



## Changing the Game: Four Steps for Re-Inventing Your Strategic Planning Process

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The following four-step process will greatly improve your odds of achieving your strategic objectives:

- **STEP ONE:** Cull Your Big Ideas Down to the Critical Few We always think we can do more than we really can, and that makes us take on too much. This is especially true when it comes to making strategic plans. We have worked with organizations who have dozens of strategic projects running at once with just a few hundred people on hand to see them through. That just doesn't work. You need to identify the three to four “breakthrough” objectives and related projects that will really drive your business forward and focus on them exclusively. That way, because you can allocate the necessary resources and tracking mechanisms, the projects linked to those breakthrough objectives will have a far better chance of being successfully executed.
- **STEP TWO:** Ensure that Your Projects Support True Breakthroughs When you are selecting your three to four breakthrough objectives, make sure that they really are game-changers, not just an extension of your current business activity and annual growth goals. Strategic breakthrough objectives are all about big things, things you typically won't know at first blush how you're going to achieve them. This could mean opening a business in a new region, developing a new product line or implementing an entirely new market channel that completely changes the way you do business. Long-term strategic breakthroughs must be true game changers that will dramatically alter your business over a three- to five-year period.
- **STEP THREE:** Dedicate the Necessary Resources Once you find the critical few breakthrough objectives and supporting projects, business leaders sometimes forget that the people responsible for seeing those projects through still have their day jobs to worry about. In addition to these long-term projects, they have to meet their daily, weekly and monthly KPIs. For your breakthrough projects to succeed, you have to make sure that everyone involved has the necessary bandwidth. That means you may have to reduce managers' responsibilities, or even take them completely out of their day-to-day job in order to see a project through to completion.

- **STEP FOUR:** Maintain Vigilance and Track Progress When it comes to executing strategic plans, we like to talk about focus, alignment and accountability, or FAA. In fact, managing breakthrough projects is a lot like being an air traffic controller: You have to focus on where everything is going at all times. You need to make sure that you've got the aircraft in the right lanes with the right spacing. Specifically, you have to have the right resources assigned to the right projects, and have visibility to know how you're performing. You need to hold people accountable for delivering on their action plans and intervene with additional support when necessary. Of course it takes time to change how your leadership team identifies breakthrough objectives, creates a strategic plan, assigns resources and follows through on project execution. Business Process Management software like [Dploy Solutions](#), can more efficiently help operational leaders and teams drive process and track progress aligned to strategic goals and achieve breakthrough opportunities faster.

Based on the experiences of our clients, it can take several iterations over several years for managers to understand the nuances of this four-step approach and for it to penetrate the company. But it can lead to a clear competitive advantage. Even if they only end up fully achieving three out of four of their big objectives, that's a much higher success rate than most businesses have when it comes to realizing their strategic plans.



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