

What Is Strategy Deployment?

Strategy Deployment, also known as Policy Deployment, Hoshin Kanri or Hoshin Planning, is a systems approach for managing change in a critical business process using a step-by-step approach to planning, implementation, and review. The process of strategy deployment helps companies stay on target to achieve breakthrough initiatives that require out-of-the-box thinking, systematic action, accountability, and visibility.

well. But we weren't great at hitting our long range planning targets. So this policy deployment concept of review, and countermeasures — with systems to help manage the process and major initiatives to go after the big improvement areas — just really clicked.” The company engaged with TBM Consulting Group to implement the strategy deployment process and began using Dploy Solutions to facilitate the process late 2008, putting plans in place for the coming year. Of course 2009 turned out to be a challenging year for virtually all businesses — this company was no exception. “We certainly were anemic in sales. But we ended up the year very strong because we established a number of countermeasures and actions around EBITDA and cash flow,” said the VP. “So our business actually was healthy last year.”

It may not have been a perfect year, but as a global company, the business was able to take advantage of the countermeasures they developed to gain a clear line of sight into what needed to happen. “Dploy allowed us to use one system and one solution for everything from reviews and discussions to countermeasures and metrics,” the VP noted. “That's a huge benefit. I don't think we would have been nearly as effective in this first couple of years of policy deployment had we not moved forward with the Dploy Solutions.”

Seeing Beyond Spreadsheets

Why did the company choose TBM and Dploy Solutions? “When we started looking for a company to help us with the policy deployment process, we found there were a lot of companies that could help facilitate the methodology and probably get us to the same place at the end of those kickoff sessions,” said the VP. “But while most other companies provide some type of spreadsheet-based solution for tracking, we knew that with a company our size, this could become way too big and unmanageable. And there was no

Taking Continuous Improvement to the Next Level

Although the company already had a strong and successful continuous improvement and Six Sigma program in place for several years at that point, it was agreed that the time had come to embark on a Lean journey. Not long after — in mid-2008 — a merger with another plastics manufacturer doubled the size of the company. Since the other organization had also been doing Lean for about a year at that point, it appeared to be a good time to take the next step into strategy — or policy — deployment. “We wanted to see how we could improve transparency and connections within the company to help impact our results,” explained the VP. “As a company overall, we were doing

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—VP, Continuous Improvement

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way we were going to be able to add the headcount needed to make that work.” She explained that unlike those other companies, TBM — along with its Dploy Solutions — offered both the process and tools they needed to run business reviews and get the transparency they wanted.

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Making Progress and Setting New Goals

By the middle of 2010, the company had made significant progress in the strategy deployment area. It has taken a “cascading” approach to deployment, starting with Level 1 (corporate functions) and moving on to Level 2 (business units) in the first year. They’re now going on to Level 3, taking the KPI alignment process to the company’s 50+ plants in the second year. At the same time, the company is rolling out Level 3 strategy deployment to

What Does a VP for Continuous Improvement Do?

This company has a Vice President for Continuous Improvement — which includes Lean and Six Sigma programs, the company’s quality assurance systems and its reliability processes and systems. Since the company has folded policy deployment into its continuous improvement strategy process, it’s the VP’s job to oversee the program. She’s responsible for all the kickoffs and all the facilitation with the Dploy team and with the business units and the corporate review teams. Her group also helps in some of the monthly review processes.

In addition, she serves as the company’s process owner for Dploy, which means her team does review audits and examines the metrics in the system after the month is closed, and sits in on the monthly review processes. She also has team members in the business units performing a similar function. They serve as process owners and as leaders of the methodology and the reviews, making sure that everyone is following the process, using Dploy Solutions and that all metrics remain up-to-date.

boost sales growth. “We’re taking the concept of using AIPs (annual improvement priorities) and monthly reviews to help guide our sales force,” the VP said. “The methodology and process really lean themselves to developing a much deeper and more structured approach to growing sales over the next three years.”

What’s more, this new approach doesn’t end with sales. The company is also applying process improvement to new product development and customer relations. Every month the company’s vice president of sales — along with a few of the operating vice presidents and senior vice presidents — go through the review of six AIPs. Once they get through those AIPs, the VP said, “We’ll go back and do another deep dive. Because we said that in three years we want to grow a certain significant percentage from where we are today.” She admitted, “I don’t know how we’re going to get there. We have some theories. But we’re going to put projects, and strategy and structure together in order to accomplish that.”

Meeting the Challenges

Of course there have been some challenges along the way, too. Action plans, by their very existence, demand accountability. According to the VP, the company breezed through the project selection process. “People were excited — until everyone

realized that once they put an action plan in place, they were going to be held accountable for it the next month,” she said. “I think it’s probably one of those normal, but painful parts of the process — just putting the ground-level traction in place. It’s hard for most folks to resist putting in just five steps when they know they’re really going to need 50. We had to say, ‘Yes, we really want them all in. We want this to be a comprehensive, dynamic review, not just a checkpoint.’”

It’s difficult to insert structure into an area of the business that didn’t have much, the VP admitted. “It’s really just human nature,” she added. “But people needed a tool to help them. And once they had that tool, and began to see how using action plans and countermeasures could help them close gaps for example, behaviors started to change. It’s still a struggle sometimes to get everyone on board with the idea of getting metrics month by month. But it’s getting better — especially since we’ve begun linking all our systems to Dploy, which takes a lot of the manual labor out of the process.”

And on a broader scale, using Dploy has also helped the company eliminate any mystery surrounding its business strategy, making it easier for everyone in the company to contribute to its success.

Our goal:

Improve your business performance and help you translate it into sustainable sales and earnings growth.



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The company and the names of its associates have been removed at the request of our client who wishes to remain anonymous.

To find out how Dploy Solutions can help your organization,
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