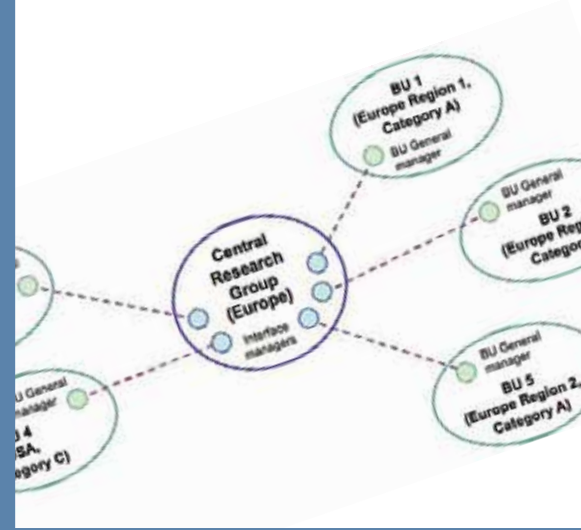


CASE STUDY:

GLOBAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY



Roadmapping Aligns Research Strategy in a Global Manufacturing Organisation

A lack of strategic alignment between business goals and longer term technology research was resolved with the help of IfM's Roadmapping process.

A competent research and development function, producing potentially valuable innovations, yet the benefits not being realised by the parent organisation. This was the situation at a global manufacturing corporation with a dozen business units spread across the world. While the troubleshooting and development support services provided by the central R&D function were appreciated, the lack of commercial direction for research resulted in highly promising technology-driven opportunities being missed.

Crucially, a lack of alignment existed between the short-term, cost-focused business units and the R&D portfolio of the longer term technology-focused research team. Over time, this had led to a concern that corporate research budgets might suffer significant, possibly terminal cut backs - just when the corporation needed to compete more effectively on the world stage.

Roadmapping process

IfM Education and Consultancy Services (IfM ECS) introduced the organisation to its Roadmapping process. The central technology group owned the process and took part in a series of dedicated workshops, one for each business unit. Key personnel were brought together from around the Group for efficient two-day working sessions, allowing sufficient time for innovation opportunities to be explored properly. An overnight stay allowed time for social activity and networking.

In each case, three key people worked together to plan and run the workshops:

➤ A **Senior Manager** from the central research team was responsible for gaining the commitment of the business unit and for managing communication. They would also be responsible for the important implementation of outputs further into the process.

➤ The **General Manager** of the business unit was responsible for ensuring that business objectives were clearly understood and

that appropriate commercial, development and managerial staff took part. Ultimately, the General Manager took ownership of the roadmaps that were generated in each workshop.

➤ An expert **Facilitator** was appointed to design and coordinate the Roadmapping process. For the first three business units, the Facilitator was Dr Rob Phaal, Principal Research Associate at IfM. In subsequent sessions, a company executive took on this role as the process extended to all of the twelve business units.

Using a top down strategic planning approach, the groups considered the holistic opportunities available to the organisation, both commercial and technical. A first iteration was useful in revealing gaps in the knowledge of the organisation which could be filled as the process developed. Importantly, the scope of the whole exercise was framed at the start as being concerned with more radical innovation and its potential for future success.

IfM ECS

IfM Education and Consultancy Services works with companies of all sizes to help create and capture value, and with national and regional governments to support and grow their industrial sectors.

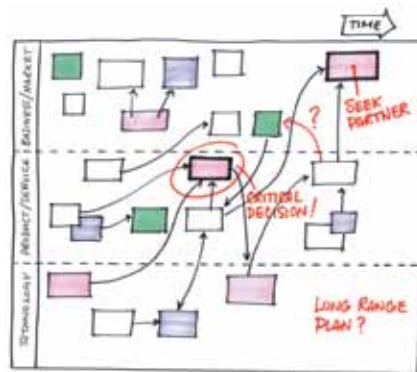
It does this by transferring the new ideas and approaches developed by researchers at the Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) through a programme of education and consultancy services.

IfM ECS is owned by the University of Cambridge. Its profits are gifted to the University to fund future research activities. For more details on its work visit: www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/services

'A key step was the initial landscaping exercise', said Rob Phaal. 'It was especially important to get off to a fast start, to demonstrate the value in the process. Using pre-populated charts and rapid iterations, participants could quickly see the opportunity the process afforded for developing tangible benefits, using agile methods.'

Outcomes

Each workshop produced a set of prioritised innovation opportunities and strategic options for the business. Plans were agreed how these would be taken forward, and an understanding developed of the technologies that would be needed to support these plans.



Roadmapping helped the organisation to move away from a mind-set based on low price competition, towards one that competed on innovation. The role of technology - and therefore the role of the central R&D function - in enabling next generation products became clear.

The business units and R&D function are now working in greater harmony, and the corporate research budget has been realigned according to the future needs of the company.



Roadmapping at IfM

IfM is a world centre of excellence for roadmapping. It has been researching the application of roadmapping for more than a decade and its techniques have helped more than 250 public and private sector organisations with their strategic and technology innovation planning.

Roadmapping is a powerful technique for planning an organisation's technological capabilities to ensure they meet its commercial or strategic goals. The graphical nature of roadmaps supports strategic alignment and dialogue between functions in the firm and between organisations.

“The benefits of Roadmapping are not well enough known. It is not widely taught on MBA programmes and needs to be better utilised at the corporate level.”

Rob Phaal

➤ For more on **Roadmapping**, visit: www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/roadmapping

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