

Try This With Your Team!

## Taking Advantage of the Winds of Change

Over the past year, we've observed some relatively common headwinds and tailwinds in building the story of a strategy. Tailwinds accelerate the organization to a higher level of connectivity and performance. Headwinds are the missteps that create confusion and dissent.

Gather your team around this sketch and discuss the Winds of Change facing your team or company.



1. Read the lists of Tailwinds and Headwinds.
2. As a group, identify which of these winds is likely to affect your team or company in the coming year. Highlight or circle them. Add new winds to the lists if you like.
3. How will you deal with the challenges presented by the headwinds? Is there a way to use them to your advantage?
4. Will the headwinds also affect your competitors? Your clients? Your employees?
5. How will you best use the power of the tailwinds? Be specific.
6. How will the tailwinds change your competition? Will they be able to take advantage of their momentum?
7. What kind of environment can you create for your team or company so you can fight the headwinds while being propelled by the tailwinds?

### Tailwinds

- Strategies that move beyond generic statements of intent and provide an elevating purpose.
- Strategies that are fluid enough to evolve their objectives based on emerging marketplace realities.
- Strategies that start with a clear definition of the challenges and then clearly connect strategic initiatives to the challenges they address.
- A balance between centralized and decentralized based on the complexity of the challenges. The more complex or challenging, the more cohesion and focus is necessary.
- Clarity on what teams and individuals need to do differently to support the strategy.
- A strategy that defines "the culture of competence" needed to fuel future growth.
- Removal of the ambiguity and uncertainty of a rapidly evolving marketplace.

### Headwinds

- Strategic intentions full of compromises that lead to watered-down, unfocused initiatives that don't generate cohesion and insightful action.
- Reactive strategies based on the competition, not organizational strengths.
- Strategies filled with jargon and boastful statements that provide little direction for employees and make them feel that leaders don't know what they are doing.
- Confusing aspirations and outcomes for objectives and strategies.
- Unanticipated problems that the business is unprepared to manage.
- Failure to acknowledge and remove ambiguity in an uncertain marketplace.