

CASE STUDY

Strategy Development & Strategic Coaching



CHALLENGE



The new executive leadership team (ELT) was coming into a situation where there was not a process for developing strategic direction and the board of directors was requesting a strategic plan by next quarter.

NEEDS



- 1 Design and facilitation of the strategic thinking and planning process.
- 2 Create a common language and approach to strategy.
- 3 Develop the ELT's strategic thinking and planning skills.

SOLUTION



- **Interviewed a sample of executive leaders** to understand their perspectives on the business.
- **ELT members completed the Strategy Survey** to begin thinking holistically about the market, customers, competitors, and company prior to the in-person workshops. The Strategy Survey responses were then compiled and distributed to the ELT so they could review each other's thinking and perspectives prior to the in-person workshop.
- **ELT members completed additional pre-work** including reading the white paper, "The Strategic Thinking & Planning Primer," and viewing the video, "What is Strategic Thinking?"
- **ELT members participated in a two-day offsite strategy workshop** with the hybrid approach of increasing their strategic capabilities while working through key business issues leading to future strategies.
- **One additional offsite meeting of 1.5 days** was held for the team to review their initial thinking and channel insights into an action plan.
- **Worked with the President and Chief of Staff** to finalize the strategic plan and develop talking points for the presentation to the board of directors.
- **Worked with the ELT members individually each month** to develop their leadership skills based on their specific needs. Topics included: Business Acumen, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Philosophy, Decision Making & Delegation, Innovative Thinking, Prioritization, Meeting Governance, Management of Time and Calendar, Succession Planning, Executive Presence, Strategic Planning, Competitive Strategy, Increasing Collaboration, Board Interaction, and others.



The year following the initial strategy development process engagement and resulting plan, the organization had its

BEST FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

in its 80-year history.

100%

OF ELT MEMBERS RENEWED

their individual strategic coaching engagements after the first year of work together.

CLIENT COMMENTS



“ Rich Horwath and the Strategic Thinking institute have given us a common language to talk about strategy along with a clear and concise process for developing strategic direction. Our business leaders have embraced the approach and are using it to drive meaningful results for the company. If you are looking for a way to elevate your team’s strategic thinking and planning skills, the Strategic Thinking Institute will exceed your expectations. Since our initial workshop with Rich, we have partnered with him over the past 10 years to facilitate our key leadership team meetings and provide strategic coaching to our executive team.

Erin Stucky, President and CEO, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City



“ Rich brings a personal, inviting style to business growth, and leadership development. His strategic coaching has broadened our business and my personal success. He is quickly able to identify gaps in strategic thinking and create a disciplined approach that our entire organization has integrated into our business. Rich also facilitates discussions on leadership and serves as coach and counsel for our teams. This team-based approach combined with individual coaching has led to lasting change and increased our ability to create meaningful strategy and sustainably execute. He has unlocked my strategic leadership potential through thoughtful conversations, insightful questions, and resources that are timely and effective.

Whether it’s improving your decision making, talent assessment, executive team development, identifying your leadership values, succession planning, or board engagement - Rich is your coach! I’m not sure I can truly encapsulate my interactions and own personal development in any other way than to say - I believe I am a better leader for my teams, my company, and myself because I met Rich.

Greg Sweat, M.D., Senior Vice President & Chief Medical Officer



“ I have worked with several executive coaches over the course of my career. I will say no other coach has been more impactful on my professional and personal growth than Rich Horwath. I am developing practical skills to enhance my strategic capabilities and regularly apply this new way of thinking to most everything I do in my role today. Rich tailors his approach to meet my specific needs based on my greatest opportunities for development. Every session with Rich results in improvements for me, both professionally and personally. Learning new ways to decision, solve and grow from Rich Horwath is the greatest gift my company provides to me.

Jenny Housley, Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer

“ I found significant value in working with Rich over the course of a couple years. My leadership capabilities have grown as a result of his writings and his one-on-one coaching, including my ability to think and plan strategically and coach members of my team. Rich is a practical thinker and good listener. He probes for needed information and context that helps me get to the heart of issues I'm facing that go beyond strategic planning into all areas of management leadership, including succession planning and team member development. I would recommend Rich to other executives who want to become better strategic thinkers, planners, managers and leaders.

Mark Newcomer, General Counsel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM VICE PRESIDENTS

“ Without your strategic framework, I am not sure that we would have assessed the full landscape and ultimately land a thoughtful strategy.

“ Through our work I have a better understanding of what it takes to execute change. I now place much greater importance on defining the tactics needed to see a strategy through to execution as part of the process.

“ I have found value in having you, as a neutral outsider, available to bounce off ideas and to question/challenge my own thoughts. Your experience in other industries has also helped me by hearing about parallels to our own business challenges and possible solutions.

“ I have found value in the having truly protected time to think strategically and pull in different tools and resources you have provided us. You have challenged us to think outside the box and to bring in new insights and to evaluate each step of the way, what is working and what is not.

“ I love the Strategy Espresso microlearning updates we receive each week to develop our strategic thinking and planning skills. I enjoy the short, straight forward format!

“ Your coaching and strategy framework is directly and demonstrably responsible for increasing my capacity and effectiveness as a leader. My experience has been that your guidance has been tailored to compliment and support my personal development plan and immediate topical needs for myself and the company overall. Foundationally, the GOST model has helped me align my activities with both my leadership and the organizations reporting to me.

“ My experience working with you has been insightful and profoundly valuable. The tactics and strategies we discuss and work through are incredibly meaningful. I enjoy your simple approach to thinking strategically, setting future direction and executing on a plan. Our interactions help me to identify my strengths, reduce obstacles and become a more self-aware leader. You always ask the right questions at the right times and that leads to positive change. Most significantly, I appreciate your ability to be compassionate while identifying and asking the hard questions that lead to personal growth and change. The integrity of our conversations and the ability to face the “hard-stuff” challenge me to rise to my highest potential. I feel your approach creates a progressive balance between coaching, mentoring, informing and challenge me to further develop my leadership capabilities, credibility and results.

“ In just a few months you have helped me make significant improvements in enhancing my approach to the organization. You have helped me remain calm and focused while addressing ways to improve our processes. I am grateful for all our work together and look forward to continuing this partnership. I have enjoyed getting to know you better and working together on improving my skills. Thank you for all you do!

“ I am always struck by how engaging and thought provoking Rich is with his strategic thinking exercises. Rich has been particularly valuable in our one-on-one sessions to really think about how I manage my team, time, decision making and professional development. The Leader Core activities really helped crystalize my thinking about leader values and ultimately a leader’s legacy. Further, as I have grown my team over the last year and developed a significant transformation initiative with that team, Rich’s insights around talent onboarding and leadership development have been highly impactful. Our strategy session was a refreshing day to spend time with the team filled with engaging discussion on strategic planning and initiatives.

“ My strategic coaching engagement with you, has provided me structure, tools and support to take a new perspective on strategy and a fresh way of thinking of how to be laser focused of what it will take to continue to meet and exceed our growth and retention goals. Specifically, I have developed a cadence of time dedicated to strategic thinking and activities. The topics and pre-work for each of our meetings have not only impacted my abilities to grow my leadership and strategic thinking but it has ignited excitement and I’m having similar discussions with my leaders. I often leverage the activities from our discussions during team meetings with my direct reports.

For more information and to discuss your team’s strategic capability and planning needs, visit StrategySkills.com

