

Smart Speed™ is the Future

Every morning in Africa a gazelle wakes up and knows that it will have to outrun the fastest lion or it will be killed.

Every morning in Africa a lion wakes up and knows that it will have to outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death.

In Africa, it doesn't matter whether you are the lion or the gazelle. When the sun comes up, you better be running.



The Lion & Gazelle

This familiar parable reminds us of the stark realities of today's business environment. Competition is increasingly resembling the survival of the fittest. Speed is no longer an option, but a requirement. Measurement of results and accountability are becoming a way of life.

The marketplace is now the world. Globalization is being driven by Customer demand for more and better VALUE in everything. Customers are smarter than ever due to simplified access to better information and more choices. The Internet, email, cell phones, digital cameras and notebook computers are extending verbal and visual communication Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere.

And we believe this isn't going to change.

Today there are fewer places to hide from competition. Tariffs and other economic barriers are being removed not only within North America and the European Economic Community countries but also throughout the world. Economies of scale are encouraging consolidation in most industries, and constantly realigning competitive relationships.

All of these factors mean that to succeed **More Decisions** have to be made **More Quickly** and with **More Quality** every day.

To modify the Lion and Gazelle parable.....When the sun comes up you better know where you want to run and then be able to run there faster than your competitor.

What is Smart Speed™?

In a Strategic Planning Work Session with a client we were discussing the need to further accelerate the speed of good decision making throughout the organization.

The issue was not simply making decisions faster, but making smarter decisions faster.

We coined the term **Smart Speed™** to describe our objective.

How to Achieve Smart Speed™

Our firm then proceeded to create a straightforward framework so that any organization can achieve **Smart Speed™**.

Our goal was to distill the essential elements for success in improving both the Quality and Speed in decision making.

What we have found draws on our observations, analysis and conclusions of best practices by firms of all sizes and fields over decades of experience, as well as thought leadership of respected business builders throughout the world.

The resulting **Smart Speed™** action template is a 4-step approach that is applicable for all organizations, both profit and non profit, public and private, large and small, service, distributor and manufacturer.

Smart Speed™ Action Template

1. Get Everybody on the Same Page

Bringing everyone in the organization into the circle to gain their Understanding, Buy In, Ownership, and most importantly Commitment to achieve the goal is vital to success.

A shared understanding of where you want to run to is key.

If the objective of **Smart Speed™** is making smarter decisions faster, then it only makes sense to assure that each person in the company knows the:

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| Company's Vision: | What is the dream /destination the company is seeking to attain? |
| Company's Mission: | What is the company doing every day to move toward that Vision? |
| Company's Values: | What are the underlying core principles and rules of conduct? |
| Company's Strategies: | What are the key directions in moving the company toward its Vision? |
| Company's Tactics: | What are the specific Action Initiatives necessary to accomplish each Strategy? |

Getting everybody on the same page is where we spend much of our time with our clients in management team Strategic Planning Work Sessions. This work yields concise, clear Vision, Mission and Values statements, Strategies and Action Plans unique to each company. This company specific "road map" then provides all of the employees with a clear route to follow to arrive at the desired destination.

2. Align Resources

The structure of an organization as well as the managers themselves can facilitate or inhibit **Smart Speed™**. Bulky bureaucracies and approval procedures and managers who seek to protect their turf are obstacles.

Lack of understanding and focus on what the Customer wants can confuse what should drive each decision.

Generally we believe it is better to push decision making downward to those closer to the Customer, in order to achieve **Smart Speed™**. Complex organizations can make this more difficult.

Simple, clear organizational structures and decision making criteria, and managers who embrace a role of Listening and effectively Responding to Customer needs are preferred.

3. Improve Processes

Analyzing each process in the firm to determine if it is necessary at all is the first step.

Challenging "the way we have always done it" can be difficult and threatening to some. But comfort and predictability are being replaced by initiative and flexibility within those firms who are successfully adapting to increasingly tough marketplace demands.

For those processes that are warranted, asking "how can we accomplish this faster, less expensively, and more effectively" can establish the open mindset and fresh point of view to begin and continue the journey of process improvement.

Embracing an attitude of seeking to continuously streamline and simplify each process to add value and eliminate waste provides momentum to implement **Smart Speed™**.

4. Communicate

We usually observe that a strongly performing company is also strong in communicating with its Customers, Employees and Investors.

We usually observe that a poorly performing company is also poor in communicating with its Customers, Employees and Investors.

How effectively a firm communicates with its Customers, Employees and Investors is generally a good indicator of how

well it performs in the marketplace.

Once everyone gets on the same page, keeping them on the same page through consistent, open and effective communications can assure that each decision they make is based on their clear understanding and confidence expressed in the Strategic Plan.

Then decisions may be pushed even further downward in the company to achieve strengthened **Smart Speed™** and greater competitive advantage.

SUMMARY

Today's increasingly competitive world marketplace requires winning companies to make more decisions, faster, and with more quality everyday.

Smart Speed™ offers a straightforward way to effectively address this new reality with all of the firm's constituents.

Keys to implementing **Smart Speed™** are:

- Get Everybody on the Same Page
- Align Resources
- Improve Processes
- Communicate

Your thoughts and comments about **Smart Speed™** are welcome. We look forward to discussing with you how our proven Strategic Planning process and **Smart Speed™** can enhance your firm's performance and profits.



"Instant gratification takes too long." Carrie Fisher, actress

"If you are in control then you aren't going fast enough."

Mario Andretti, race car driver

"Good communication is a dialogue not a monologue."

Richard Brown, former CEO EDS

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