



LTC International Business Initiative Alignment

An interactive workshop-based development approach for success-oriented companies focused on telecommunications: service providers, vendors, and telecommunications-intensive enterprises.

From time to time, companies want to make a big change: expand into a new territory, start a new line of business, set up a new division or change the organization in some other important way.

LTC's Business Initiative Alignment workshop helps a company obtain a clear picture of what needs to be done. The workshop output is an Initiative Manifesto which provides a solid starting point for the initiative. The Initiative Manifesto provides executive sponsors, the project management team, internal contributors and external suppliers with a single definitive statement of intent that will align all their decisions and action, and the workshop output can be used to ensure that all contributors to the project, inside departments and external suppliers – can be directed to focus on what is necessary and important to deliver the business benefits.

Overview – Why Alignment is Important

Major business initiatives are sometimes *essential*; sometimes they're unnecessary and a waste of everyone's time; most often initiatives exist because they are *desired* by some people in the company, for reasons that may or may not have anything to do with the success of the business as a whole.

Many business initiatives fail in some way: they are delayed, they cost more than expected; the expected benefits never appear. One factor in failure is the absence of *alignment* at multiple levels in the project. For a business initiative to be successful...

- The *business purpose* of the initiative should be clearly stated, and aligned with the company's higher-level goals and objectives.
- The *expected business benefits* of the initiative should be stated, and consistent with the business purpose.
- The *deliverables* from the project should be clearly stated in concrete terms, and should be specified in order to support achievement of the business benefits.
- The *deliverable acceptance criteria* should be objective, measurable and directly linked and aligned to the expected performance of the components.
- The *initiative success criteria* should be objective and measurable and should directly measure achievement of the expected business benefits.
- Everyone in the company should understand why the initiative is important and be aligned behind a common purpose for the project.

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This goes a long way toward eliminating the requirements drift, scope creep and indecisiveness that plague so many projects, causing delays, overspends and even failure.

Stage 1 – Assessment and Preparation

We obtain a snapshot of the current situation by conducting structured interviews with selected company executives and managers, and reviewing company documentation related to the initiative (if any). The assessment stage allows us to identify the degree to which the initiative has been thought through already, and to identify areas of focus to remove gaps and inconsistencies.

The assessment stage provides the basic information needed to design the workshop sessions for Stages 2, and to provide a fact-pack for use during those sessions.

Stage 2 – The Business Initiative Alignment Workshop

The Business Initiative Alignment workshop generally takes one or two days, depending on the scope and nature of the initiative under consideration. It is important that the people who attend the workshop include authorized and authoritative representatives of every business department likely to be impacted by the project.

Each workshop session is specially designed to reflect the needs and priorities of the client company, and the specific initiative. The workshop generally includes:

- Review of level and depth of understanding of the purpose of the initiative, across the organization
- Defining or redefining the purpose of the initiative in terms that are consistent with objectives set at the corporate level
- Clearly stating the business benefits that are expected
- Identifying major deliverables for the project, and defining how those deliverables will make a positive contribution
- Setting first-cut high-level acceptance criteria for each major deliverable
- Defining business success criteria for the initiative, linked to the expected business benefits
- Agreeing key messages for the Initiative Manifesto.

By the end of the vision development session, the team will have created a new vision statement that expresses stretching and worthwhile ambitions for the company, while being grounded in practical reality.

Stage 3 – Capturing the Brilliance in the Initiative Manifesto

The hard work of the team must be captured and documented. Following the workshop LTC will work with the client's team to document the decisions in an *Initiative Manifesto* – a document that can be used to provide clear statements of intent and decision guidelines for use by people at all levels in the company, by internal contributors, by external suppliers and by the project management team.



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