

SEM, the Deputy Minister and You

If the Deputy Minister has a more important job to do than creating the department's strategy, communicating it throughout the organisation and making sure it is properly implemented, I'd like to know what it is. But there are few government departments - or even businesses and non-profits - that actually have a *recognizable and discrete* strategy execution management (SEM) system that makes sure the strategy is executed correctly. Sure, all of them have a plan and many have some kind of reporting system, such as KPIs and goal achievement measures, that help the Deputy know roughly where the organisation stands from time to time.

But they don't have a proper SEM that delivers the results accurately, automatically and regularly.

How many organisations do you know that have a real strategy execution management system that works, responds to their Deputy's (and the Minister's) interests and concerns and doesn't take a lot of time and effort to manage? I'd be surprised if there were many. Have you ever seen a system that collected the performance data related to the strategies that the Minister, the Deputy and the executive team spent so long designing and reported it directly back to them whenever they needed it - automatically and instantaneously?

As a university graduate school instructor and a management consultant who spends a lot of time working with governments, I am often asked, and have often wondered, why this was so - especially since research shows that a recognised SEM leads to improved organisational performance. Why couldn't the department just assign all its strategic initiatives to individuals and then measure the performance of the individuals from time to time during the year?

Well, of course that's just what many do. But it tends to be cumbersome and time consuming, especially in senior managers' time. It's not always effective because it is not well automated and the key performance messages don't always get back to those who need them - the Deputy or to the Minister, for instance. They are invariably tailor-made and organisation-specific so no-one else can use them. Further, performance measurement in most government departments relies on measuring the performance of *individuals*, not the department's performance *against strategies*. As the Deputy knows, these are not the same thing at all.

Neither we nor anyone we knew - clients or consultants - had ever seen a strategic execution management system that they would unreservedly recommend. Why? Firstly because many organisations have yet to recognise SEM as a *discrete management system* which will improve their performance; and secondly because those that have tend to focus on individual and team performance, not on performance against strategies.

So we set about looking for an SEM that our clients in government might use. We found several but only one we really liked - KeyneLink www.keyneinsight.com. We talked to people who had implemented KeyneLink and found that they and their clients were pleasantly surprised and often delighted. We found that KeyneLink client users had from four to over 10,000 employees. They found it effective, scalable, easily learned and inexpensive. It is web-based so everyone from the Deputy down gets to participate. You start with a pilot with the Deputy (crucial!) and the executive and you extend it according to your own timeline and comfort level. If you don't like it you quit, but almost nobody does. The cost? Around 1%-3% of the annual salary of each manager you have in the system. Is it worth that for performance? I think so.

For the first time, the Deputy knows what's *really* going on inside the department.

KeyneLink has a recorded demo at <http://www.keyneinsight.com/sitepages/demo/recordeddemo.aspx> Your password is **kl-demo2009**. Take a look and I think you'll be interested in what you see. If you are, email me - chris@strategylinkconsulting.com or call me at 250.386.7655 (Victoria BC Canada). No obligation, just information!

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