

Annual strategic planning war games



KEY BENEFITS

- The Deloitte approach helped to ensure that the strategy planning session was customised and appropriately focused on the client's specific strategy needs.
- The use of a framework such as war gaming enabled a combination of creative thinking, imagination and abstract strategising to take place, in contrast to more conventional and restrictive planning based on operational needs only.
- The exercise strongly supported Deloitte's view that tailor-made and customised strategy planning sessions provide the best value for clients, rather than a generic "one-size-fits-all" approach.
- The use of ThinkTank™ transformed individual ideas into collective solutions and aligned the group.

Summary

Deloitte was asked to design a leading provider of healthcare's annual strategy planning session. The client wanted to determine whether their strategy goals were still valid, and if not, how these need to be adjusted to ensure sustainable results and competitive advantage.

The Challenge

For the strategy goals to be appropriately considered and re-defined if need be, Deloitte's challenge was to help the client to think on a deeper strategic level as opposed to an operational level.

In addition, how could Deloitte provide the client with an innovative process in which to engage, with an element of fun to break the monotony of regular strategy planning sessions, while at the same time achieving the desired outcome?

A third challenge – and one of the day's design parameters – was how to get a large Exco group of close on 20 members to engage without the size of that group necessarily hindering the process.

The Solution

The approach was firstly to introduce the concept of disruptive innovation and to make the participants aware of the importance of strategic thinking.

They were given specific examples of potential factors within the healthcare industry that could disrupt the status quo, to assist them in assessing whether they were prepared for such potential changes.

Deloitte then asked the participant group to explore what possible future disruptive invasion could occur within their competitor

landscape, given actions by competitors or funders for which they would need to have a counter attack strategy ready to deploy.

The Deloitte team designed two war gaming sessions consisting of two teams each – an attack team, and a counter-attack team.

The war games brief included a focus on competitor changes within the industry and anticipated attack and counter attack strategies dealing with competitors. An additional key factor was the issue of what funders could do to change or shape the client's industry environment.

The participant group voted using ThinkTank™ on the likelihood of some of the attack actions taking place in various scenarios and also on the impact of their own counter-actions. Hundreds of entries were listed and prioritised in minutes.

The results of the voting provided a framework against which the group could test their existing strategy goals, through verifying if all possible contingencies had been covered. The group considered whether the strategy goals were complete and still relevant - or whether additional goals were needed.

Through the process, which was codified into ThinkTank™ the participants began distinguishing between truly strategic goals and operational goals that would not necessarily help the firm to sustain a competitive advantage. The participants revised, then adapted their strategy goals through adding three new goals, eliminating operational goals, and redefining existing goals.

Lastly participants agreed their strategic priority for the next financial year.

What was achieved?

Deloitte was able to help the client to become more strategic in its thinking. The team succeeded in encouraging participants to engage with each other and brought a “fun” element to the day through the use of war gaming, to ward off possible feelings of monotony.

The use of war games enabled the 20-strong group to be divided into four sub-groups, resulting in deeper conversations at a strategic level within these sub-groupings.

“Strategic thinking reaps dividends”

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Deloitte South Africa, now the sole distributor of ThinkTank™ software in Africa

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