

Effective Execution The Technology Contribution

“The old rules no longer apply” has become a 21st century business catchphrase. Global market forces, advanced business process automation, the Internet and the impact of corporate watchdogs have ensured that. In the process, geographical boundaries are obliterated, businesses open 24 x 7, the power of the consumer, the taxpayer and the community has increased, demands for returns lift each year and the list goes on. Result? An exponential rise in the expectations placed on all organisations to deliver on all fronts.

Is it any wonder then that execution is the current catch-cry? Execution, the dictionary defines it as ‘implementation’, ‘carrying out’, ‘completing’, ‘effecting’. In other words it is the ability to deliver.

Etvia Corporation specialises in working with organisations to master strategy and business plan execution. We provide a framework which addresses the human factor and the business disciplines required to drive execution, underpinned by enterprise software that encompasses the best of Business Performance Management (BPM) with the realities of organisational life.

Strategy execution – why so hard?

Many organisations are still searching for the answer – why else the large number of change initiatives over the past 2 decades in particular.

Do as much or more with less is the driver - profit and ethics, service and lower costs, happy employees and an efficient business, corporatise and serve the community – this is today’s executive’s challenge, and the bigger the organisation, the bigger the challenge.

The real challenge with strategy execution is not creating the right strategy (often this is obvious), but whether you have the aptitude, the skills, the business disciplines and the infrastructure to implement and manage it successfully.

The challenge starts once you leave the realm of theory and good intentions. Take a look at Figure 1. It represents an organisation with a matrix structure and each box represents the high level plan for a business unit. In this example the lines map the interactions that occur in tracing the interdependencies and agreements that surround only a single (and common) Strategic Goal – in this instance “Moving market place positions” - between the business units in the top tier of an organisation. It is important to note that the level of interactivity would extend even further as you penetrate the organisation, hierarchically.

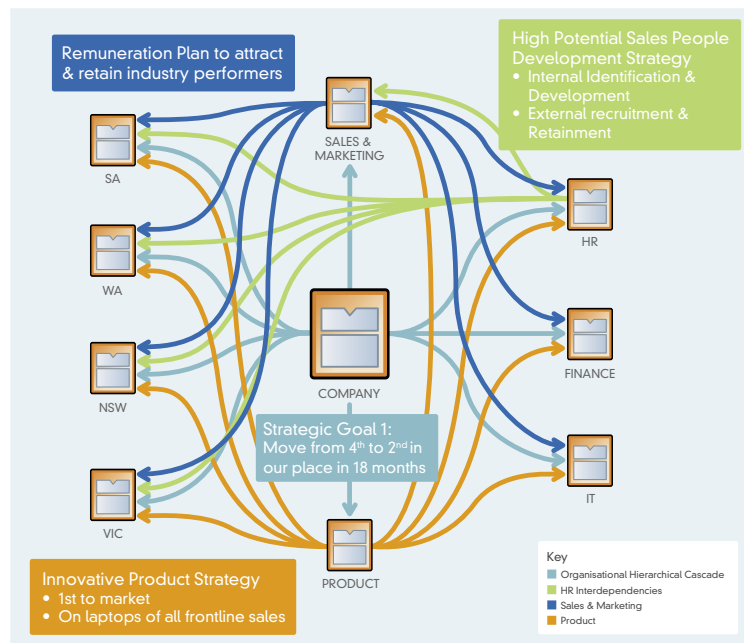


Figure 1 depth & breadth of change initiatives

The sheer volume of requirements needed to provide clarity and specificity to everyone, define and agree interdependencies, keep people informed and updated, hold people to account (all important facets of being able to execute well) is overwhelming. Extend this to a larger, more complex organisation where there are numerous plans, thousands of staff, multiple layers and business units – this means millions of information items (written, spoken or reported on). It is no wonder this becomes unwieldy and inhibits an organisation’s ability to excel.

Communicating strategic direction, enhancing people capability and an engagement strategy supported by

a reporting process of some sort are the primary tools utilised in organisations today to manage this challenge. We intuitively know these components to be important –the nature of initiatives that businesses have tried in the search for performance improvement over the past 20 years supports this. Experience also shows us that each component in and of itself has not been the answer and that to date there has been no answer to the challenge of how to manage the complexity inherent in organisations in a way that accelerates execution, rather than slows us down.

The Role of Technology

Etvia Corporation’s technology solution, Etvia Trace, has been specifically developed for the purpose of driving and measuring performance to plan and plan execution in the BPM space. Etvia Trace provides the critical missing link in helping organisations effectively execute their business commitments, that is, support for the Process of executing business plans:

Etvia Trace:

- Manages the process of execution by
 - Binding performance criteria that are generally available in Balance Score Card (BSC) type approaches with the disciplines of Project management and execution
 - Defining and managing interdependencies between departments and business units in an organisation
 - Monitoring performance to scorecard measure and deliverables, and execution of plan status
- Puts everyone’s piece of the plan on their desktop, providing clear context and accountability
- Ensures the Strategic areas of focus of the Senior team are visible and execution progress is visible and real time with no administrative effort to provide the reporting

Etvia Trace is an enterprise application that uses a familiar web-browser interface to access widely adopted technologies like Microsoft Excel, Powerpoint and Word. Importantly, it effectively accommodates both the structured business plans and ad-hoc, unplanned tactical activities, making it easier for people to assess the importance of information in context of critical business plans and jobs.

The framework operates through two mechanisms designed to provide the strategic picture and the management of ‘today’ whilst ensuring a process to align the two.

The two mechanisms are:

1. “Organisational Context”: articulates the longer term aspirations and drivers of a business unit which provides the focus for subsequent alignment.
2. “Execution Management”: ensures the breakdown of plans and deliverables, supports the integration of unplanned activities such as meetings, provides real time access to execution data and execution status reporting.

The application is designed to simplify many of the organisational and usage challenges associated with business planning and execution by bringing the planning process into the realm of daily business execution and on to the desktop. It:

- Is scalable and secure
- Leverages existing enterprise applications
- Cascades plans and objectives
- Maps and facilitates inter-dependencies
- Monitors Scorecard roll down and roll up
- Runs diagnostic reports on performance and execution as it relates to the plan

A tool for all stakeholders

Etvia Trace supports the needs of three roles in planning and execution management. The value for each of these roles is:

 Planners	 Leaders	 Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and business plan documentation repository and process driver • Alignment (vertical and horizontal) & cascade of business objectives & plan deliverables • Diagnostic reporting (drafting and execution phases) • Performance reporting & plan refinement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegation & collaboration for distributed goal setting • Cross business inter-dependency mapping • Activity monitoring • Reporting and transparency into performance and execution status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility of context and strategic alignment • Activity management • Progress management • Collaborative engagement

Planning Stage	Current Practice	Etvia Trace Feature
<p>Plan Drafting Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Version control • Document sharing • Process Facilitation 	<p>Manual process dependant on a high level of administration control centred on the team managing the process. It is expensive and cumbersome, and at best is as focussed on the process as it is the quality of the content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real time, multi user drafting • Facilitates the process • Available to everyone • Manages deadlines • Status management - draft & approved
<p>Content Quality & Rigour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective alignment • Score carding & Success Measures • Deliverable dates • Inter- dependencies • Risk identification & assessment • Cascade process 	<p>A manual process where the quality of the content is dependant on good will & capability of those involved to make work. It does not, as a matter of process, drive clarity on interdependencies or links to budget correlations and the cascade process</p>	<p>'Hard wired' into Etvia Trace are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cascade process for objectives & Areas of Focus • Interdependency negotiation & recording • Transparency & alignment of planning (vertically & horizontally) • Scorecards, due dates & measures of success link to each objective & through to reporting • Risk management processes interdependencies and commitments across business units at and beyond senior levels
<p>Budget Alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching funding to initiatives • Budget reviews • Initiative & funding approval process • Prioritisation 	<p>The discipline of separating core operating expenses from prioritised initiatives is new. The link between budgets & plans is manual & held in separate places with no relationship.</p> <p>Budget iterations need to evolve with plans. The process is manual, slow, & unlikely to be correct. It means a re-write of plans each budget review, including interdependencies.</p>	<p>Etvia Trace is a process & framework to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link plan contents to costs/funding information • Allow attachments (Excel files) of more detailed costing plans & budgets • Delineate between Plans that are funded from Business As Usual, Projects going including Business Cases for evaluation & prioritisation • Embed discipline to improve transparency, accountability and governance
<p>Execution Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting • Meeting Support • Activity facilitation 	<p>Reporting processes are often manual, separate from the plan, require a great deal of administration to produce and are reliant on a few to generate.</p> <p>Status reports on execution are often subjective & inconsistently reported against. A holistic view of the organisation and views beyond the Executive into their team's performance is not possible</p>	<p>Etvia Trace provides the mechanism to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update scorecards & execution status • Support meetings, project reviews & performance reviews with reporting. BRM - scorecard reporting, Business Cases for review; SRM - plan execution status • Assign activities from meetings for cascade, linking back to reporting • Break down deliverables to be specific & in context • Gain real time access to execution data

Figure 2 - Plan Execution meets Technology

Figure 2 outlines the requirements needed for effective plan development and execution. You can see how the Trace application underpins these requirements, enhancing the ability to execute – regardless of the type of organisation or your role within it.

Bringing it to the individual

Ultimately the goal is to ensure accountability, focus and alignment of activity. To support all users in this goal, Etvia Trace provides a personalised and centralised view of all individual and group accountabilities derived from plans, ongoing execution management AND unplanned activities – moving business plan execution into the day to day.

Etvia Trace has been designed to become an integral part of people's work habits. It becomes the tool that people live in, that is easy to use, that adds value and that is readily available. By incorporating ad hoc opportunities and communications, Etvia Trace provides the foundation to integrate such information into an organisation's daily work habits, and the ability to assess these alongside the organisation and Business unit's structured goals and objectives.

It becomes entrenched into peoples work environment and daily routines and finally allows people to integrate the "Why" answer into everything they do.

Converting thinking into action

We believe there are no tools today that can manage the complexity of organisational relationships as effectively as Etvia Trace.

It converts strategic thinking into organisational action by:

- Improving clarity and visibility
- Improving corporate alignment in the organisation
- Giving people purpose, showing the context of their work
- Reducing duplication
- Reducing non-aligned activities
- Providing a tool to address the reality of business execution and ad hoc, unplanned activities
- Improving decision making and prioritisation
- Improving accountability and governance
- Reinforcing the delivery of commitments

It has an important role to play alongside existing performance management tools as it delivers the mechanism to effectively manage the missing link between strategy creation and measurement.

To request a copy of the complete Etvia Trace white paper please contact one of the company's representatives.