

**Business needs to embrace its own strategy to succeed.**

- Executives use platform to discuss the failings of the traditional “strategy”

‘Strategy is still locked in the cupboard and treated like a closely guarded secret’ was the view of the Panel at a recent Executive Insight Forum, hosted by Vsolution Management Consultants at the Radison Blu in Sandton.

The Forum had met to share thoughts and ideas on “Successfully Leading Business Transformation”, to gain insight on the practical aspects on creating continuous profitable growth. Surprisingly the most heated debate was around strategy being treated as a tick box activity and not generating the content and tools that would align and energise the organisation.

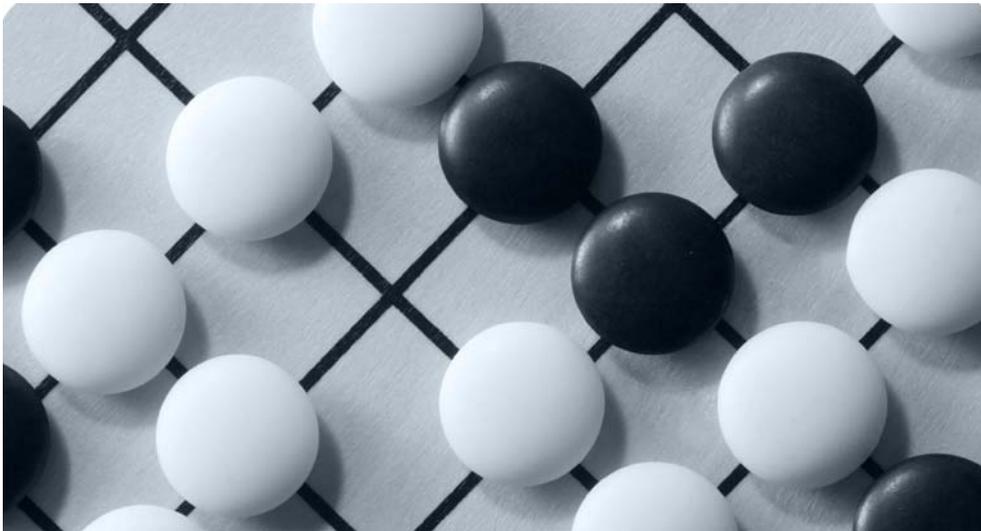
“Some of the most common themes put on the table included the fact that strategy itself is still treated as a strategic secret and as a result locked in a cupboard,” says Paul Connolly, director at Vsolution. “This then leads to the second identified theme, namely that strategy is not in fact shared in a company and is often only created by a small team within an organisation, frequently the managing director and the financial director.

Other pertinent issues touched on included the fact that strategy is at times merely a document and is not lived by the organisation, to that end strategy is also not always made visible so can’t be followed; and lastly strategy is viewed as an annual event, rather than a continuous theme.

“The consequences of the above are catastrophic for all companies, particularly those looking to mobilise management teams and staff to achieve outstanding growth performance. Instead of looking at market opportunities and threats arising from disruptive technology, changing customer needs or the competition raising the bar; management effort migrates to an internal focus,” adds Connolly.

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When properly executed and embraced, effective strategies that are shared can create a feel good factor through incremental improvements; those that are not will lead to missing the broad strokes (in improvement) that provide the best chance for material sustainable growth. The forum also highlighted how in some cases it appears that companies often start to stagnate as the lack of direction impedes decision-making and the allocation of budgets.

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“The reasons for the benign strategic approaches aired by many of the attendees, appeared to be mixed and included aspects such as leadership style, fear of visible targets, leadership team personalities, time and resource constraints and so on. The panel agreed however that these challenges can be overcome, and the first step of a growth journey must be a simple visible strategy that generates tools and targets to ignite the enthusiasm of the organisation,” ends Connolly.

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