



Strategy made personal

## Leading the Digital Revolution in Strategy Execution

How Modern Leaders  
Use Digital Media to  
Accelerate Results



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## **Leading the Digital Revolution in Strategy Execution** **How Modern Leaders Use Digital Media to Accelerate Results**

We are in the middle of a digital revolution that is creating a wake of societal, technological and workplace changes. BTS is leading the way in leveraging digital solutions that allow senior leaders to accelerate the pace at which they execute strategy, develop talent and build capabilities in their organizations.

The convergence of mobile, social, cloud and big data is transforming how organizations do business and creating new opportunities and challenges along the way. Industries in all geographies are faced with digital disruption. Accenture already recognizes this reality, declaring in its technology vision: "Every business is a digital business." Companies who are ready for this digital revolution will thrive, while those who don't will lag and, ultimately, perish.

While digital and technology are driving the revolution, the transformation ultimately revolves around people. Not only in the way individuals are leveraging digital devices, tools and platforms from their personal lives to be more efficient in their work lives, but in the new ways in which people are working together. New work styles are emerging, such as social networking, virtual collaboration and crowdsourcing. As a result, organizations must evolve their leadership, talent, skills and culture in order to stay competitive.

All of this is happening as workforce demographics are changing rapidly, with younger generations more digitally sophisticated and used to new work styles and ways of interacting. Workers are now expecting organizations and corporate cultures not only to support their digital needs and lifestyle, but to engage and empower them. Like consumers, today's employees want things quick and easy. They want large to feel small. They need to be connected and involved. Everything needs to be personalized. And it's all about achievement. Businesses must break old habits or risk being at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to recruiting and retaining talent.

Just as enterprises are embracing mobile, social, cloud and big data to reach and serve their customers, they need to harness these trends to align, engage and enable their workforce. Using mobile devices, cloud-based app stores, crowdsourcing and analytics, companies can get the right learning and tools to employees on the job when and where they need them. BTS is a trailblazer in harnessing digital solutions and platforms that enable organizations to execute strategy, develop leaders, build capabilities and effect cultural transformation — focusing on the people part of the equation.

From our experience supporting hundreds of companies in implementing their strategic priorities, we see that everyone faces challenges with managing the pace of technological change. It is essential that leadership demonstrate to their organizations their technological savviness and leverage the power of digital technology in making strategy a reality.



## The Modern Leader

Senior business leaders all recognize the critical importance of harnessing technology and media trends. They do so to develop innovative products, capitalize on new market opportunities, and create and deliver value for their customers. However, when it comes to communicating their vision and gaining alignment and mindset around company strategy, senior leaders still tend to rely on traditional communication methods.

When it comes to their own day-to-day activities, senior business executives have often been slow in adopting new technology. A recent study performed by Domo, Inc. and CEO.com found that nearly 70 percent of CEOs were not using social media. With today's rapid pace of technological change, companies are grappling with staying in front of technology and positioning themselves as innovative. When leaders aren't keeping up with the latest technology trends, it sends the wrong message to the rest of the organization. Modern leaders need to demonstrate to their organizations that they get it when it comes to digital, and walk the walk as they communicate with and engage their workforce.

Communications and conversations are occurring fast and frenetically. Internal and external social networks now serve as digital "water coolers" for today's employees. Senior leaders need to embrace this dynamic and foster transparency in order to drive the conversation and validate important messages. Mass communications alone, however, aren't effective for today's audiences. They need messages to be more personal, custom, tailored and relevant to their roles and their teams. Trying to apply "old school" communication methods to today's media will not be effective in engaging employees.

Modern leaders quickly adopt and perfect new ways to communicate and facilitate. Technology must be at the forefront. How they communicate with their people serves as a model for how communications cascade down through the organization. Modern leaders identify key moments in strategy execution and leadership and increasingly use digital media and tools to build alignment, mindset and capability in their organizations.

Key Leadership Moments	Traditional Approach	New Approach
<b>Launch of a new initiative</b>	Email, all-hands conference call, road shows or town-hall meetings	Digital achievement platform to drive alignment, mindset and capability via gamification, user-generated content and analytics
<b>Leadership Off-sites</b>	Executive presentations and "sage-on-the-stage"	Ideation, crowdsourcing and collaboration using digital tools to create an outcome and work-product from the meeting
<b>Performance management</b>	Formal process once or twice a year	Ongoing focus via dashboard with ability to push needed interventions (learning, coaching) based on current performance/status
<b>Capability development</b>	One-time, one-size fits all workshop or online course	Workshop or course complemented by personalized and mobile-enabled apps sustain activities and tools to drive Go-Do's, which embed the capability in daily work

While they may at first be apprehensive, skeptical and risk averse about letting go of traditional methods, modern leaders will understand the power of digital-enabled communication, learning and execution methods, and quickly embrace them. They engage thousands of people in conversation, involve them in developing plans to implement strategies and remove barriers, and sustain the level of communication, capability development and aligned action. When they do so, modern leaders are viewed as nothing short of rock stars by their organizations and peers.

## Accelerate Execution through Digital-enabled Events

Digital technologies provide new capabilities for digital-enabled events that allow companies to accelerate strategy execution at scale. They can enable large audiences of event attendees to become active participants in generating, sharing and rating content—including value statements, action plans and messaging on executing and communicating the strategy. These collaborative exercises not only generate valuable content that can be used after the event, but also create alignment and ownership of the strategy among the event participants, who feel as though they are contributing to the playbook for executing the strategy down through the organization.

Digital engagement platforms for large off-site events make “big feel small” by creating community and a dialogue between leaders and attendees. Crowdsourcing and collaboration exercises (where content contributions by the audience are pushed back out to the group for evaluation and rating) allow an audience of 1,000 senior leaders to feel as though they are engaged in a conversation and part of an experience that feels personal.

A digitally-enabled designed experience can also be crucial in demonstrating that the organization's senior team is aligned on and energized by the strategy. Because the event is designed as a series of interactive exercises to build alignment and mindset around the strategy, senior executives leading various modules follow the same game plan. When senior executives facilitate off-site events using the new digital technology, they not only appear cool and modern, they are acting in concert to engage the audience in the execution of strategy.

# Case Study: Leading Global Bank Gets Digital to Accelerate Strategy Alignment

## One of the World's Largest Banks Accelerates Strategy Alignment by Immersing Leaders in an Innovative Digital Experience — Led by their CEO

### Overview

For a leading global bank, BTS provided a high-impact, interactive digital experience to create alignment and ownership of the company's new strategy among 3,200 Managing Directors. The innovative program leveraged digital technology to engage Managing Directors in identifying the strengths and opportunities of the strategy, creating action plans on how to best execute, and developing a playbook on how to communicate it down through the organization.

### Situation

As the financial services industry continues to evolve through globalization, structural changes and increased regulation, this prominent financial institution must transform its business to deliver extraordinary experiences and value to both clients and employees. Success depends, however, on the successful execution of the company strategy, and the bank needed to overcome the following challenges:

- Implementing a comprehensive business transformation across multiple distinct organizations and business units
- Gaining alignment and mindset of its Managing Directors — a skeptical audience hesitant to embrace change — and cascading the strategy down through the organization
- Traditional communication methods leveraging executive speakers and PowerPoint hadn't proven effective at engaging this audience

### Engagement

The bank partnered with BTS to develop a high-impact program to engage its Managing Directors and align them to the company strategy. BTS consultants worked closely with the company's CEO, CLO and Head of Productivity to develop a digitally-enabled designed experience to:

- Engage, align and motivate Managing Directors around the company strategy and execution imperatives
- Facilitate a common understanding of the company's current state and desired future state, and provide clarity around the way forward
- Ensure leaders have a deep belief in and ownership of the company strategy, and a sense of urgency to accelerate its execution
- Drive awareness of leaders' individual roles in leading the strategy to success

To maximize engagement, it was essential that the program be led by the bank's CEO and its key senior executives.

### Solution: Strategy Execution Goes Digital

Rather than rely on traditional communication methods, BTS developed a high-impact, interactive digital-enabled event that effectively engaged 3,200 Managing Directors, organized in groups of 1,000 at three separate off-site events. The digital solution enabled the bank's senior executives to facilitate a series of activities designed to deliver and generate content, allow hands-on participation, facilitate sharing, and capture feedback.

Program Highlights

1,000 Managing Directors, sitting in teams of six to nine with three iPads® per table, were taken through the following activities:

- A crowdsourcing exercise on strategic opportunities and barriers, in which teams used iPads to craft and enter opportunity statements on how the company strategy will benefit investors, clients and employees.
- A competitive business simulation immersing leaders in the company's strategy, where each team ran a global bank and was challenged to make difficult choices and understand the trade-offs, allowing them to see the business impact of their decisions and actions.
- An "operationalizing the strategy" crowdsourcing exercise, where teams came up with actions the Managing Directors could do themselves. The collective actions were pushed back out to the whole group to be rated on their impact, ease of implementation and originality.
- A "communicating the strategy" crowdsourcing exercise, where teams created videos showing how they would articulate the strategy to their direct reports — crafting and practicing messaging to convey the strengths of the strategy and why they should buy into it. The videos were then sent out to the broader group to be rated.
- The CEO closed the program by sharing the top three videos and articulated how each video connected to the strategy. The audience then voted on the winning video.

**True Experience, Real Results**

For this global bank, high expectations were exceeded. Bringing as many as 1,000 people together in one session was unprecedented, and skepticism around the

ability to create the level of intimacy and connection necessary to effectively engage such a large audience was quickly overcome. The exercises in the digitally-enabled event allowed the audience to feel as though they were engaged in a conversation, and created an experience that felt personal.

The Managing Directors left the program with the feeling that, together as a group, they had created the path forward. The event activities resulted in the creation of a strategy execution playbook, leveraging the best practices from:

- More than 500 statements around the value of getting the strategy right
- More than 400 high-quality actions to accelerate execution
- Hundreds of model videos on how to communicate the strategy, of which the top videos will be shared with the rest of the organization

Going forward, the Managing Directors' wholehearted comprehension of the strategy and strong alignment will accelerate execution and enable the company's future success in maximizing the potential of its global network.

*The incredible use of technology in this program has changed the way we come to work and can communicate going forward. We have become more efficient in every sense of the word. It has become a catalyst to bring people together in a cost-effective way. A great springboard to execution — don't be afraid, embrace change, use technology, be collaborative and look to the future.*

– CEO, Global Bank



## Embed Strategy Execution in the Daily Rhythm of Work

Together with the right mindset and capability, company-wide alignment is vital to strategy execution. At a basic level, everyone in an organization needs a common understanding of the strategy, why it's important and what's in it for them. Beneath that layer, strategy execution becomes much more targeted and personal. Different people at various levels and functional areas will need deeper understanding and specific capability to execute.

While leadership off-sites are essential to driving alignment and mindset, and learning interventions (whether classroom, virtual, online or mobile) are critical to capability building, the rubber meets the road back on the job in what leaders and their employees actually go and do to execute the strategy.

Digital platforms offer organizations new opportunities to accelerate and effectively drive strategy execution through the right actions in the field. Using a combination of push and pull learning and application, digital media can be used effectively to:

- Target experiences based on actual needs and real performance data at the individual and group levels
- Personalize and socialize experiences to bring strategy to life, maximizing individual, team and organizational impact
- Provide continuous on-demand tools to embed alignment, mindset and capability in daily work
- Aggregate and analyze data to take the pulse of strategy execution in action and learn from it

Digital platforms help companies improve capability and execution in the daily rhythm of work. That allows them to make the most of fewer formal learning interventions and also increase opportunities for informal and social learning on the job. Time away from work is reduced, multiplier effects of collaboration are realized, and interventions are targeted based on actionable insights. The result is an elevated and continuous achievement of commitments by leaders and their employees — in other words, superior execution. And better results, faster.

Leading organizations are deploying mobile apps to embed alignment, mindset and capability in the cadence of daily work. With mobile apps already integrated into employees' personal lives, modern leaders are putting learning, development and valuable feedback literally at employees fingertips. With just-in-time, just-enough tools and guides available through mobile devices, companies are developing apps to:

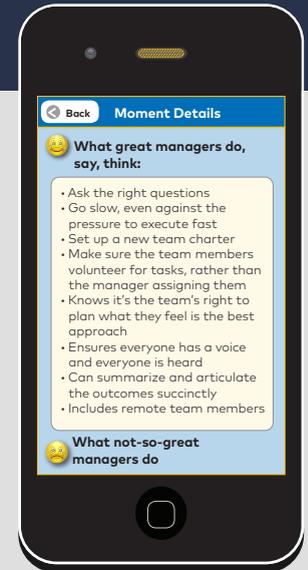
- Sustain and reinforce learnings from leadership conferences and development experiences
- Enable people to practice real-world experiences through business simulations
- Provide best practices for key leadership and management moments
- Deliver gamified experiences, leaderboards and progress tracking
- Measure the continuous achievement of commitments
- Enable people in action planning and measure progress and results

However, mobile apps are only one component of an effective integrated learning program that must be continuous in order to keep a younger workforce engaged. Bersin by Deloitte puts it this way: "It is not enough to simply offer courses in a mobile interface. Companies should invest the money to integrate all of their learning content (as well as expert and social tools) into one easy-to-use interface — making continuous learning and knowledge contribution a part of your everyday life. This is the type of interface that young employees expect to find in your organization, and it drives the enablement of continuous learning."

## Case Study: Global Software Provider Enhances Leadership Capabilities to Drive Agile Development

Achieving tremendous growth, the cloud-based service provider's process and culture were feeling the strains of scale. Recognizing this challenge, the company renewed its commitment to enabling people to do the best work of their careers. To make this a reality, the organization immersed first-line managers in a two-day gamified experience, co-created with BTS, that allowed them to explore leadership challenges within the context of their daily business and practice new skills in a safe environment.

Digital solutions then continued the learning and embedded the insights into daily work. Following the experience, managers are given ongoing access to a mobile app that reinforces leadership challenges and choices, embeds key behaviors in on-the-job management, and crowdsources insights. The tools and concepts introduced are at each manager's fingertip. And the company has seen improvements in first-line manager leadership and employee engagement.



### Conclusion

Companies are for the most part struggling to keep up with the pace of technological advancement. It is essential that senior leaders show up as technology saavy.

Advancements in digital technology are revolutionizing the way strategy is being implemented and capabilities are being developed. As the digital revolution continues and the business world grows ever more connected, BTS will increasingly integrate digital into designed experiences for our clients. This will happen with large off-site events, classroom-based initiatives, continuous online learning, mobile applications and results assurance.

Modern leaders need to get digital. Harness the power of digital technology to generate better results faster — and build your leadership brand.



### About the Author

**David Ackley** is head of BTS Digital Services, an organization within BTS dedicated to enabling our consultants to provide designed digital experiences and support our clients in deploying them successfully. BTS Digital Services has development centers in the US, Europe and India.

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## About BTS

### **BTS: The Global Leader in Strategy Alignment and Execution**

BTS is a world-leading strategy implementation firm. The company accelerates execution by ensuring the workforce is aligned to the strategy, has the right mindset, and has mastered the capabilities needed to deliver business results. BTS leverages customized business simulations and experiential learning initiatives to develop the business acumen, leadership and sales capabilities necessary for superior strategy execution. Partnering with today's leading corporations, BTS consultants bring passion and deep industry expertise to deliver high-impact solutions that help clients achieve better results, faster.

Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, BTS has approximately 350 professionals in over 25 offices located on six continents. Partnering with nearly 400 organizations, including more than 30 of the world's largest corporations, BTS's major clients are some of the most respected names in business: Anglo American, AT&T, Chevron, Coca-Cola, Ericsson, HP, Rio Tinto, Sony, Telefonica, and Unilever.

BTS is a public company listed on the NASDAQ-OMX Stockholm trading under the symbol BTS B.

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