The Power of Alignment
Prioritizing the Work That Supports Your Strategy

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Lost in the Noise?

For many healthcare systems, the difference between thriving and merely surviving comes down to how well they align resources and prioritize work in support of their strategic goals. Without alignment, efforts become fragmented, resources are strained, and the organization's vision becomes lost in the noise.

Many organizations find themselves:

- Inundated with initiatives and projects

- Struggling to set and sustain clear priorities

- Unable to reliably meet commitments or deliver expected value

- Over-allocating or under-utilizing people, budgets, and technology

When this occurs, it's time to step back and ask a critical question:

Are we doing the work that actually supports our strategy?

This question leads to others:

- What is our organizational strategy —and how clearly has it been defined, articulated, and communicated?

- Is there a clear roadmap of strategy with measurable goals, objectives, and aligned projects?

- Do decisions about projects and budgets include evaluation of how they support strategy, or are they driven by "urgent" noise?

Is our strategy really our strategy if the projects receiving funding and resources have no measurable connection to strategic objectives?

Why Strategic Alignment Matters

The cost of misalignment is significant: competing and conflicting initiatives, wasted resources, diluted impact, and delayed value.

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Without alignment, budget decisions are often made for reasons unrelated to strategy. How can an organization achieve its strategy if the budgeted projects have no relation to measurably achieving defined organizational objectives?

Furthermore, different departments may focus their individual efforts pursuing conflicting or non-complementary projects. One area may invest in technology, while another invests in workforce training, and another in service expansion — each worthwhile on its own but collectively disconnected from a shared objective and contributing to a cohesive outcome.

This friction can:

- Stretch or waste limited budgets.

- Overwhelm already constrained teams.

- Reduce overall organizational effectiveness.

- Lower morale and increase burnout.

- Erode the organization's ability to deliver long-term value.

A Framework for Strategy-Driven Decision-Making

Four practical steps can help ensure your portfolio of projects aligns to strategy — and that organizational strategy stays relevant as conditions change.

1. Establish future-oriented goals with measurable objectives

Start by defining goals that clearly express the organization's long-term direction and intent. Clear measurable objectives establish the means and method for prioritization and accountability.

- Clarify criteria and indicators for when goals should be reviewed and updated.

- Translate goals into concrete measurable objectives (e.g., reduce infection rates by X%; lower cost per surgical case by X%; grow orthopedic services by X%; improve staff retention rates; decrease cybersecurity vulnerabilities; etc.).

2. Backcast

Work backwards to identify what must change or be put in place to achieve goals:

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- What capabilities, structures, or conditions must be in place or changed to realize the defined objectives — including processes, services, regulatory compliance, functionality, and optimization?

- What gaps exist in technology, data, talent, or financial capacity?

  What are the existing commitments, and do these initiatives and projects support strategic objectives — or do they distract?

This approach helps identify and prioritize the projects that deserve organizational investment.

3. Communicate and Govern

Alignment cannot exist without shared understanding and disciplined governance.

- Verify governance committees and budgetary processes understand and prioritize selecting projects and managing resource capacity (people, budget, other commitments) based on alignment and ability to achieve objectives.

- Communicate goals, objectives, and initiatives broadly across the organization; don't assume understanding, even among leaders.

- Maintain a "line of sight" — a transparent link between projects, objectives, and strategy. Multiple projects may support a single objective, and individual projects may contribute to more than one objective—but the connection should always be explicit. Read "Do You Have Line of Sight to Strategy?" to learn more about a simple tool used to establish and maintain line of sight.

4. Review and Update

Formal review cycles help confirm that selected projects are delivering the intended value.

- Define points during the organization's fiscal calendar to formally review and publish progress. This helps confirm selected projects support the organization's objectives and goals as well as confirm the organization's selected goals are the right strategy.

- Load balance – review projects and initiatives tied to objectives and goals. If projects are not being selected to support specific objectives and goals, then assess whether the organization understands the strategy or if the objectives and goals are right for the organization.

- Annually reassess and update – as objectives are met, introduce new objectives that further support the future-oriented goals.

Why Re-evaluation Matters: The Risk of "Strategy Drift"

Over time, many organizations experience "strategy drift." As daily "noise" and demand accumulate, it is common to see projects being selected that are not aligned to achievement of the organization's defined objectives and goals.

Further, as projects are approved, deferred, or rolled forward year after year, incremental misalignment occurs. Projects persist because they were once approved, not because they still matter.

In addition to updating objectives and re-evaluating goals, it is important to assess and recalibrate road-mapped or planned initiatives and projects to verify they are still relevant for achieving the organization's goals.

As emphasized in "Adapting to Disruption: Recalibrating your Project Portfolio", re-evaluation ensures that:

- Projects stay relevant and responsive to strategy.

- Resources continue to focus on meaningful, high-impact work.

- Organizational efforts stay balanced across compliance, optimization, growth and transformation, increasing resilience, equity, and digital adaptability.

How MAKE can help

In an environment where financial pressure, workforce constraints, technological disruption, regulatory change, and constant demand all compete for attention, strategy only succeeds when it actively guides decision-making.

MAKE Solutions helps organizations clarify and communicate measurable strategy, establish effective organizational governance, and apply project portfolio management practices that maintain line of sight from vision to execution.

MAKE Solutions' consultants have decades of experience working with organizations to overcome "initiatives fatigue" and achieve measurable and meaningful alignment shaping a future driven by intentional design rather than reactive decisions. Our Resource Center offers free tools that can get you started establishing alignment and prioritizing the work that supports your organization's strategy.

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