

Creating Strategic Solutions

Do you know what your strategic issues are?

Are your priorities clearly defined?

Do you need to make collaborative decisions?

Is it a challenge to create consensus?

Could your communication process be improved?

Is it difficult to implement decisions?

**Real decision making in complex
and uncertain environments**

Overview

Managing complexities arising from technology, geography, politics and hierarchy in an environment where the only constant is change, provides a challenging back-drop for strategic decision making. Uncertainty can influence and may inhibit the creativity of decision makers and the commitment of decision implementers.

**YOUR BUSINESS +
DMU
= DECISIONS
MADE**

Creating Strategic Solutions is a consultant-led service designed to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of your decision making. The portfolio of methodologies we use to help you define, understand and analyse an issue can be applied in any context. The mix of methodologies selected and applied is customised to your organisation to encapsulate both the quantitative and qualitative elements you need to address in your decision making. In essence we work with you and your team to deliver a process given the emotions, power and politics of your specific environment.

Why use Creating Strategic Solutions?

The benefits of the service derive from the strengths of the methodologies employed as well as from the practical expertise and experience of the consulting team who will facilitate a solution-driven workshop that's right for you. Our consultants are experts in business strategy and adept at process facilitation having supported private, public and third sector organisations.

The applications of the Creating Strategic Solutions consultancy are vast. The methodologies can be harnessed to help you to focus on and resolve the key business issue facing you – and even to help you define what the key business issue is.

Workshops have been facilitated on issues ranging from delivering new technological processes and improving communications through to making multi-faceted decisions in uncertain environments and selecting the right KPIs to take a business forward.

How we help you Create Strategic Solutions

Leicester Business School provides process consultancy expertise which, when combined with your knowledge, results in a strategic action plan which carries the commitment of all key parties. Our consultants support and facilitate through a three stage process which ensures that the issue definition at stage one will result in a tailored, workable action plan at stage three.

– Stage 1: Pre-Workshop Meetings

The consultancy process starts with diagnostic pre-meetings to establish and understand the organisational issue to be addressed. The number of pre-meetings required to complete this stage will depend on how clearly defined the issue is – if it has been defined at all.

In many cases, early assumptions regarding the issue are challenged to yield a more robust definition as the foundation of the workshop.

– Stage 2: Facilitated Workshop

Consultants from Leicester Business School deliver fully facilitated workshops, at a location convenient for participants. Workshops draw on the creativity and knowledge of your team to tease out the issues and their interconnectedness, to generate alternative possible solutions that are acceptable across a range of dimensions and to evaluate them.

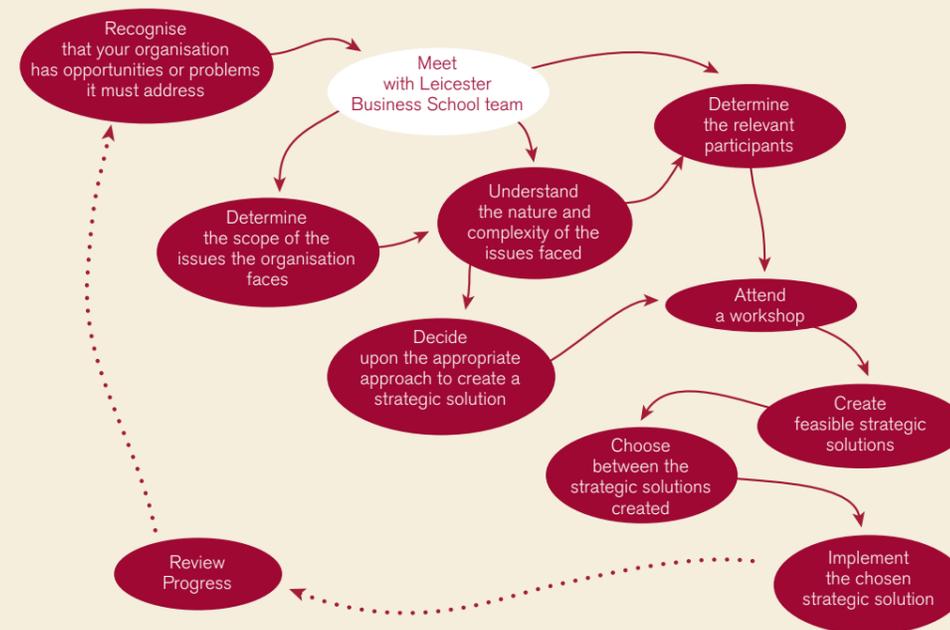
We bring a mobile laboratory of networked laptops which allows information to be submitted directly, individually and in real-time. This allows us to achieve high levels of group productivity and to maintain the integrity of the cognitive mapping process.

Workshops will normally consist of 6 – 12 participants from your organisation however groups of up to 30 can be accommodated. The frequency and duration of workshops depends on the nature of the issue you wish to address and the outcome sought.

– Stage 3: Action Plan

Your action plan is generated during the event by the workshop participants, so implementation can start immediately. You will receive a post-event report confirming the action plan and next steps as agreed during the workshop, with stakeholder responsibility indicated where appropriate. The report will also detail the process and outcomes, any issue themes or clusters, and areas for further exploration.

Process Map: Stages in Creating Strategic Solutions



Workshop Feature	Client Experience
Applies proven, practical methodologies	Uncovers real issues & provides the framework to address them
Procedurally rational workshops	Stakeholder commitment to and ownership of outcomes
Real-time analysis	High levels of group productivity
Emphasis on simplicity & transparency	Addresses and resolves conflict
Combines soft, emotional & more formal, mathematical approaches	Integrates data with social judgements
Tackles head-on organisational complexity & uncertainty	Outputs are workable in the unique environment of each organisation
Output in most appropriate form for the defined issue	Post workshop output and action plan is tailored



“The workshop facilitated open but structured opinions to be made, no one was excluded, this produced a sound action plan for our next phase of growth. It provided the evaluation tools we needed to understand the relative values of conflicting investments. That meant we made better decisions that we’ve all bought into.”

Technical Director, Pepsico



“It has helped us to structure how we go through all our processes so that now, when we define our overall strategy, everyone is in agreement about what the priorities are.”

Chief Executive, Braunstone Community Association



Lead Consultant

Dr. Ashley Carreras is a Principal Lecturer at Leicester Business School and has many years experience in using a range of quantitative research techniques and the development of strategic plans. Ashley is actively engaged in leading Creating Strategic Solutions consultancy projects for international corporations, local authorities and not-for profit organisations. He has experience in delivering across a range of countries including USA, Spain, Poland, Russia and Belarus.



Lead Consultant

Parmjit Kaur is a Principal Lecturer in Strategy and Management at Leicester Business School. A fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Parmjit has been with the Business School for 20 years, gaining a wealth of experience in academic leadership, consultancy, management and administration. In addition to delivering core Strategic Management modules at Masters level, Parmjit is a lead consultant in the area of Creating Strategic Solutions. Her consultancy experience encompasses the public, private and third sectors across a wide range of business issues.

Methodologies

Many of our clients are interested in the theory underpinning the workshops, so we have summarised below the primary methodologies that we use. There are a number of practical processes and tools to capture and simplify the complexity and uncertainty characteristic of decision making within or between organisations; each of the methodologies used by Leicester Business School consultants has been developed

to meet the practical needs of an organisation and applied successfully to real life issues.

The methodology, or mix of methodologies, applied depends on the nature of the issue to be addressed. Our consultants design a process, using a range of bespoke software tools, to deliver the most effective and appropriate workshop for your needs.

Strategic Options Development Analysis

An approach which emphasises the use of cognitive mapping to model ideas about an issue, concepts and relationships are mapped to provide a coherent picture of the situation. This is analysed to give insights into the underlying structure of an issue from which strategic priorities are developed. Critically these will take into account feasibility and the core competencies of an organisation.

Strategic Choice Approach

Most appropriate in highly uncertain environments, SCA is used to construct a range of feasible solutions to an issue from which a choice can be made. This approach is applicable to decision making at many organisational levels; it focuses attention on possible ways of managing uncertainty in the decision making process itself in a strategic way.

Soft Systems Methods

SSM has evolved from systems engineering but with a "softer" emphasis to allow consideration to be given to real life, messy and ill-defined situations where the definition of the strategic goal may itself be part of the issue. This allows for the complexity of opinions and emotions to be addressed to provide solutions which are underpinned by the cultural dimensions of the organisation.

Multi Criteria Decision Analysis

A more formal, mathematical approach, MCDA allows for the identification of a range of options and the development of a set of criteria to assess the merit and applicability of these options. It can be used to complete a strategic solution process allowing for options developed through other approaches to be traded off against each other and a definitive decision to be taken.

For further information about Creating Strategic Solutions and the Leadership & Management Education we can provide, please contact:

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“Working with the De Montfort University team has enabled the Oasis Executive Group to develop and implement changes that have made a substantive difference to our organisational performance.”

Marketing and Practice Development Director, Oasis Healthcare Ltd.

