Handbook of Research on Strategy Process

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12 From theory to action: the story of one strategy
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INTRODUCTION

The professor gazed out of his windowless office and thought carefully about the task at hand. Develop a three year strategy for the consulting function at a top 20 business school. Rather than study or teach strategy, the time had come to actually craft a strategy. OK, now where to start?

The purpose of this chapter is to give you a firsthand account of a strategy professor charged with putting strategy theory to work. This is intended to be a contribution to the growing literature on the process or practice of strategy. In essence, a micro based perspective of what is actually done during the strategizing within an organization. As I began my research and outlining for this paper, it dawned on me that a reasonable approach could be to adopt my teaching philosophy of experiential learning. In my mind, experiential learning begins with the identification of relevant theory, moves to application to an actual phenomenon, and then concludes with a reflection upon the process. So that is just what I decided to do for this chapter; what follows is my 'experiential' story of strategy development for a function within the business school.

It all started when I was asked if I would be interested in coming back to the University of North Carolina (UNC) as the academic lead of the consulting programs. I was excited about the opportunity to return to my alma mater and especially about the chance to positively impact the consulting function of which I care so deeply. During the interview process, the Dean and Associate Deans asked what my strategy would be for the program; more specifically, how I would take it from 'good to great'. I certainly had familiarity with the topic of strategy given my experience in consulting (with PricewaterhouseCoopers and McKinsey) and my PhD in strategy, and here was my chance to put some of my espoused ideas to work.

The rest of the paper documents my journey of bridging strategy theory to action. I present the ideas in the general progression of the steps I took in crafting the strategy for the consulting function at UNC: internal analysis, external analysis and the actual strategy creation. I will discuss the theories I considered as well as the applied steps I took. I pay particular

attention to the 'artifacts' I created along the way and share those as well. In general, I will keep the theoretical discussion to a minimum, as the primary goal is to explore the ideas in action. The final section of the paper is a discussion on key takeaways from the experience and ideas for future research.

Theory

My underlying theoretical assumption is that strategy (and 'strategizing') is alive and well (Whittington and Cailluet, 2008). In fact, crafting strategy is one of the most prominent management tools in use today (Rigby, 2005). Of course, there are theories that posit much more of an 'emergent' versus 'deliberate' philosophy (Mintzberg, 1987), but for this essay, the goal is to explore strategy formulation, realizing of course that changes and iterations will occur as the strategy is implemented (Sull, 2007).

So what is strategy? A good starting point for a definition is from one of the top selling strategy textbooks in the country, *Strategic Management – Concepts and Cases*. The goal of strategic competitiveness is for a firm to 'successfully formulate and implement a value creating strategy; and a strategy is an integrated and coordinated set of commitments and actions designed to exploit core competencies and gain a competitive advantage' (Hitt et al., 2009, p. 4). My interpretation of this guidance is that I need to do the right activities that will result in an advantage over competitors. Strategy rules also apply to non-profit entities, with an obvious difference in performance metrics (e.g. more about behaviors, satisfaction assessments and efficiency measures).

The focus on the set of activities, not only of the employees in the organization, but also of the strategist, has increasingly become a priority topic for strategy researchers. This is operationalized as 'strategy process' or 'strategy as practice'. Strategy process literature recognizes that strategy is a dynamic process and best realized by studying the actions of employees with the organization and in particular the activities of strategy actors at the functional, business unit and corporate levels (Chakravarthy et al., 2003). Strategy as practice, which in my mind may be a subset of strategy process, also focuses on the activities of strategy actors, rather than an 'organizational property': examining what is done, how and by whom (Whittington and Cailluet, 2008). As both the process and practice literature seem to agree that the 'strategy process' is best focused on decisions and actions, I will attempt to describe these in detail in the application sections of this essay. The literature also warns against excessive rigidity in strategy research and suggests an open mind to context specific actions and the benefits of reviewing strategy 'artifacts' used in the strategy

process (Giraudeau, 2008). It is recommended to consider the 'laughter, frustration, anger, excitement, repetition and other detailed observations during the process (Jarzabkowski and Whittington, 2008, p. 283). In general, we have to be wary of the strategy 'straight-jacket' when it comes to strategy research and writings (Bettis, 1991), so I will attempt to be creative in the strategy process and documentation thereof.

The research also suggests a focus on the actual strategy tools used, and researchers are encouraged to employ much more of an ethnographic approach to observing and learning from practitioners. Both process and practice literature seem to understand that strategy involves a careful look within the organization, as well as outside, by referring to the direction of 'macropraxis' and 'extra-organizational actors' (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009).

The final introductory theoretical concept on my radar screen for this exercise is 'strategic communication'. I was particularly inspired by the recent piece in *Harvard Business Review* entitled 'Can you say what your company's strategy is?' (Collis and Rukstad, 2008). The premise is that a goal of good strategy is to ensure that the majority of employees are able to articulate the essence of the business strategy in a few, easy to remember and easy to share statements. The only way for this to happen is for it to be carefully developed and strategically communicated, over and over, and using no more than 35 words. I find that this concept strikes an initial chord of enthusiasm with executives I teach during strategy sessions but then gets lost as more and more people get involved with the strategy process. Eventually, the priority of strategy communication seems to become subjugated to other objectives and I truly believe this to be one of the most significant contributors to failed strategy efforts.

Application

So what does all of that mean for me as I approach this strategy project?

After reflection on the guidance above, I have decided to implement three guiding principles as I go through this process. *First, I will use the key concepts of strategy taught during a basic strategy class.* For me, that means that the strategy process involves three distinct steps: (i) external analysis, (ii) internal analysis and (iii) strategy creation. While strategy is usually taught in this sequence, I found that my particular experience actually started with the internal analysis, rather than the external analysis. I felt that I had to get a sense of the current state of affairs related to the consulting program before venturing out to a competitive survey and customer analysis. And I had to get my arms around both the internal and external analysis before crafting my strategy.
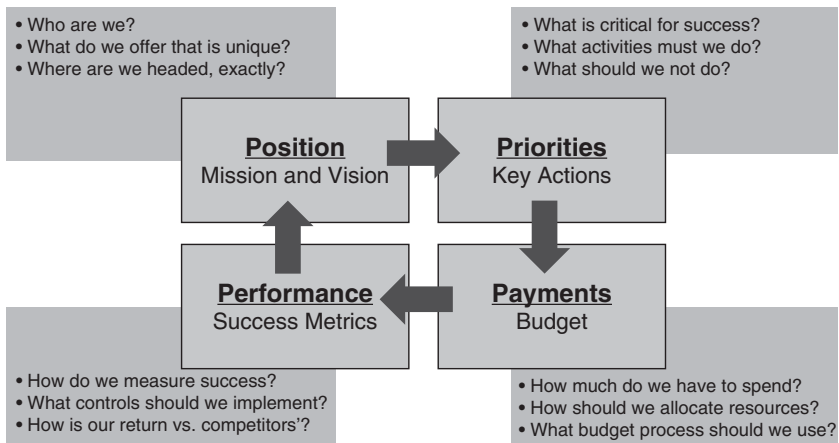
Position
Mission and Vision

• Who are we?
• What do we offer that is unique?
• Where are we headed, exactly?

Priorities
Key Actions

• What is critical for success?
• What activities must we do?
• What should we not do?

Performance
Success Metrics

• How do we measure success?
• What controls should we implement?
• How is our return vs. competitors'?

Payments
Budget

• How much do we have to spend?
• How should we allocate resources?
• What budget process should we use?

Figure 12.1   Paul's 4 Ps of Strategy

Second, I will pay particular attention to the activities of strategy during the process. As activities seem to be the focus of some recent strategy research, I will document the activities I undertake to compare with what researchers are finding elsewhere. Since commitments and actions are essentially the tools of strategy, I will also think carefully about the activities that will be needed to support the stated strategy I am creating. The emphasis on decision making is one of the key tenets I use in all of my strategy sessions to students and executives: 'The whole goal of strategy is to ensure that the daily decision making of employees within an organization is consistent with the agreed-upon positioning and priorities.'

Third, in terms of application of the strategic communication advice, I will create a strategy captured in a clear, concise manner and ensure that I use no more than 35 words for the high level strategy statements. Toward that end, I will utilize a framework that I created for my strategy students that I refer to as 'Paul's 4 Ps of Strategy', which is shown in Figure 12.1 (Friga, 2009). I will also implement and recommend guidance that all strategies should be documentable on one page.

The first 'P' is *Position*. In my mind, this is the starting point for any strategy – the mission and vision for the organization. The mission answers the question 'Why are we here?' and the vision addresses the question of 'Where are we going?' Both statements must be clear and concise so that they can be understood by everyone in the organization, so as to be helpful to drive daily decision making. In my case, the positioning statements must be clearly understood by the students in the program, recruiters, and fellow faculty and staff with whom I interact. Two other constituent

groups who may be interested in these statements include alumni, who may donate money to support the program, and other business schools which indirectly affect the school's rankings through the reputational surveys. I also realize that my statements must go beyond just the generic propositions often adopted in mission and/or vision statements – such as 'excel at teaching, service and research and be the leader'. Effective positioning statements must capture some uniqueness of the entity. I will also work hard to keep these statements concise and understandable at a high level, following Peter Drucker's advice to make sure that they can fit on a 'T-Shirt' (Drucker, 1990).

Next come *Priorities*. Once the positioning is set, the leaders must establish scope and priorities. What is most important to assist the entity in achieving the vision? What must be done differently and what should be continued? The most critical decisions (and often the most difficult) are related to the elimination of activities that are not essential to the core mission and vision. What should we *not* do?

The *Payments* portion of my model is where the 'rubber hits the road'. The way that strategy is really implemented is through resource allocations and incentive programs. Many organizations are overly reliant on what my wife refers to as 'SALY' – same as last year (plus or minus a few percentage points). This is not strategic. I will be sure to carefully spend my allocated budget on the kinds of activities that are necessary to move the consulting program in a new direction.

Finally, there is *Performance*. I will need to construct a *few* (no more than three) overall performance metrics to track how well the strategy is working. It is important to consider the long term perspective as an over-focus on short term performance metrics can have devastating results (perhaps a contributor to our current economic woes). In my case, I will set a strategy with a three year performance window. Now that I have introduced the theoretical underpinnings, definitions and objectives for the strategy process I plan to follow, it is time to move to action. The starting point is the internal analysis.

INTERNAL ANALYSIS

Theory

One of the dominant theoretical perspectives related to the internal analysis related to strategy is the resource-based view or RBV (Barney, 1991). The RBV theory posits that organizations can work toward competitive advantage through strategic management of resources and capabilities,

by ensuring that certain competencies are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable.

Another relevant strategy theory comes from the infamous SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (Andrews, 1971). The strengths and weaknesses components are intended to be a careful and candid review of the current state of affairs within the organization vis-à-vis the best in the industry (and sometimes beyond). What are the elements of the company's value chain that are performed to a world class level and ultimately translate to competitive advantage? In the event that there are internal deficiencies that would impede the progress toward the stated vision, what corrective steps could be taken to improve the internal capabilities or should we consider outsourcing the function?

Finally, from a theoretical perspective, strategy occurs at multiple levels in an organization. Generally, this is viewed at three levels – corporate, business unit and function. One of the areas of the strategy literature currently under investigation in the strategy process literature pertains to how these different levels of strategy interrelate. It is logical that they should adhere to a common corporate mission and vision, as well as a set of values that guides behaviors. Each business unit and function will also have its own mission, vision and priorities, but these statements should reconcile very cleanly with the higher level corporate strategy statements. In essence, they articulate the particular role of the unit or function in accomplishing the higher level objectives and should not be in conflict in any way. Next, I will move to how these ideas informed me as I began to design related strategy actions.

Application

I sensed that the starting point was to spend some time understanding the current and historical situation. I certainly had a few hypotheses as to what types of activities may help but I still needed some more basic information to solidify the ideas. My intuition as to the strategic actions was based upon my experience leading the consulting program at Indiana University, where I found that bringing more consulting alumni on campus and institutionalizing more formal case interview preparation programs were very productive actions. The challenge was to understand the informal and formal context in the new environment, in order to determine the strategic priorities and the strategic communication mechanisms at UNC. This is the basis for my internal analysis.

In retrospect, the strategy formulation process actually began before I had the new leadership position. During my interview process, I asked many questions about the current state of affairs. I knew that I would be

asked about initial ideas for strategic changes, so I needed information from the leadership team as well as students and staff to get a broader perspective. I quickly learned some of the most important strengths and weaknesses of the program which directly impact the strategy formulation.

From a strength perspective, the business school maintained a top 20 reputation, counted many alumni in consulting, and had a committed leadership team that believed consulting to be a priority. On the negative side, current interest in consulting courses and the concentration had dwindled, the consulting program was isolated from the core courses and faculty, and alumni were not extensively engaged in helping students prepare for and land jobs in the consulting field. Ironically, what some key constituents were concerned about was the lack of a coherent, consistent and exciting strategy for the program.

So, my first 'official' activities related to strategy creation took place prior to assuming the new position. I interviewed many different people to get a sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the program as it existed. I also floated hypotheses as to what might help the program and paid particular attention to the reaction I received as the ideas were discussed. The hypothesis-driven approach was ingrained in me during my time at McKinsey and a methodology I research and teach to students in my consulting classes (Friga, 2009). My first 'artifact' was created during this process and is shown below (Figure 12.2). It represented my 'draft' ideas as to the mission and priorities for the consulting and related programs over the next three years. I also included some key performance metrics that would give me focus as to what we were trying to achieve with the program.

Note that the documented strategy was shaped greatly by conversations during the interview process and is only intended to be a guide. I did feel it would be helpful (to me and others) to actually take a stand and document at least the preliminary plan for future reference.

EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

Theory

After completing the internal analysis, I moved to Step 2, the external analysis. The external components of the aforementioned SWOT analysis are threats and opportunities. When I teach these concepts, I stress that the threats are potential negative external issues related to our organization's performance and achievement of competitive advantage.

Mission Statement: *Our purpose is to continue to differentiate the Kenan-Flager Business School through innovative and experiential learning opportunities.*

2009	2010	2011	Goals
Formalize	**Enhance**	**Grow**	• 75% of students participate
• Organize team	• Raise funds	• Increase # projects	• 6/7 or 4/5 satisfaction ratings
• Develop methodologies	• Market externally	• More programs	
• Engage faculty	• Consolidate other project based work	• Include more faculty	

STAR Projects
Mission: Provide students with real world opportunities to help North Carolina companies with major business issues

MBA Consulting
Mission: Teach MBA students about the consulting industry, train in consulting skills, and connect with top consulting firms

BSBA Consulting
Mission: Teach Bachelor of Science in Business Administration students about the consulting industry, train in consulting skills, and connect with top consulting firms

Formalize
• Organize team
• Develop methodologies
• Engage faculty

Redesign
• Streamline concentration
• Revamp courses
• Host consultants

Create
• Launch consulting concentration
• Offer new courses
• Institute open consulting club

Enhance
• Raise funds
• Market externally
• Consolidate other project based work

Engage
• Raise funds
• Market externally
• Visit firms

Establish
• Create 'Consulting Corps'
• Market externally
• Visit firms

Grow
• Increase # projects
• More programs
• Include more faculty

Recruit
• Add consulting faculty
• Conduct research
• Assist admissions

Connect
• Support STAR programs
• Hold Consulting Day
• Host alumni

Goals:
• 75% of students participate
• 6/7 or 4/5 satisfaction ratings
• 40 students in consulting concentration
• 30 placements/yr
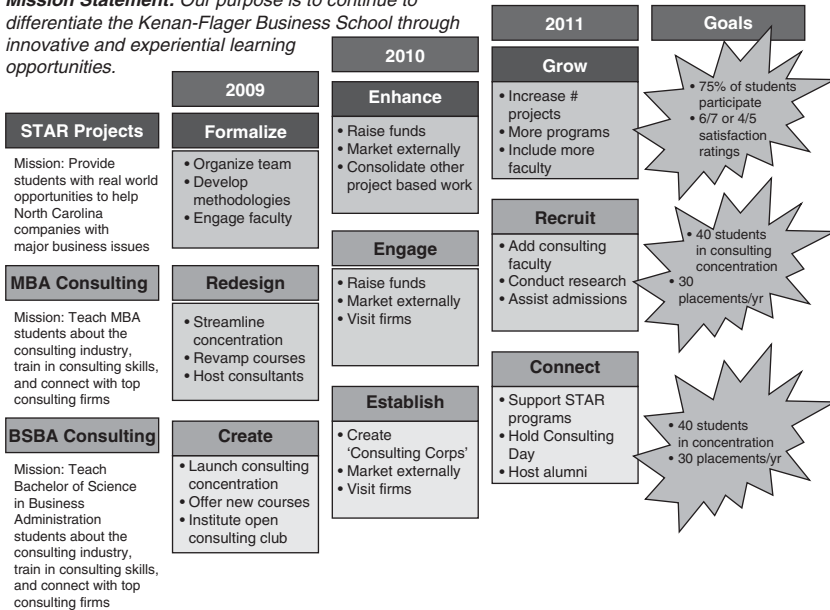• 40 students in concentration
• 30 placements/yr

Figure 12.2   Star program and consulting strategies at Kenan-Flagler

The opportunities represent all of the potential priorities and actions we could undertake and once we identify the right shortlist – it becomes our strategy.

The threats may come from three general sources – the macro/general environment, competitors (industry level) and from customers (in terms of negative shifts). One of the most common frameworks used to capture the macro/general environment issues is STEEP: Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic and Political/Legal (Fleisher and Bensoussan, 2003). The goal is to create a shortlist of the most important issues that may affect us after carefully considering the impact of the issue as well as the implications for strategy. Next, I will describe how I moved to actions related to the external analysis.

Application

One of the tenets of my strategy teaching is how important it is to truly prioritize. A SWOT analysis that results in 8 weaknesses and 10 strengths, in my opinion, has not truly been completed as each of the 8–10 items

Bad Economy	Nationalism	More Competition
Impact: Decrease in recruiting Implications: Diversify firms	Impact: Less positions for international students Implications: Seek more global placements	Impact: Potential to lose top candidates Implications: More innovation and marketing

Figure 12.3   External Analysis Consulting Program at UNC KFBS

cannot be of equal importance. The rule of thumb I teach is to require the identification of the top three of any type of list. In this case, I am required, therefore, to identify the most important threats from an external perspective, as shown and discussed in Figure 12.3.

By far the most important macro issue is the *overall economic decline*. The impact of this issue is that the demand for consulting positions has decreased (in some cases up to a 40 percent decline) from the six primary firms which hire the majority of our students into consulting (Bain, Booz Allen, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte, McKinsey and ScottMadden). The implication for strategy is that we will have to dramatically shift our target market to include many more firms, including small to medium sized firms with whom we have historically had little or no contact.

The next important macro issue is a political issue and social movement toward more *nationalism*. In this context, companies in the United States are increasingly scrutinized for the hiring of international students for positions in the US. Historically, consulting was one of the few industries where hiring international students on H1 Visas was a bit more common. The impact of this is a drop in the number of openings for international students, which was a major draw for a number of these students to come to a US business school in the first place. The implication of this issue from a strategy perspective is the need to seek relationships and placements in other countries. It also requires an increased effort in education to match the students' expectations with the reality of the changes.

The final macro issue comes from a *competitive perspective*. An increasing number of business schools are bringing in ex-consultants to assist in creating consulting programs and the schools have also become much more adept at utilizing alumni in consulting firms to prepare students for the interviews. The implication is that to effectively compete against some programs with even more relationships than we have, we will need to devise more innovative and outstanding activities than ever before.

And speaking of activities . . . I almost forgot to share the key activities I undertook during this phase of the strategy journey. On an ongoing basis, I

subscribe to the key consulting industry journals and book lists (including Kennedy Information). I also periodically review the websites of the other top 20 business schools to see what they are up to in terms of programs and activities. Finally, I engaged in a dialogue (via email and in person/phone) with many of the over 900 UNC KFBS alumni who are currently working in consulting. I found the consulting alumni to be very informative and candid in their responses! After completing the internal and external analysis, it is time to move to the final step – creating the strategy.

STRATEGY FORMULATION

Theory

So what is necessary for me to conclude that I have a good strategy? From an analysis perspective, it is important to conduct a thorough internal and external review as described above. I know that I will be filling in the 4 Ps of Strategy as shown in the first section of this chapter (Position, Priorities, Payments and Performance), and I know that my ultimate goal for this program is competitive advantage.

From an organizational perspective, strategies of corporate, business units and functions must be aligned and consistent. They obviously increase in level of specificity as they go downward and the sets of questions and activities will naturally vary. I will keep this in mind as I move toward application in the strategy formulation stage as described below.

Application

So my first task was to secure an understanding of the corporate and business unit strategies. In my case, the corporate level strategy was the university as a whole and the business unit was the UNC Kenan-Flagler School of Business. In terms of the University of North Carolina's strategy statements (Figure 12.4), I thought through how my strategy would need to align with the priorities of attracting/inspiring, recruiting/supporting and serving/elevating. In my case, 'attracting and inspiring' ties to my objectives to raise money for the program related to attracting and inspiring both students and faculty. The 'recruiting and supporting' priority directly ties to my intentions to use funds for innovative programming and active involvement of graduate students in the planning and execution of consulting strategies. Finally, the 'serve and elevate' priority corresponds to my plans to use experiential learning as a key part of the curriculum, and I decided to add a component that includes service to the
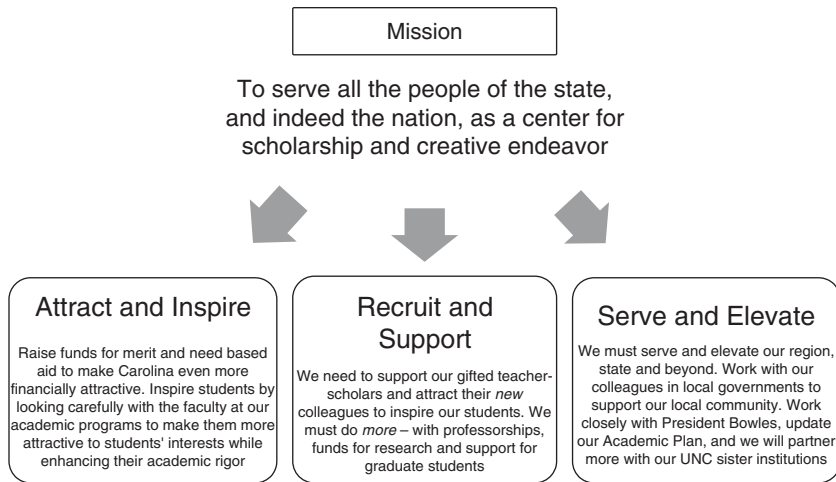
Source: UNC Undergraduate Bulletin; Chancellor Holon Thorpe, Installation Address.

Figure 12.4   UNC mission and priorities

UNC campus operationalized as one action learning project a year for the UNC system.

Next, I set out to understand the strategy of the UNC KFBS, my direct business unit. I met with the Dean several times, as he was in the process of crafting the strategy for the business school at the same time, as this was his first year in the leadership position. I learned quite a bit from his experiences, especially with regard to the importance of connecting with all relevant constituents (for ideas and buy-in), taking it slow (offering bits of the strategy over the course to gauge reactions) and the need for strategic communication (simple and repetitive). One interesting footnote was that over the course of the year, the Dean referred to the vision statement as 'his' vision statement for the school, which was normally followed up with, 'and I hope you can make it yours as well'. This may have been strategic communication or his humility or both.

Figures 12.5 and 12.6 show the Dean's vision statement and strategy summary presented to the faculty over the course of the year. The priorities were announced early and he assigned taskforces to each of them. The vision statement violates the aforementioned guidance of 35 words (over twice that at 73 words); so while it seemed to successfully guide the activities of key lieutenants in the process it is unlikely that the majority of faculty could recite it (it is a busy T-shirt). There are also four priorities, rather than the 'rule of thumb maximum' of three, but I still found it very

'We will be a leading global professional school of business. Our research will influence business leaders, academics and policy makers. Our graduates will be known for their effective and principled leadership as well as their technical and managerial skills. We will be a workplace of choice for faculty, staff and students, a valued member of the UNC community, and a contributor to the welfare of North Carolina and the world beyond its borders.'

– *James Dean, Jr. Dean, KFBS*

Source: Dean Jim Dean's presentation to faculty, March 17, 2009.

Figure 12.5   Dean's Vision for the Kenan-Flagler Business School

helpful as I began shaping my strategy for consulting, which needed to be aligned of course.
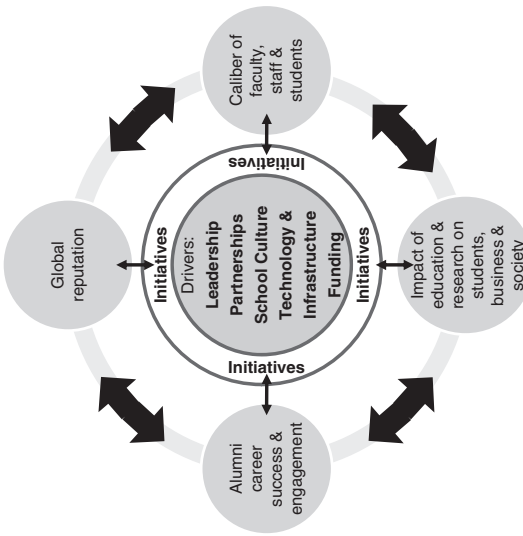
In terms of 'leadership', I will continue to align the efforts of the consulting program with the school's leadership initiative, in particular through the STAR Program (Student Teams Achieving Results), where we provide consulting training and methodology development for the students. We will try to find ways to align with the 'globalization and research impact' priorities through our support of the STAR global projects as well as participating in global conferences on education, experiential learning and consulting. Finally, I plan to find ways to incorporate 'technology' in our projects, with an emphasis on using Skype and video conferencing during global coordination efforts.

CRAFT THE STRATEGY

Now, with the background work and context done, it was time to craft the strategy for the consulting program. I worked to incorporate the internal and external analysis as I went about the process.

My first step was to draft some ideas and begin my 'constituent conversations'. I documented some initial ideas as to the mission and vision and met with the deans, faculty, staff (in particular, the Career Management Center or CMC), alumni, recruiters and students. The most important meetings proved to be a series of strategy sessions with the CMC and the student officers of the consulting club. We reviewed the internal and external analysis results and iterated on the potential positioning and priorities

- **Drivers** are organizational attributes needed to reach the goals
- **Initiatives** provide focus for action to reach the goals

Strategic Initiatives			
Leadership Development: Develop students as exceptional global leaders in all career areas	**Globalization:** Conduct research, education and engagement programs that reflect the global economy	**Research Impact:** Increase the impact of our research and thought leadership on business executives, policy makers and the academy	**Technology in Research and Education:** Utilize technology strategically to enhance research and the teaching and learning experience

Source: Dean Jim Dean's presentation to faculty, March 17, 2009

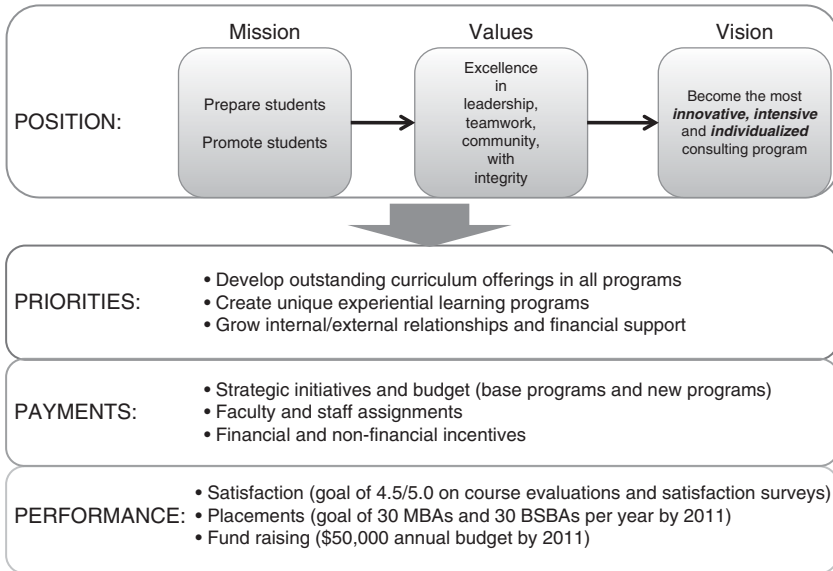*Figure 12.6   Dean's strategic roadmap*

Figure 12.7   UNC KFBS consulting program strategy

of the consulting program. The results are shown in our strategy 'one pager' organized around the aforementioned 4 Ps (Figure 12.7). Note that the mission is particularly concise and the vision is meant to be a bit differentiating. The priorities and payments help explain how we will achieve the desired positioning and the performance is how we will measure success (with stated goals in each area).

The strategic communication was the next critical step as we needed to make others aware of the new strategy. In addition to many in-person meetings and presentations with staff and students, we put significant effort into documenting the strategy as clearly and concisely as possible. We put together flashy brochures, updated the website, and used the mission and vision as much as possible as talking points whenever the consulting program was mentioned. Another key tool for getting the word out was an alumni magazine article written about the new consulting program that included a discussion of the new strategy. In essence, we viewed this effort just as we would an advertising campaign for a new product. Feedback from students and other key constituents has been very positive and we are making progress in our performance measures as the first year of roll-out concludes.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this paper was to discuss the strategy process of theory to action through the lens of one strategy's formulation. Since the strategy process is a micro based phenomenon, examining the actions of one actor offers a unique perspective on what truly takes place and the insights that result therein. As I reflect upon the writing of this paper and the creation of this strategy, the following insights surfaced.

First, strategy is not as complicated as many would make it out to be. Essentially, there are only three steps – internal analysis, external analysis and crafting the strategy. That being said, the devil is in the detail, as the exact actions one takes in each bucket of activity are not as clear cut. Many strategy frameworks are helpful for external analysis (e.g. STEEP and Porter's 5 Forces for external analysis) and internal analysis (RBV and Value Chain) but less guidance exists for the crafting and presentation of the strategy. I offered a few new ideas here related to the 4 Ps as an organizing framework and the desire to keep strategy to one page for strategic communication, but this is an area that could be further examined for tool creation.

The second insight is that strategic communication is undervalued as a critical step in the strategy process. Designing the proper communication mechanisms and devoting the proper resources to delivering the messages took much more time than I imagined but proved to be one of the most important steps to successful strategy roll-out. I am realizing more and more how this should be viewed as a marketing challenge, just as with the introduction of a new product or company launch. In my case, I was able to leverage our marketing and communication staff as well as the unique talents of my student research assistants, but the importance and effort should not be underestimated.

My third insight centers on the iterative process of strategy. I employed the scientific method and anticipated iterations, but I quickly realized that the strategy process mandates minor changes as you go, especially to manage buy-in from all constituent groups. At one point, however, you need to take a stake in the ground and issue strategic communication, but then it is necessary to continue to monitor the results and feedback for the next 'major' iteration.

Finally, as I think about how this paper surfaces ideas for future research, I make the following humble observations. I think we should continue the micro based research stream to learn more about the individual level actions and decisions for the strategy process. Particularly useful efforts may be multiple person examinations within one organization and/or comparisons of similar actors in multiple organizations. The goal

would be to begin to identify taxonomies and patterns that could actually inform practice, rather than just observe. Perhaps as this research stream moves forward, 'strategy process audits' by academics could be developed that parallel clinical checkups in the medical field, but that may be the subject for another paper.

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