

Strategic Planning Playbook

Strategic Planning During Unpredictable Times

Why strategic planning and execution require a dynamic, agile, and flexible approach to resourcing and technology.

CATALANT



Strategic Planning During Unpredictable Times

Substantial and unpredictable global events and disruptions have occurred, and continue to occur regularly, making one thing certain — a static approach to long-term strategic business planning is no longer a reliable option for enterprises and firms looking to scale and stay competitive.

Today's work environment calls for a proactive, flexible, and iterative approach to strategic planning. As [Harvard Business Review shared in a recent article](#), "... the business environment has continued to evolve, and it is placing new and different demands on corporate strategists. The magnitude of the changes in the technological, social, and natural environment are such that corporate strategy will need to be qualitatively reinvented again for new circumstances."

This has caused today's most innovative and forward-thinking CEOs and leadership teams to establish new strategic priorities and develop problem-solving models to navigate today's ongoing challenges across their organizations. According to a 2022 Gartner® CEO Survey, [The Year Perspectives Changed](#), CEOs' top four priorities for 2022 are growth (overall expansion and scaling), technology (digitalization, e-commerce, and cybersecurity), workforce (talent retention, hiring, and DEI), and corporate (M&A, strategy refresh, and restructuring).

An April 2022 study from Gartner revealed the top four business priorities of executives are:



In this playbook, you'll discover:

- Which strategic project areas leading organizations are focusing on most today.
- How an agile problem-solving approach allows you to optimize for today's top CEO priorities during your strategic planning process.
- How a partnership with independent and highly-skilled talent improves the quality and ROI of your strategic plans.

Gartner, 2022 CEO Survey — The Year Perspectives Changed, Mark Raskino, Kristin Moyer, Stephen Smith, 12 April 2022

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Today's Most Common Strategy Project Investments

Strategic work is high on the priority list of nearly every enterprise today. Here's a look at some of the most common strategic projects Catalant has seen major global organizations and firms post on our Expert Marketplace over the last year, and the top three strategic work categories these companies are leveraging Catalant's independent consultants to execute.



Popular Corporate Strategy Project Types on Catalant over the Last Year

- Portfolio strategy/ optimization
- Three-to-five-year growth strategies
- Market/ competitive intelligence
- Board prep and support
- Investor relations support
- Due diligence
- Customer calls and primary research
- Post-merger integration: change management
- Post-merger integration: systems
- Post-merger integration: interim leadership
- Business case development
- Transformation project management
- Change management
- Pricing and revenue strategy
- Organizational/ people strategy
- New business buy/ build analysis
- Data analytics/ data translators

Enterprises used independent consultants to execute a variety of their strategic initiatives last year.

Most Popular Project Categories Posted to the Catalant Platform in 2021 (by %)

 Market Research & Growth | 31%

 Corporate Strategy | 22%

 Digital Transformation & Technology | 9%

1 Strategic Priority: Growth

- Growth is a goal for every company. However, most leadership teams today feel the pressure of unpredictable economic and labor market dynamics.
- They recognize the risks associated with prioritizing growth versus revenue protection and must think critically about realistic opportunities for growth.
- Leadership can balance risk while increasing ROI with an agile strategy that leverages the right expertise at the right time.
- They can hand-select independent consultants with years of relevant experience through Catalant's Expert Marketplace to execute strategic projects that allow for sustainable growth.

A Catalant Expert Success Story



Growth Strategy with Roy Johanson

Roy Johanson has 20 years of management consulting experience and has served in C-level roles at several multi-billion dollar firms.

Client Challenges

A small, high-growth, and recently-purchased firm focused on energy infrastructure development wanted to develop a three-to-five-year growth strategy that simultaneously drove attractive ROIC. Unstable market conditions, supply chain disruption, regulatory changes, and a highly-competitive environment were all challenges. Changes in market conditions since the time of purchase had rendered assumptions around performance and growth irrelevant.

Timeline: ~Six weeks

The Execution

Roy and the team had four key objectives: 1) establish alignment across all stakeholders, 2) determine which elements of the strategy were evergreen versus situational, 3) articulate a set of actions for expected market conditions, and 4) develop an execution strategy that adjusts as market conditions

change. Roy helped conduct interviews with stakeholders to synthesize available information, perspectives, and aspirations. He held a one-day workshop to align on the range of strategic options available and conducted additional interviews to define the expected value and challenges of different strategic actions. Another one-day workshop was then used to align on actions to take immediately versus as market conditions warrant.

Results

Owners and managers aligned on the implications of current and future expected market conditions and developed decision rules so growth initiatives were contingent on appropriate insight. They made a proactive decision to delay new project initiation efforts until specific market conditions improved, focus growth efforts on select market and geographic segments, and expand team capacity and capabilities in advance of anticipated growth.

2 Strategic Priority: Technology

- COVID-19 accelerated the need for businesses to reevaluate their current technological investments, focus on [digital transformation](#), and implement new tools and strategies for effective remote work, collaboration, and communication.
- CEOs continue to prioritize investments in technology (e.g., digitalization, e-commerce, and cybersecurity) and the talent necessary for their implementation, management, and expansion.
- Consultants on Catalant's platform have the knowledge and experience necessary to quickly plan and execute on existing and new technological and digital strategies.

A Catalant Expert Success Story



Technology and Digital Transformation Strategy with Doug Touche

Doug's background includes growth strategy focusing on evolving business capabilities to provide a best-in-class customer journey, enhance the customer experience, and deliver value for the organization.

Client Challenges

A major industrial conglomerate that relied heavily on mature offerings and lacked the digital capabilities to deliver on evolving customer expectations faced pressure to update and expand its product portfolio. Once a transformation was prioritized at the C-level, the working teams faced challenges with the volume of activity needed, limited internal resources, and lack of deep expertise necessary to manage large-scale programs.

Timeline: Six months

The Execution

Doug began by adding structure to the work that was already underway. He implemented workflow processes, introduced project management tools, and streamlined stakeholder communication. In parallel, he prioritized

activities and sequences, and managed customer journey mapping and brand rationalization to inform future work. Doug also helped build an operational group that followed a governance framework and contributed to ongoing management and support.

Results

The project resulted in a process that now prioritizes and manages over 2,000 digital properties and facilitates over 50 million visits across more than 40 countries. Doug helped create an ecosystem that is scalable for internal and external resources, and positioned the company to deliver best-in-class customer experiences that enhance the customer journey.



3 Strategic Priority: Workforce

- CEOs are leaning in on workforce (e.g. hiring, DEI, talent retention) as a strategic lever more than ever before.
- It takes up so much executive mindshare today due to one of the most substantial business impacts of COVID-19 – [the Great Resignation](#).
- Leadership teams at Fortune 500 companies and top private equity firms must rethink how they leverage top-tier talent for critical work.
- They're turning to highly-skilled and experienced independent consultants on Catalant's Expert Marketplace as interim executives to help them stay as effective, resilient, and flexible as possible.

A Catalant Expert Success Story



Human Resources with Rhonda Brown

Rhonda served as an employment attorney, ethics program head, and human resources team member for several years at a privately-owned publisher. Her work involved advising on all types of human resources legal issues across all 50 states. Rhonda has also provided compliance management and employee training in the U.S. and four other countries.

Client Challenges

A fast-growing company needed high-level HR support to quickly onboard a large number of employees and contractors in multiple states and outside the U.S. The client had gone from a single-state employer to a multi-state and international employer essentially overnight. They also became large enough to be covered by federal rules that had not previously applied.

Timeline: 12 weeks

The Execution

Rhonda identified issues in a number of areas including state and federal policy requirements, employee classification issues, and taxation of remote and hybrid workers. She reviewed policies,

benefit offerings, and agreements as well as proposed changes and amended language to reflect the company's revised employer profile. Rhonda drafted offer letters, contractor agreements, and other communications explaining benefit and policy differences and supported new employees who needed to learn about benefits and policies.

Results

Rhonda was able to integrate all contractors and employees by the time her project concluded. She also created the client's first-ever parental leave policy and filed for the ability to operate legally in ten different states, enabling the business to continue its hypergrowth expansion and attract great talent.



4 Strategic Priority: Corporate

- Leadership is prioritizing corporate transformations (e.g., M&A, strategy refreshes, and restructuring).
- Shifting market dynamics and a highly-competitive landscape make corporate growth transformations more difficult than they were when long-range planning was still sufficient.
- A proven approach is to lean on highly-skilled independent talent with years of experience at Fortune 500 companies, major consulting firms, and PE firms for input and guidance on M&A work, value creation, strategy refreshes, and restructuring.
- Catalant's experienced consultants can be dropped into interim executive roles after an acquisition and fill niche skill set gaps related to corporate priorities such as ESG or FP&A.

A Catalant Expert Success Story



Strategy Refresh and Restructuring with Brian Dapelo

Brian worked for six years as a financial advisor, trader, portfolio manager, and founder at an investment advisory firm before becoming a management consultant at PwC. He then launched Monarch Point Consulting Group where he offers strategic planning, operational improvement, transformation, and program management services, and helps PE firms increase the value of portfolio companies.

Client Challenges

A PE-backed fintech firm needed help with strategic planning for six key growth initiatives. The firm lacked a centralized strategy planning regimen and program management office (PMO) to oversee strategy implementation. They also needed guidance on how to execute the strategies and work through any challenges that surfaced along the way.

Timeline: Two months

The Execution

Brian held discovery calls with the firm's leadership team followed by strategic planning sessions with the leaders of each of the six initiatives to collect relevant

data and information. During a second round of sessions with initiative leaders, Brian helped establish the firm's PMO and began executing the strategies. This entailed setting up more detailed project plans, identifying key milestones, tracking performance, establishing weekly reporting cadences, and helping overcome obstacles.

Results

By the end of his project, Brian helped the firm host strategic planning sessions, create project plans for implementation, and establish the PMO. At the time he handed over leadership of the PMO, four of the six strategic initiatives were over 50% complete.



The Value Catalant Brings to Your **Enterprise**

Partner with Experts and teams who have top consulting and operating experience to support your strategic planning and execution.

The Catalant Difference

1

Time to Value

Accelerate time to value for your most strategic work. Catalant's Experts hit the ground running in an average of just three weeks.

2

Return on Investment

Improve ROI on external resource spend by leveraging independent professionals that use their relevant expertise and skills to solve business problems quickly.

3

Quality of Expertise

Access a marketplace of 80,000 highly-skilled Experts with experience as operators at Fortune 500 companies and leading global consulting and private equity firms.

Ready to partner with Catalant to unlock strategic flexibility at your organization?

Get in Touch →

Who are our Experts?

Our Experts are alumni of:

- Bain & Company
- Coca-Cola
- McKinsey & Company
- Procter & Gamble
- Johnson & Johnson
- General Electric
- Boston Consulting Group

80,000+

Independent Experts

6,000+

Experts from top consultancies*

10,000+

Experts with Fortune 500 experience

10-15+

Average years of work experience