

# Strategic Assessment



Transforming Today,  
Outperforming Tomorrow.

Many companies start initiatives to implement new technology without really looking at the initiative in totality. They know they have a marketing problem, they know they need to buy new technology to fix it, they may have determined MRM can solve the problem, but they haven't looked clearly at some significant things, like whether their processes are ready to automate, what the business case is to support this new implementation, or how to begin to formulate the business case and gain the executive sponsorship necessary to prove the value of an MRM implementation, is the organization ready for change?

Essentially, companies that prioritize technology without looking at the initiative in totality have not planned out their roadmap for success. They have set out on a quest to implement technology but they haven't done all the other things they need to do to make the project succeed. They haven't done all the necessary work required for success and a strategic assessment will help to ensure these work streams are planned.

A strategic assessment will explore how this new technology is going to change the organization and the way people do things, what the impact on the working relationships between people is going to be, how people cooperate today and how they will cooperate differently tomorrow, what technologies are currently being used, what technologies will go away and what the impact on process is going to be and what all this means to the bottom line.

Strategic assessments are comprised of the following steps:

## Strategic Assessments

- Identify the Business Drivers
- Conduct an Executive Stakeholder Analysis
- Create a Unification Strategy
- Develop the Initial Business Case
- Define the Governance Model
- Deliver the Initial Roadmap (2-4 years)

A best practice is to get key stakeholders together and execute an Initiative Design Workshop (IDW).

## THE INITIATIVE DESIGN WORKSHOP

Sometimes companies have already started looking at their processes, but how often are these processes perfectly aligned with what needs to happen in the future in order to automate MRM successfully? Almost never.

The main questions then become, what are the gaps between the work that has been done and the work that needs to be done prior to automation?

An Initiative Design Workshop, (IDW) is essentially a one to three day long workshop that identifies gaps in the overall plan for the initiative, gaps in the roadmap, stakeholder goals and what is covered in the work streams.

The IDW will determine what the company still has left to do prior to selecting and implementing technology. Or whether to do it at all.

*"We knew we needed to change the way we plan marketing campaigns but weren't sure which direction to go. MTS provided valuable input and helped us move in the right direction while keeping us realistic about what's possible."*

*Mike MacDonald  
IBM*

## IDENTIFY BUSINESS DRIVERS

While it is critical to know who the highest level marketing executive sponsors are and what their goals are, it is equally important to help them reshape the things they want to get out of the initiative. In other words, it is necessary to ask them whether they are being realistic about their ability to achieve their actual goals and understand which business problems (increased productivity, increased accountability, cost savings) are driving the initiative.

For instance, if the company wants financial visibility down to the project spend, an expectation needs to be set that helps that executive understand how long this targeted goal will realistically take. Execution time will vary from company to company, but this type of detailed visibility usually will not happen in a phase one MRM implementation to the extent the senior executive would like. Therefore, it is important to make clear what MRM can and cannot do in realistic timeframes.

Expectations and goals need to be realistic from the top down and throughout the executive stakeholders so there is no disappointment and there is no failure. The goal is to minimize unrealistic expectations and show wins along the way. Under-promise and over-deliver, if necessary.

For example, Executive sponsors have gone to marketing conferences and heard “MRM is the greatest thing in the world and these are all the things we’ve accomplished with it...” and now the sponsors expect to achieve success within six months. This cannot be allowed to happen.

### **BUILD BUSINESS CASE**

MRM can solve multiple business problems, but not all at once. They need to be solved in a thoughtful order. Building an initial Business Case provides a foundation for prioritization at the start.

The best way to determine prioritization, and make sure it sticks, is to build a business case together with all stakeholders, and in order to agree upon priorities it is necessary to see what the financial impact is going to be to the organization.

Doing the business case this way literally determines what problems you want to solve, and how the company is going to get the payback from their investment.

Paybacks can be achieved in the short or long term. A business case with a “quick win” is often attractive to finance and IT review boards. It is important to build the case with both immediate and long term financial gains in mind.

The initial business case supports the priorities you put in place but that doesn’t mean you solve the “highest” financial beneficial problem first.

The business case will structure the payback, what the initiative delivers to the company, in three ways: It can contribute to revenue. It can cut costs. It can increase efficiency of employee productivity.

It is now time to take it to the Stakeholders.

### **CONDUCT STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS**

After identifying and prioritizing the business drivers, the next step is to conduct a stakeholder analysis to determine who wants to accomplish what? Each executive has their own goals and things that they want to accomplish through this MRM initiative over time and that is a very important thing to keep in sight.

It is important to ask key stakeholders, inside and outside of marketing, “What have you done already with technology initiatives and what else needs to be done to build a plan to achieve the goals that each stakeholder wants to achieve?”

### **CREATE UNIFICATION STRATEGY**

A unification strategy is the process that gets all key stakeholders to discuss and agree to the prioritization of business problems and drivers. It is the process of getting all the stakeholders aligned around what needs to be accomplished.

At this point there is a detailed laundry list of each stakeholders’ needs and wants. Now is the time to get all of the stakeholders together for the success of the initiative to occur.

It is important to ask: “What is it going to take to make this MRM initiative a must-have versus a nice-to-have?” The initiative has to become a must-have if the organization is going to transcend the turnover in people, the budget cuts, climate changes, etc., that normally effect a company. The initiative has to be mission critical to the business so the initiative transcends any sort of environmental factors, or anything that might compromise it.

### **GOVERNANCE MODEL**

To oversee the initiative and make sure it stays on track requires a well-structured governance model, which determines the management of the initiative going forward. It lays out who is involved, what the decision-making hierarchy should be, a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of all team members and, most importantly, ensures any one person involved cannot make one-off decisions that go contrary to the best interests of the initiative.

The Governance Model develops the way decisions are can be made, can clarify the people involved in making them. Governance Models often are made up of three bodies: The Core Team, the Steering Committee, and the Executive Stakeholders, each body having their own roles and responsibilities.

### **INITIAL ROADMAP**

The initial roadmap, which is the deliverable of the strategic assessment, will help the initiative and everyone involved stay on track.

The roadmap addresses the business problems in the order in which they will be solved, gives approximate time frames, and presents multiple workstreams for People, Process and Technology.

Changes will be made based on the established Governance Model.



## SUMMARY

Success in MRM requires an assessment of where you are today and where you are going. The strategic assessment identifies where the company is today, where they need to go to help drive the initiative, and it makes clear what work streams need to be done, in what order, and what the work stream timelines are.

The length of time depends on whether the right components have gone into the overall strategic piece of this, namely the key stakeholders' understanding of what MRM really is, how MRM can help the organization, and the stakeholders' willingness to work together for what's best for the corporation.

If these issues aren't defined, stakeholders can make MRM reflect whatever they have read about it or want it to be. If that happens, the strategic assessment will take a lot longer to complete because a lot of time will be added in educating stakeholders on why things are the way they are and why what they want may not be possible.

Ultimately, a well-executed Strategic Assessment is the key to a successful initiative.