

# Out-think Your Competitors

It is nearing the end of the financial year. As with previous years, your boss has asked you to develop the Objectives & Strategies (O & S) document which includes your proposed budget and KPIs for the new financial year. What do you do? Refer to past performance, make some minor adjustments to the O & S document, budgets and KPIs, and hope that your boss does not ask you too many questions when you present this document. Sounds familiar?

Almost 9 out of 10 organisations typically go through this process year after year. Sadly, the performance of many of these organizations is not much better of than that of the previous year. This begs the question, why do organizations continue to employ this methodology despite seeing dismal results? Well, it's easier to work with the tried-and-tested model as opposed to doing things in a radically new way.

Sadly, many of these organizations that have stuck to the conventional way of doing things find themselves being squeezed out of the marketplace due to complacency.



In order to ensure long term sustenance, the name of the game is to do things in a way that makes competitors redundant. It requires a fundamental rethink of the business model year after year, month after month with the primary intent of reaping transformational benefits. This is not to say that we do things differently for the sake of doing things differently. What it means is that an organization needs to look at the entire delivery change and focus on re-inventing itself.

So the question is, how does an organization "Out-think" its competitors?

## 1. Out-think Your Targets

For a start, every individual within the organization needs to start thinking: If I knew that the only way for the organization to survive is by achieving a 300% growth over the previous year, what do I need to do today? The sheer thought of 300% will almost undoubtedly result in creative problem solving on what needs to be done in a radically different manner to ensure the organization continues to grow from strength to strength.

## 2. "Out-think" Your Area of Operations

Let's take telecommunication as an example. Many Telco's have traditionally defined their market based on specific demographic or geographic area. This has resulted in individuals within the organization taking a microscopic view of things and exploring "how do we grow in xxx segment". Then comes along a once little known company called Skype Technologies.





Over a short period of time, Skype's presence transcends across geographical, language and cultural boundaries. What made this possible? Simple, a team of people started asking some of the most fundamental questions about "Zone of Operations"

### 3. "Out-think" Value Propositions

Every organization, every brand, every product or service offers a value proposition. Without good and strong value propositions, products or services will likely vanish from the marketplace. Therefore, the key lies in challenging each value proposition. For example, traditionally, a cellphone was meant for individuals who were generally mobile and wanted to remain in contact with others. However, today, individuals purchase cellphones for a host of reasons including for use as a camera, mp3 player, etc. While in essence, the core value proposition has not changed, other value propositions have developed.

### 4. Out-think "Non-consumers"

Many organizations find themselves fixated with trying to develop strategies for existing customers. However, little effort is made towards exploring what can be done for "non-customers". "Non-customers" are typically defined into three groups: the fence-sitters, the adamant, and the unknown.

For each of these groups, an "Out-think" strategy needs to be developed so that the organization is able to reach beyond its existing demand models.

### 5. "Out-think" Key Enabling Processes

While there is a tremendous focus placed on what "out-think" strategies should be implemented outside the organization – in terms of customers or markets, it is equally important to explore what should be done within the organization in terms of key value derivation processes. For example, for aircraft wheel maintenance, organizations look at learning from other industries such as the Formula 1 tyre replacement process and incorporate this learning to the work that is done. By doing so, the organisations are able to challenge current paradigms in terms of process efficiency.

While these pointers are not exhaustive, they serve as a starting point for organizations who wish to embark on a journey of reinventing themselves and successfully identifying commercially compelling opportunities.

