

The Six Pillars Strategic Planning Process

My approach to creating strategy is through the Six Pillars Review process.

The Six Pillars Review is a holistic approach to creating a winning strategy and, developing a 3 year strategic plan and 1 year operating plan.

It reviews the business through each of six key aspects or 'pillars' of the business using data, insight and best practise tools and techniques to answer key strategic questions.

The Six Pillars Review is not anything new. It is simply a best practise strategy development and business planning approach, developed through practical use.

The structured approach enables the leaders to focus on the strategy, solutions and plans rather than process itself.

The method can be used for the business as a whole or can be used for a new venture, product launch or new market entry strategy. It can be used to create a new strategy or to refine and develop an existing one.

Benefits of the Six Pillars Review

Provides Clarity and Focus:

It creates clarity for the business as a whole, keeping the business focussed on the things that matter and directing key resource allocation and prioritisation decisions.

Ensures Alignment:

The leadership team is aligned, committed and confident in success. Everyone is working towards the same goals and going in the same direction.

Establishes Ownership:

Through the process the leaders create the strategic plan and make the key strategic decisions. The knowledge and learning is developed and retained within the business, not with an external consultant.

Is Action Oriented:

The Six Pillars Review results in an operating plan with milestones, metrics and accountabilities clearly laid out. There is the line of sight connection from strategy to plan to action.

Is Achievable:

The Six Pillars Review includes continuous sense checking of what is realistic and achievable. It stretches thinking but is also grounded in realism.

Facilitates Communication:

A Six Pillar Review results in documents and tools that can be used throughout the business to keep everyone in the business informed and aligned. The outputs can also be used with other key stakeholders of the business to inform, influence and gain support.

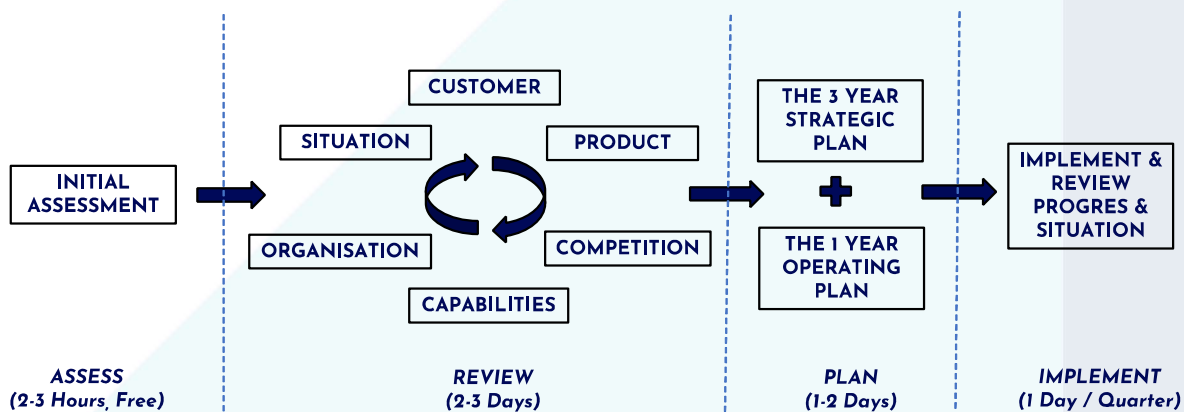
The Scope of the Six Pillars Review

The Six Pillars Review focuses firmly on the strategy and planning of the business. The diagram below outlines how strategy and planning fits with other critical aspects of the business to form a consistent, coherent whole.



The Six Pillars Review Process

The Six Pillars Review is a complete process to creating the strategy and developing the strategic plan and the 1 year operating plan. It follows the process flow below:



The Six Pillars Approach

The Six Pillars and the tools that are used in each pillar are shown.

While each pillar is assessed individually, it is a dynamic process and there are impacts and dependencies between the pillars that are understood as the process progresses.

The inputs and tools used are not prescriptive. They can be adapted for the business needs and others methods brought into the process if they can bring further insight.

<p>SITUATION</p>	<p>CUSTOMER</p>	<p>PRODUCT</p>
<p>Key Question What is our market & how is it changing?</p>	<p>Key Question Who is your customer & why do they buy from you?</p>	<p>Key Question What is your product & how do you make money?</p>
<p>Inputs & Tools Macro Trends & Info Industry Trends & Info Market Identification PESTLE 5 Forces & Force Field</p>	<p>Inputs & Tools Customer Pains & Gains Value Proposition Design Target Market Definition Customer Avatars Brand Identity</p>	<p>Inputs & Tools Product Definition Unique Selling Points Route to Market Review Value Chain Analysis Pricing Analysis</p>
<p>Output Summary of the factors shaping the market and projections of future trends.</p>	<p>Output Understanding of our target customers and why customers buy from us.</p>	<p>Output Understanding of how our products meet customer needs and the value we add.</p>
<p>COMPETITION</p>	<p>CAPABILITIES</p>	<p>ORGANISATION</p>
<p>Key Question Who is your competition & how might they react?</p>	<p>Key Question What do you need to make it happen?</p>	<p>Key Question Is the everyone ready for change and aligned?</p>
<p>Inputs & Tools Competitor Analysis Competitive Position Substitutes & Alternatives Scenario Identification Risks & Assumptions</p>	<p>Inputs & Tools Critical Success Factors Capability Requirements Gap Analysis Resources & Investments Feasibility Assessment</p>	<p>Inputs & Tools Organisation Alignment Change Management Team Commitment Stakeholder Mapping Communications</p>
<p>Output Identification of competitive threats, risks and assumptions.</p>	<p>Output Identification of the capabilities needed and how to fill any gaps.</p>	<p>Output Assessment of the readiness to change and change management approach.</p>

The Key Outputs:

The outputs and deliverables from the Six Pillars review are summarised below.

Insight & Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summaries of the findings and conclusions from each Pillar• The insight and information resulting from the review of each pillar
The Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A summary of the overall Strategy, the reasoning and the critical Assumptions and Risks• An definition of the Strategic Initiatives and their Objectives• A summary of the Critical Success Factors• Identification of the critical Milestones by quarter• A "Strategy on a Page" summary
The Operating Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The critical 1 year Deliverables, Accountabilities and Metrics• Process for reviewing progress and potential course corrections

In Summary

In summary, the Six Pillars Review is a complete, structured approach to developing the business strategy and plans. It results in clear, well defined winning strategies and plans that are tested and achievable.

It then provides the line of sight connection between the overall goals of the business and the the key activities within the business. It gives confidence to all stakeholders and aligns and engages the whole business in it's success.