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MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

8 Reasons to Use a Facilitator

for Your Next Strategic Planning Session

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1 Everyone can participate.

If you're the leader of a team, you can't lead your team and facilitate a conversation at the same time. People won't speak freely, and you won't get the information you desire from the meeting.

If you're busy facilitating the meeting, you can't listen to what others are saying and fully be present in the conversation. Having a facilitator will allow better conversations and better participation from everyone.

2 We have a specialized process.

All we do is strategic planning. Our process (a combination of experience, best practices and management science) is designed to get buy-in and agreement quickly, while incorporating all aspects of business strategy so that your team can be on the same page and make the best decisions for your company as possible.

3 We can ask the right questions to get to the heart of the issues.

Having a facilitator creates a safe space for people to ask questions that get to the root of issues without having their concerns come out as personal attacks. This way the important topics get covered to a level of satisfaction for the whole group.

We also don't know what's considered taboo in the culture and have no power dynamics to avoid; Our job is to get all the information on the table that's relevant to the future of the organization, and we can do that by asking the relevant questions, and probe more deeply if needed.

4 We're neutral to the decisions.

Our main focus is creating a powerful discussion about the present and future of the organization and to bring those issues to completion; By approaching the discussions in an objective manner, we don't have to worry about getting our way, or having a decision go one way or another.

5 A facilitator sets the tone.

By having a facilitator come into your organization, it shows the rest of the participants as well as your staff that you're investing in the future and the well being of your organization.

You're committed to having everyone in the organization contribute to the future, and the first step is bringing in someone to facilitate that process.

6 We control the time and the conversation.

One of the roles of the facilitator is to ensure people stay on task and speak about relevant topics. If you stray from current discussion or waste valuable time, the facilitator will interject and get the conversation back on track.

This is slightly harder to do when there are power dynamics at play and management is leading the session.

7 We're used to dealing with people.

We're used to dealing with people (lots of them). Our job is to manage people and make sure communication lines are open for everyone.

Our job is also to ensure all participants participate (Crazy right?). We're always aware of who's contributing, who's just talking, and who's not saying anything.

While not everyone contributes equally, their insights are valued if they were invited to the meeting.

8 You can get more done by using someone external to make the first move.

As strategic planning facilitators, we won't be the ones leading the change in your organization on a day to day basis. We do, however, set your team up to realize:

- What they need to do to create that change
- Why that change needs to happen now
- How each employee contributes to the success of your organization
- The next steps and easy wins to get the ball rolling
- And much more.

Using a professional facilitator who understands business strategy as well as how the people within them operate will help bring your organization to a new level in teamwork and effectiveness.

Learn more about Aligned Strategy Development – exclusive to SME Strategy – and how it can help your strategic planning execution.

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