it was important to create something concise which ‘joined the dots’
- The cascade is a great example of how this can work in action – catalysed by the leadership event which gave accountability and ownership to an influential body
- Role models across the organisation build credibility and engagement – and belief

‘Track Results’- Measurement of progress and success is key

- Tracking the results cascade through the organisation gave a concrete sense of progress and showed how far the organisation moved in terms of strategy engagement

- Engagement scores in the organisation were visibly and significantly higher for those who had been through the cascade than not
- Important to link KPI’s to the strategy – i.e. some of the harder measures of success , rewards and incentives make a difference, although there has to be some appreciation of patience – not going to happen over night!

‘Challenge is essential’ - Managing challenge within strategy development and getting in front of the senior team is critical, everyone has to participate.

This, along with allowing the voice of the organisation to be heard i.e. focus groups, being seen to modify the Purpose and elements of the strategy to reflect grass roots (EDGE1 findings endorsed in practice). But clearly stating this is not a democratic process!

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‘Maintain momentum’ - Difficulty of managing strategy-making excitement, i.e. it looks and feels great in a high-energy workshop but does it stand up the following day / week?

There are a lot of ways of doing this, but some of things that have worked for SEN are:

- CEO Webcasts
- Asking individuals to make personal commitments – what will you do to deliver the strategy?
- Ensuring feedback loops back to top mgt are maintained
- Check-ins by line managers with their teams
- Local success stories – published and shared
- Approach as a ‘campaign’ – got to stick with it, invest to keep fresh / relevant

“On behalf of the entire leadership team at SEN, I would like to thank you and the entire Cognosis team for doing such a great job. All feedback and indications post event are that it was a smashing success, beating even our own high expectations. Everything from the content to logistics was perfect, and this would not have been possible without your great work. I feel that now our top management is aligned in a way that realization of our strategy is a matter of diligent execution. I look forward to working with you for future events.”

Hamid Akhavan, CEO, Siemens Enterprise

If you want to know more about how we helped Tim and the Siemens Enterprise Communication team then please contact John Fidoe at john.fidoe@cognosis.co.uk