

THE UNTAPPED POWER OF SHARING YOUR COMPANY STRATEGY



At the end of 2018, the Biesse UK Senior Leadership Team started creating their first visual strategy map. Fast forward four years, and the retention of staff has increased, company morale is noticeably better and the company is a better place to work overall.

In the summer of 2018 Steve Bulmer, MD of Biesse UK, visited a workshop hosted and run by Jacqui Hanbury. Here he saw how Festo Ltd used a visual strategy map, based on the four parts of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), which ensured that the whole company was aware of, and was working on, the company strategy. As a similar company to Biesse UK (both are sales subsidiaries of European companies) Steve heard how this could help him with employee engagement and communication and immediately arranged for the whole of his leadership team to come and have a look for themselves. Although some of the team were sceptical Steve's enthusiasm and Jacqui's and Festo's experience was enough to sign a contract to deliver a workshop and ongoing support to enable Biesse to have a virtual strategy map of their own.

Biesse already had a strategy – 20 or so items on a page – only visible to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).





OPSP					Draft June 2018	
One Page Strategic Plan						
Mission: Creating & maintaining relationships with all stakeholders based on our core values.						
Vision: Deliver world class customer experience						
2023 Objective: (what is winning) Sustainable growth plan to get us to ExM Turnover.		Strategies: how will we WIN 1. Attracting & retaining high calibre staff		Plans: (owner, Date) 1a Clear communication & clarity		
				Owner	date	
					✓	
				GH	18	
				ST	18/19	
				ST	18	
				ST	19	
				ST	18	
				KS	19	
				GH	18	
				KS	18	
				KS	18/19	
				SP	19	
				DB	19	
				DB	19	
				GV	19	
				TC	18	
				IC	19	
				TC	19/20	

An example of a one Page Strategy document

What they didn't have was a way to share the strategy to the wider company of just under 100 employees. They also wanted a way to improve communication to their staff and to share the Vision, Mission and Values as they recognised that employee engagement and staff retention needed to improve. This is a particular problem for engineers as the shortage of engineers in the industry means they are particularly hard to retain. Sharing their strategy and involving the employees in the future of the company could be the change needed.

The concept

The first stage in moving to a visual map was to understand the principles behind it and how it differed from the one page strategy Biesse currently had. This meant understanding the structure that would be used for the new map that would be based on the Balanced Score Card (BSC) areas

-  Finance
-  Customer & Market
-  Processes
-  People

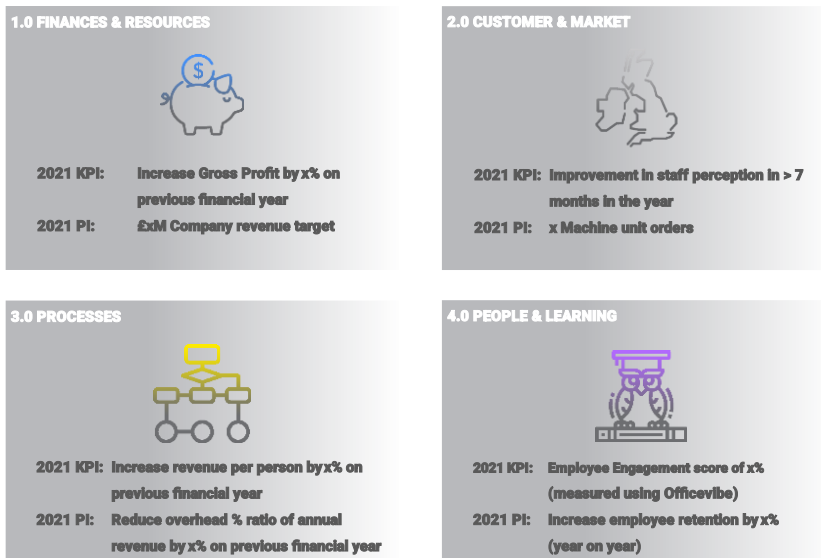
(Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, 1996)

Jacqui explained that although every company has financial goals. if these are the only measure for a successful company it can have many unintended consequences. The first is that you are only ever looking behind you, you cannot measure a financial goal in advance. Secondly the other three aspects have a massive impact on the finance. If the people are not happy and fulfilled and the correct processes are not in place then your customers will not be happy, and then the finance goals will never be hit. So the people should always be the foundation of any business

Creating the Strategy map

During a two day workshop in September 2018 Jacqui and a colleague from Festo introduced the concept for the strategy map to the SLT at Biesse. Once this was understood they set about taking the present goals and working out how to split them into the four areas of the BSC.

The team split into groups – worked on each area and then presented back to each other. By the end of the workshop we had a first pass at two goals in each area – one Key Performance Indicator and one Performance Indicator.



The goals are split into four areas

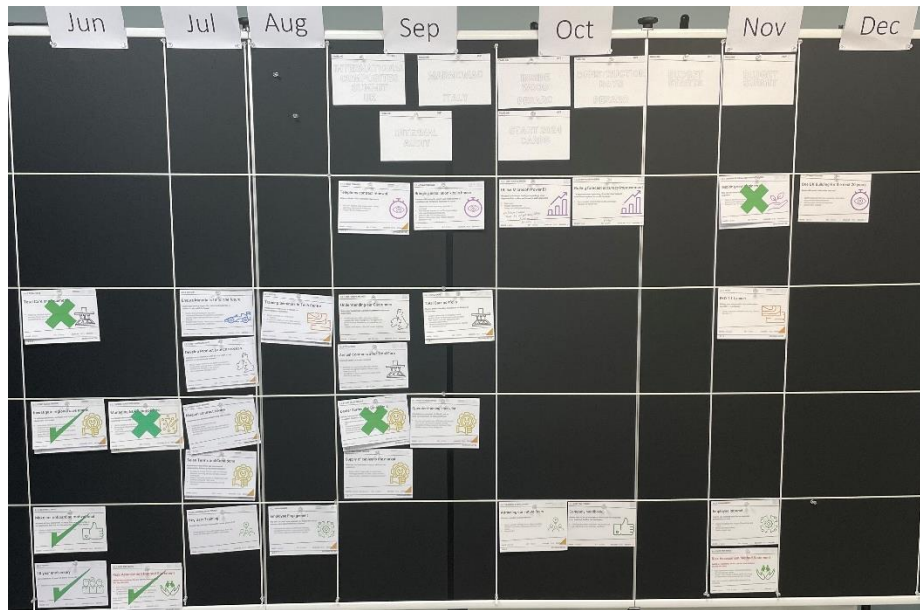
The team then set about taking the strategies listed on the existing one page strategy and fitting them into one of the four perspectives – each with their own headline detail as to what that strategy should achieve – basically why it was there! They also checked that they had all the strategies in place that were needed to achieve the goals they had set.

The team left the workshop with some tight timescales to then get the ‘How to’ behind each strategy written in time to start using the map in Jan 2019. These cards needed to be SMART and be assigned to a specific member of the SLT who would be the overseer of the card. They also needed to be held up to the Vision, Mission and Values of the company, ensuring that everything that was done was in line with the company culture. This provided a way to continually live these values helping to embed the culture in the company. The members of the SLT would not necessarily carry out the actions, they would assign many of the actions to a driver who would do the task on the card and then report back to the rest of the SLT.

With Jacqui’s assistance the ‘How to’ cards were created and then the team came back together to lay them out as one picture. This was the first time that they had seen all the strategies and ‘How to’ cards together and this was a key moment! How much had they committed the company to do in the next couple of years?

It became evident that as well as strategies another aspect had to be overlaid on the map and that was events. As a sales company Biesse in the UK do lots of exhibitions and shows and at busy times the strategy tasks would have to take a back seat. A timeline of these events was added and the due date on each strategy adjusted to

take this into account. At last a map was emerging and it was proudly put it up on the wall – a graphic image of the goals of Biesse were visible.



The Strategy map on a pin board so everyone could see it

The team then started planning how they would not only communicate the map to the employees but also involve them in it.

A launch in January to the whole company was planned, but first they decided to introduce the concept to the middle management team (MMT). Getting their comments and thoughts and hopefully buy in would enable them to help communicate in turn to their teams. So in December they ran a one day workshop for the MMT where they explained the concept and then gave them time to look through each of the strategies and how to cards, ask questions and ensure they were happy that they could support the SLT in explaining to the rest of the company.

Launch to the whole company

Now they were ready to launch to the whole company.

The launch event went well – the SLT explained the concept in a series of workshops and gave everyone chance to ask questions. They were under no illusions that this would now mean the strategy was accepted by everyone, but it was a great start – now the whole company had to live it!

They also introduced an ideas board at the launch event. They recognised that no one group of people have all the answers and that to be truly successful as a company Biesse had to ask for new ideas to help grow the company. And these should come from ALL of the employees, after all they have different cultural backgrounds and experience and are different ages to the SLT. All ideas would be considered and

discussed and clear communication back to the employees would be essential ensuring that, even if an idea was not put into practice, the employee felt their opinion was valued.

Using the map

Jacqui initially acted as Strategy Co-ordinator, keeping the map up to date by attending monthly SLT meetings where each card that was due to be signed off or cards whose due date was in the next few months was reviewed. Any ideas were also discussed. This took half a day a month and was a very valuable time as it enabled the SLT to hear from each other, question the decisions made, and for them all to be clear what actions were taken across the whole company before the cards were signed off. Many interesting conversations took place in these meetings and the strategy came to life!

Following this successful launch and implementation of the 2019 map, towards the end of that year the 2020 map was created. And this has continued ever since with the whole concept now widely accepted and expected by the whole of Biesse in the UK.

Conclusion

The Strategy map is alive and kicking in Biesse and the effect has been transformative. Staff retention and engagement have increased. The culture of the company is now more embedded through living out the values, increased. Ideas from the employees have been implemented. Engagement has increased. Interactions and interest in the strategy as well in as the company culture (set by the vision, mission and values) has improved. So many things that had been on the to-do list for the SLT for a long time have been done, not least because in telling the rest of the company about them the accountability of the SLT to make them happen grew!

Steve commented on LinkedIn in October 2022:

“Jacqui is very skilled at helping to articulate and manage a strategic plan. We have worked together for more than 4 years and have been on a great journey of continuous improvement in all areas of the business. With her help and support I have seen our managers grow and I can categorically say that we wouldn't be where we are without her involvement.”

The Pathway Communication Company helps businesses to improve their internal communications. Jacqu Hanbury is the owner of the company and has many years' experience of working in big corporate companies as well as running her own business. She has run internal communications campaigns, worked in sales and marketing and understands that good communications start with inspiring those around her.

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