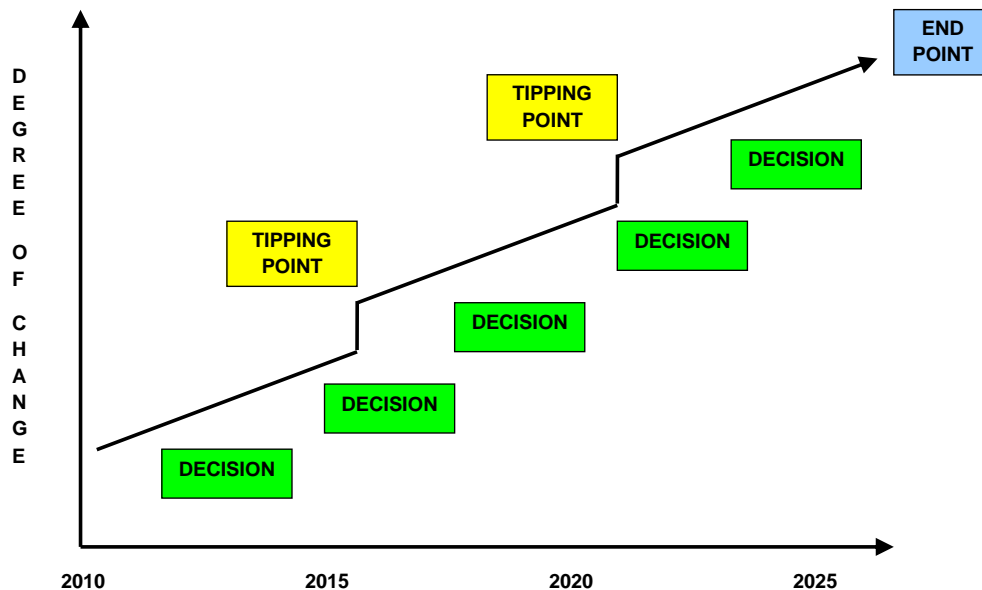


STRATEGY MAPPING: ACCELERATING BUSINESS SUCCESS

Strategy mapping offers an approach to defining vision and strategy that is well-suited to organizations undergoing—or anticipating—major change as the result of either internal or external forces (e.g. industry change, technological change, competitive change). This method builds business resilience by helping organizations dynamically chart the best course through uncertain and potentially dangerous waters.

Strategy mapping employs a two-dimensional virtual “strategy map” in which the horizontal axis represents time and the vertical axis represents the degree of change that will affect the organization and its business environment over a period of time (delta of change). Below is an example of a strategy map:



The map is typically created through the following steps, all of which can be tailored to fit a given client’s requirements:

1. First, introduce people to the idea of strategy mapping by asking them to plot different trajectories of companies they know. Help them understand the different rates of change and different trajectories that have occurred in the past to move specific organizations and industries from one state to another. Help people begin to appreciate the range of trajectories that are relevant to their organization.
2. Brainstorm key events in the future of your industry. These are the tipping points that could be transformative to the industry and organization. Examples might be

- when a critical mass of customers adopts a new technology or combination of technologies, when new competitors capture a certain market share, or when new laws and regulations re-shape the business landscape.
3. Create a set of potential end points, i.e. alternative visions of the organization's future. This exercise, which typically involves small group brainstorming, results in alternative descriptions of the future business environment and the organization's place within that environment. Using simulated hindsight, groups describe different trajectories for the business, with a story line that captures key points along the way. These stories and headlines describe potentially pivotal moments where key trends impact the business landscape and the organization (e.g. new technology, competition, regulation, new business models).
 4. Conduct exercises to test people's assumptions about the influence of these key trends. Teams develop alternative and non-obvious trajectories and alternative end states. People think about what strategies would best enable the organization to withstand and succeed in a variety of environments.
 5. Develop a set of operating assumptions and probable trajectories for the organization. Refine the headlines and stories. Develop two to three strategy curves that represent the "probable futures."
 6. Based on those assumptions and probable futures, make choices about the organization's vision and how to implement that vision. Create a set of action steps to achieve it. Decide what else must be done to assure the organization's resiliency in the face of the forthcoming change.

By using the technique of simulated hindsight, strategy mapping gives participants a meaningful way to engage in conversations about the future. It enables them to think about the future as though it were an exercise in writing history. By projecting themselves into the future and looking backward, people can have an opportunity to think through the consequences of different trends and factors, single out those that are most important, and make decisions to strengthen the organization.

LRI has successfully used strategy mapping with Boards of Directors, at the executive level, with individual business units, and to achieve cross-functional alignment. This method enables people in the organization to try out different futures, discuss and observe the benefits and drawbacks of each, and then develop strategies to handle unanticipated changes. As a result, the organization comes away with a deeper understanding of its future and an achievable, relevant vision and a set of action steps to achieve that vision.

LRI can help your organization develop a strategy map. You can send your inquiry via email to info@leadingresources.com or speak directly to a consultant by dialing (916) 325-1190. You will receive a prompt, personal response from one of our consultants.