

# VIEWPOINT

## Excuses, Excuses: A Simple Equation for Innovation Success

BY PAMELA SOIN

A bad economy, globalization, consumer attention deficit disorder, lack of resources, poor technology infrastructure, corporate politics, bad luck and loads of other excuses exist in companies that are not getting good innovation results. It's just doggone hard. But what in life isn't hard?

Think back to high school. Things were easier then I guess... Not! I don't think any professional adult today would tell a group of freshmen getting C's in high school that making A's is hard and they shouldn't try to get into a good university.

Instead we'd encourage them to set goals and map out a plan. The plan would include all critical dimensions over time that impact getting into college: admission requirements, peer competition, current grades, extracurricular activities, standardized tests and class prerequisites.

But, if all we did was create a strategy and nothing more, the teenagers would probably stick to the plan for a week and then revert back to all-night Wii-playing behavior. To avoid such disaster, it's important to ensure that parents and teachers stay involved to monitor progress, adjust the plan, help the students balance their studies with extracurricular activities and make priority decisions. Want to play in the basketball game Friday night? Then SAT study marathon takes place Saturday. Spanish final the same day an English thesis is due? Then allocate time according to which has higher weight on the final grade.



Sound simple? Good, because this translates directly into the business world. Innovative companies succeed by creating a Strategic Innovation Roadmap to communicate goals, the right initiatives and strategy throughout the organization. They combine this with Innovation Portfolio Management to continually monitor progress and readjust as needed.

No executive can be comfortable knowing that the goals communicated to the Board and Street don't trickle down deep into the organization. Angst will ensue if Mr. or Ms. Exec can't articulate the value of the pipeline and next winner coming through.

# VIEWPOINT



One without the other is better than nothing, but leaves any large organization with too many unanswered questions that create roadblocks to getting the right work done:

- Companies with only a Strategic Innovation Roadmap have no checks in place. People are working on small pet projects and pipeline value is not at potential.
- Companies with only Innovation Portfolio Management survive with just the top executives knowing the innovation strategy. Projects will not align to these goals because—well, nobody knows what they are!

No executive can be comfortable knowing that the goals communicated to the Board and Street don't trickle down deep into the organization. Angst will ensue if Mr. or Ms. Exec can't articulate the value of the pipeline and next winner coming through.

Here's a painful reminder from our high school days: it's time for a pop quiz!

**How can you move your company to the head of the innovation class?**


1. Explain strategic planning capabilities to leadership
2. Establish a cross-functional team to create and maintain a Strategic Innovation Roadmap
3. Appoint a leadership decision-making team to monitor the Innovation Portfolio
4. Communicate roadmap and portfolio decisions to all levels

Hard times and excuses are everywhere, but so are innovation opportunities, whether it's launching the next game changer, developing a creative distribution channel or creating a more effective manufacturing process. No matter what your company wants to do—increase revenue or cut cost—strategic roadmapping and portfolio management practices are critical to achieve full potential from your innovation efforts.

## KALYPSO CONTACT

Pamela Soin, Manager  
pamela.soin@kalypso.com

www.kalypso.com



No matter what your company wants to do—increase revenue or cut cost—strategic roadmapping and portfolio management practices are critical to achieve full potential from your innovation efforts.