

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 and six execution initiatives among 3,200 Managing Directors. Rather than rely on traditional communication methods, the innovative program leveraged 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. The Managing Directors left the program with the feeling that, together as a group, they had created the path forward.

Situation

This leading global bank is innovating for the years ahead. As the financial services industry continues to evolve through globalization, structural changes and increased regulation, this prominent financial institution must transform its business to capture the full potential of its global network and deliver extraordinary experiences and value to both clients and employees.

However, success depends on the effective implementation of the company strategy, a challenge for an increasingly expansive global organization. In order to execute on its six strategic initiatives, the bank faced the following challenges:

- Implementing a comprehensive business transformation across multiple distinct organizations and business units
- Gaining alignment and mindset of 3,200 Managing Directors and cascading the strategy down through the organization
- A difficult-to-engage audience, the Managing Directors were often skeptical and hesitant to change, and creating a sense of urgency was critical
- Traditional communication methods leveraging executive speakers and PowerPoint hadn't proven effective at engaging this audience and delivering the necessary impact

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

Engagement

To enable success, the bank partnered with [BTS](#), a leading strategy implementation firm, 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 craft an interactive experience designed to:

- Engage, align and motivate Managing Directors around the company strategy and six execution imperatives
- Build and reinforce the importance of a culture of ethics
- Facilitate a common understanding of the company's current state, the 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

Working in true partnership with the bank, BTS designed a strategy alignment and execution program that effectively engaged 3,200 Managing Directors, organized in groups of 1,000 at three separate off-site events. Rather than rely on traditional presentation methods, BTS developed a high-impact, interactive digital solution that enabled the bank's senior executives to facilitate a series of activities designed to deliver content, allow hands-on participation, facilitate sharing, and capture feedback. Over the course of the two-day program, the bank's CEO and key senior executives led the audience through sessions on the current state, the new strategy, the six key execution initiatives, and the leaders' role in achieving success.

The positive momentum is expected to continue. The strong results of the initial strategy execution initiative have inspired further application. By 2013, 300 senior leaders, 150 branch members and the IT organization will have participated in the programs.

Program Highlights

- At each event, 1,000 Managing Directors—sitting in teams of six to nine with three iPads® per table—were given the opportunity to step outside of their traditional roles, collaborate in new ways, and explore the company strategy in a risk-free environment.
- C-suite executives facilitated an ethics discussion and case study where teams faced ethical challenges and brainstormed potential responses, which they entered into their iPads. Responses were viewable by the entire room, and facilitators were able to engage teams in discussion around them.
- 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. More than 500 captured statements were pushed back out to the teams and rated. Then, teams brainstormed and entered real and perceived barriers to successful strategy execution, which became content for an executive-led panel discussion that followed.

- An iPad-based competitive business simulation, where each team ran a global bank and was challenged to make difficult choices and understand the trade-offs. The simulation immersed leaders in the company's strategy, provided a forum for them to practice executing the real strategic initiatives, and allowed them to see the business impact of their decisions and actions.
- An "operationalizing the strategy" crowdsourcing exercise, where teams came up with actions that the Managing Directors could do themselves, resulting in the submission of nearly 400 quality actions in 10 minutes. The collective actions were pushed back out to the whole group to be rated on their impact, ease of implementation and originality. Teams could see what their colleagues were submitting, and felt as though they were part of a collective approach to executing the strategy. Senior executives viewed the actions filtering to the top in real-time, and engaged teams in discussion around them.
- A "communicating the strategy" crowdsourcing exercise, where Managing Directors used video to explore how to communicate the strategy down through their organizations. Teams were tasked to script and create a 30- to 90-second video showing how they would articulate the strategy to their direct reports. Teams crafted and practiced messaging that would convey the strengths of the strategy and why their direct reports should buy into it. Through the experience, the Managing Directors developed the mindset necessary to cascade the initiative. 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. The collaborative exercises resulted in the creation and distribution of value statements, action items and inspirational videos with best practices on how to effectively communicate the strategy and ensure its success.

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. There was skepticism around the ability to create the level of intimacy and connection necessary to effectively engage such a large audience on the topics critical to the successful execution of the company strategy. According to the CEO, the success of the off-site events and the digital solution that BTS provided has changed the way the bank can communicate its initiatives to the organization going forward.

The 36-hour digital-enabled event resulted in a strategy execution playbook for the Managing Directors, 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 positive momentum is expected to continue, as the strong results from the initial program have inspired further application. A condensed one-day version of the experience will be delivered across three continents at the directors forums.

About BTS

BTS focuses on the people side of strategy, working with leaders at all levels to help them make better decisions, convert those decisions to actions and deliver results. At our core, we believe people learn best by doing. For 30 years, we've been designing fun, powerful experiences™ that have profound and lasting impact on people and their careers. We inspire new ways of thinking, build critical capabilities and unleash business success. It's strategy made personal.

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