

# Checklist for Successful Strategic Planning

Excerpt from CEB Ignition™ Guide to Strategic Planning

## The Strategic Planning Shortfall

As organizations set their strategic priorities, most are uncertain whether they are targeting the right areas for improvement. Ineffective strategic plans waste money, miss opportunities to inflect performance, and damage credibility. Unfortunately, these challenges are common and diminish business partners' confidence.

## Business Partners' View of Strategic Planning Effectiveness



Use the following checklist from our CEB Ignition™ Guide to Strategic Planning to jumpstart your strategic planning process.

Executives need better tools to evaluate their organization's capacity for development. CEB Ignition Guides help organizations complete key projects quickly and correctly. Like our best practice insights, these guides are aligned with our members' most important projects, and the actionable structure allows teams to get started quickly.

## 6 Steps for Successful Strategic Planning

### 1. Define the Strategic Planning Process

Lay the groundwork for the strategic planning process, and ensure all participants understand their responsibilities, process timeline, and expected outcomes.

### 2. Determine the Implications of the Business Strategy

Understand business goals, and identify the capabilities required to support them.

### 3. Diagnose Performance Gaps

Assess your function's capabilities and their business impact to prioritize improvement areas.

### 4. Determine Actions to Meet Objectives

Define your function's objectives and the key investments needed to achieve them.

### 5. Communicate the Strategic Plan to All Stakeholders

Drive alignment and commitment throughout your function and the company.

### 6. Monitor Progress on Strategic Objectives

After creating the strategic plan, measure progress toward objectives, and adapt your strategy as business conditions change.

# Common Pitfalls and Keys to Success

## Pitfalls

### Insular Planning Process

The planning process fails to consider the business strategy, changes in stakeholder expectations, and external business conditions.

### False Executive “Head Nods”

Executives often withdraw from initial commitments in the face of short-term priorities, ultimately rendering the strategic plan ineffective.

### Changing Plans, Not Behaviors

Leaders fail to engage key managers and employees, leading to a lack of urgency in making progress toward strategic goals.

## Keys to Success

### Engage Business Partners Early On

Involve business partners in the planning process to understand their priorities.

### Align the Leadership Team Throughout the Year

Actively manage alignment and win buy-in across the leadership team throughout the year.

### Eliminate Unnecessary Activities and Legacy Behaviors

Assist staff in eliminating activities and behaviors that do not support the new strategy to free up capacity for new imperatives.

## How CEB Helps

CEB members have access to the full suite of CEB Ignition™ Guides, available for the most important initiatives undertaken by your function.

In each CEB Ignition Guide, members receive:

- Tools and templates for each step of the process to accelerate execution,
- Discussion forums to facilitate peer sharing, and
- Case studies from companies that have unique solutions to common challenges.

## Sample Resources from CEB Ignition Guide to Strategic Planning

### Strategic Plan Templates

This 50+ page, customizable PowerPoint deck serves as a starting point to build your strategic plan. Each slide includes examples and is accompanied by discussion notes, input instructions, and links to the most up-to-date CEB research to help you quickly customize and clearly communicate your strategy.

### CEB Ignition Diagnostics

This diagnostic assesses performance in your function's essential activities. The output is an actionable path to maturity outlining the most critical activities to prioritize and the next steps to take, helping executives execute with greater speed and confidence.

## Leadership Councils

CEB offers more than 50 memberships aligned with functional and key industry leadership roles. Our membership model is designed to deliver insights, tools, and advice that lead to transformative outcomes for your team and your company. Leadership councils provide support for decision makers in:

- Compliance & Legal
- Finance
- Financial Services
- Government
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Innovation & Strategy
- Risk & Audit
- Marketing & Communications
- Procurement & Operations
- Sales & Service

## About CEB

CEB is a best practice insight and technology company. In partnership with leading organizations around the globe, we develop innovative solutions to drive corporate performance. CEB equips leaders at more than 10,000 companies with the intelligence to effectively manage talent, customers, and operations. CEB is a trusted partner to 90% of the Fortune 500, nearly 75% of the Dow Jones Asian Titans, and more than 85% of the FTSE 100.

**100%**

of the Fortune 100

**300,000+**

Business Professionals

**21,000+**

Senior Executives

**74%**

of the Dow Jones  
Asian Titans 50

**93%**

of the DAX 30

**87%**

of the FTSE 100

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