

North Star Insights

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Guiding Organizations to Success

I thought that you may be interested in the pros and cons of three typical approaches to developing the implementation plan for a strategic initiative. Also, I've added a Strategic Roundtable section to this newsletter where North Star Strategies consultants will briefly discuss a concept that you may be able to immediately put into practice.

-Tracy

Three Approaches to Implementation Planning

There are pros and cons to the three typical approaches to developing implementation plans for strategic initiatives. All three are valuable for different situations. The purpose of this article is to share some of the differences among the approaches to help leaders determine which should be used in a given situation. The three approaches are:

- *Consultant Facilitated*
- *Manual Do It Yourself*
- *Alignment Technologies*

Consultant Facilitated

Pros	Cons
Methodology	Visible expenses
Domain expertise	Truth vs. power
Fresh perspective	Person-quality dependent
Option to take it or leave it	Alignment is a side benefit

The consultant facilitated approach is best for projects where the group has little expertise or a narrow range of experience. In this case the

group can rely upon the consultant to provide suggestions based on their domain expertise. The drawbacks of using a consultant are that it can be expensive, and the quality level varies among consultants. Also, solutions are frequently "sold" to the group. Since in this case solutions do not come out of the group, the result is a lack of buy-in or failure to recognize a critical aspect of the unique situation faced by the group.

Manual Do It Yourself

The Do It Yourself approach is best for projects where the group has significant expertise, experience and a low level of conflict. In these cases it can save money. There are productivity problems, however, when applied to situations where these criteria do not exist.

Pros	Cons
No out-of-pocket expense	Hidden downstream costs
Your domain knowledge	Inefficient meetings
Ownership	Incomplete discussion
Control	Volume overload

Alignment Technologies

An alignment technology approach works best when there is a need to implement quickly, when conflict is high, or when the risk of failure is costly. Alignment technology processes are relatively new developments that rapidly lead to collaborative solutions fully considering all perspectives from the group. Because it is collaborative, this method does not endorse a pre-ordained solution from the leaders. Also, considering all viewpoints includes those that may have caused conflict in the past. The transparency and technology enable objective dialogue that result in strong buy-in.

<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>
Inexpensive	Unfamiliar approach
No unproductive meetings	No top down solutions
Fully informed solution	Raises uncomfortable issues
Transparent methodology	Objective, not passionate
Strong buy-in	Requires technology

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