

# A Practical Strategy Approach for Resource-Constrained Organisations

## THE CHALLENGE:

“It’s easy to have strategic plans that are focused on the big goals you want to achieve, but they often overlook BAU and in doing so ignore the resource implications around operating day-to-day — and therefore ultimately how you’ll achieve those big goals.”

Iain Potter, BBNZ Chief Executive

Basketball New Zealand (BBNZ) is a small, not-for-profit organisation that works with and supports a national membership base through a mixture of full-time, part-time and volunteer staff. With a vision of “Growing New Zealanders, Growing the Game”, the BBNZ Board<sup>1</sup> had conducted a strategic review to produce a list of initiatives which, alongside an All-of-Basketball Plan, mapped out where the organisation wanted itself and its members to be in the future. The BBNZ management team were tasked with planning how to implement the initiatives to achieve BBNZ’s vision. At the same time, they would need to keep executing the day-to-day activities of the organisation to serve its members.

BBNZ were facing three challenges common to resource-constrained organisations:

1. Integrating BAU and change — how to develop a strategy when business-as-usual mode is operational rather than strategy focused.
2. Getting the right strategic conversations at the Board table — Board meetings were very focused on financial results and operational reports, without sufficient time or attention given to holistic performance measures.
3. Making prioritisation decisions for resource allocation — BBNZ needed a clear framework that would allow them to allocate their finite resources in a way that would achieve both BAU and strategic initiatives.

MSH addressed each of these challenges as follows:

## 1. Using the Strategy Map to integrate BAU and change

BBNZ needed an approach that would allow them to get the right balance between operational and strategic perspectives. The first step was to review the strategic initiatives approved by the Board and incorporate these into a one-page Strategy Map that reflected the needs of the four key stakeholders (owner, customer, suppliers and employees). Iain Potter, BBNZ’s Chief Executive, notes that through this process, “MSH was great at getting the management team to stand back and look at BAU and the strategic initiatives all together and in context. They showed the cause-and-effect connections between investment in strategic initiatives and the impact on our BAU activities, our offering to the customer and the outcomes we’re trying to achieve as an organisation.”

## 2. Defining KPIs to shape Board conversations

MSH worked with Iain and the team to create a set of KPIs against each area of the Strategy Map, to be tracked and reported against using the MSHOnline reporting tool. MSH developed a focused set of KPIs where each activity was represented by a single metric, so that reporting to the Board would not be onerous but still give a clear picture of progress and highlight upcoming issues which required decisions.



## 3. Making prioritisation decisions for resource allocation

Having developed the Strategy Map, the Board used it to define the relative priority of each strategic theme to guide resource allocation. This allowed Iain to clearly target his team’s discretionary resources across BAU and between strategic change initiatives to ensure he could deliver on the targets set by the Board. As resources were aligned to the Board’s priorities, the team then felt comfortable that they were able to deliver on the organisation’s strategic goals.

## THE OUTCOME:

“The key benefit of the process with MSH is a practical strategy framework which gives staff, management and the Board a shared understanding of how resources should be prioritised across *everything* the organisation wants to achieve.”

Iain Potter, BBNZ Chief Executive

The result has been consistent, structured management reporting to the BBNZ Board and has significantly changed the Board agenda. Board meetings now include reporting on strategic KPIs at the forefront — before the detailed financial and operational reports. MSH ensured that the process of developing the strategy and performance measures didn’t become a roadblock to achieving the strategy. Iain notes, “MSH understood what scale and resource means for an organisation like ours and were anchored in a real-world view of how setting up the disciplines for a monitoring and reporting system could be achieved. They were also realistic and solution-orientated, demonstrating this both by using their expertise to do the bits that we couldn’t and by empathetically guiding us through frustration points. I felt they understood our organisation, its possibilities, and its limitations.”

For more information visit [www.mshconsulting.co.nz](http://www.mshconsulting.co.nz)

<sup>1</sup> Brian Yee sits on the BBNZ Board and is Managing Director of MSH Consulting