

## STEP 1

## ASSESS YOUR READINESS

## OVERVIEW

The first step is to assess the readiness of your organization for the rigor and discipline of building a robust plan. This tool describes some key success factors including how it's critical that this is a CEO driven mandate with a deliverable to the board; that one senior leadership team member must be singularly accountable for the plan; and, most importantly, that the strategy connects directly to achieving your mission. Launching the strategy is not a one-off event – the organizational culture needs to be ready to embrace it in an ongoing and measurable way.

Without this preparedness – the process will likely fail due to lack of capacity, capability, or commitment.

## Five Key Success Factors

1

**Does your mission statement clearly specify the role your organization plays?**

Readiness starts with having a clear mission statement that will determine what is in scope and out of scope for your strategy. To quote HBS Professor Michael Porter – “the essence of strategy is choosing what not to do.”

2

**Has your organization determined where your core capabilities create differentiation and competitive advantage delivering the mission?**

Has this identified the ‘how’ the mission will be progressed – i.e., do your core strengths and desired outcomes most relate to funding, convening, building – or a combination of all three?



**THE FUNDER**  
Raising money to  
find a cure



**THE CONVENER**  
Creating alliances to  
find a cure



**THE DOER**  
Building processes  
to find a cure



**THE END-TO-END  
INTEGRATOR**  
A combination of funding,  
convening, and/or building

*Five Key Success Factors continued*

## 3

**Have you identified a leader for the initiative who is 'wired' to be strategic?**

Determining a strategic direction is very different from operational delivery and will require a leader that is not defined or limited by the world as it is. The right leader thinks strategically and is open to hearing a broad array of thoughts and ideas from the ecosystem.

Readiness to lead your strategic plan development requires combing the organization (or externally hiring) for the right profile leader, some properties include:

Willingness to put aside current constraints and push the envelope of the possible

Curiosity to embrace ideas from outside your organization's focus

Gravitas and energy to engage externally in exploring the landscape

Underlying pragmatism to connect up to mission and down to operational feasibility

*Five Key Success Factors continued*

## 4

**Is the strategy unequivocally championed by senior leadership?**

In developing a progressive strategy, the organization will be challenged to consider unfamiliar business models, roles, and partners. Preparing (sometimes reluctant) colleagues to embrace this journey will require the explicit support of a CEO mandate and board level sign off to be credible and command the attention of the whole organization.

## Some key steps to prepare are:

Broadly communicate  
CEO level mandate  
to develop a strategic  
plan

Set expectations and  
schedule for status  
final deliverable for  
board approval

Ensure charter  
includes the delivery  
of near-, medium-, and  
long-term wins

Require that the plan will  
selectively embrace risk  
to push the envelope

Develop periodic  
communications cascade  
to update colleague  
on progress

Purposefully involve  
medical, scientific,  
marketing, development  
on governance, etc.

Create incentives on the  
process to develop the  
strategy as well as to  
deliver it

*Five Key Success Factors continued*

## 5

**Are you prepared to invest to fill any readiness gaps?**

The work of developing the strategic plan can take anywhere from 3 months to the better part of a year. If your organization is not replete with the capabilities, capacity, or process rigor to dedicate to the plan – you may need to consider hiring external consultants for specific, time-bound roles.

Some examples of where consultants can play an important role in catalyzing the process are:

Data sourcing, analysis, and framing of analytics i.e., landscaping

Creating interview guides, reference materials, and capturing insights from interviews

Overall project management from a dedicated program management office

These are expensive options not in the budget for every organization - but where appropriately applied can make the difference between success and failure.