

Monsanto: “Growing” Understanding of Strategy

The business need

Monsanto, one of the world’s leading agricultural companies, continually faces strong competition and new challenges. In April 2007, the leaders of the U.S. commercial organization created a strategy to earn the #1 position with customers.

When Monsanto examined its core competencies, they determined enhancements that were needed to build stronger relationships while increasing business. They used a cascaded communication from management to launch the strategy. The result? People didn’t connect the dots – there was little traction, alignment, or ownership.

The solution

Monsanto worked with Root on a two-pronged approach to organizational alignment of their strategy. First, to re-launch the strategy at a leadership team gathering, they developed two *Strategic Learning Map*® modules intended to create a line of sight within the leadership group about the “why” of the strategy as well as the “what.” One module explained the marketplace, and another presented Monsanto’s strategic response.

Because Monsanto leadership also needed to confront what was holding them back, Root helped them to construct a “Dialogue Café,” which allowed them to have tough conversations about obstacles and behaviors. A third *Strategic Learning Map*® module helped drive home Monsanto’s value proposition in a very concrete way.

To help leadership better determine areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement, Monsanto implemented Root’s Strategy Execution Insights™ tool. This helped to clearly identify their levels of strategic engagement and alignment in the company.



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— Jennifer L. McMahon,
Director,
Commercial Strategy,
U.S. Commercial
Organization



Results

Jennifer L. McMahon, Director, Communication Strategy, U.S. Commercial Organization, said, “The response from leadership was incredible. By the end of the two-day summit, our U.S. Commercial Business Lead made it clear that every employee in the organization would be engaged through the Strategic *Learning Map*® modules within three months.” Another leader said, “I knew what the strategy was, but now I know what it means.”

They found the Strategy Execution Insights to be an excellent diagnostic. McMahon said, “It confirmed many of our gut instincts in a quantitative way. As a leadership group, we looked at where we were as a team, what we could reward, and where we needed to continue working.” Monsanto has built these areas of focus into its semi-annual leadership conference.

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About Root

Root is a strategy execution company that helps organizations engage people as a catalyst for change using a proven framework that consistently achieves clarity, ownership, and results.



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