

**HIGHPOINT ASSOCIATES**

# **FIRM INTRODUCTION**



# HIGHPOINT ASSOCIATES OVERVIEW

## Who We Are

- **Management consulting firm** founded in 2002 with offices in Los Angeles and New York
- Industry and Functional practice areas **led by former partners from leading firms** (McKinsey, BCG, Bain, and Booz), each with **over 30 years of relevant advisory and operating experience**
- Our team is a **group of 850 experienced consultants** whom we have **carefully curated** – alumni of the world's top firms with “real-world” post-consulting experience
- Our focus is on **strategy and execution engagements** with Fortune 1000 and middle-market growth firms
- **Our clients** are management teams requiring an “**A**” **team** to develop and execute **solutions specific to their needs**

## How We Are Different

- Teams led by people with **deep expertise**
- **Industry and functional** knowhow
- Teams with combination of **consulting and operating experience**
- We bring consultants with the **exact right experience** for a client's specific challenge, **not inexperienced generalists**
- **Objective** – no allegiance to specific technologies or vendors
- Top-tier consultancy model with a **more flexible cost structure**
- Customized and **tailored approach** that meets client needs
- **Collaborative model** where we work closely with clients

# HOW WE WORK WITH YOU

## ENGAGEMENT

HPA engages clients with a focus on understanding the why before executing the how. HPA engagements only begin after in-depth discussions between Partners, Senior Advisors, and Client Executives around the core issues that need to be addressed.

## EXPERIENCE

We hand select teams with relevant top-tier consulting and operating experience, a unique blend that enables us to craft practical solutions based on real world experience and support our clients through implementation and execution in a way most consulting firms cannot.

## COLLABORATION

We believe that breakthrough ideas come from combining our knowledge and experience with yours. When client and HPA team members discover solutions together, the result is a high-value solution that gets implemented.

## FLEXIBILITY

We are not “one size fits all” where every team is structured the same way, regardless of client individual needs, size, and capacity. We also have the ability to flex our involvement as work progresses – heavier involvement in earlier stages, and lighter involvement as we move into client ownership of programs.

# THE HPA DIFFERENCE

## Traditional Strategy Firms

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|--|--|
| <b>Team:</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Team Leader is a 28-year old</b> Engagement Manager / Principal <b>generalist</b>, 2-3 years out of business school, with an associated team</li></ul>  |
| <b>Partner Presence and Objectivity:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Multiple shared partners</b> in and out of meetings, <b>focused on up-sell</b></li><li>• ‘Let me tell you the answer,’ hypothesis-driven approach; more <b>culturally disruptive</b> and heavier to a client organization</li></ul> |
| <b>Flexible Team Size:</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Utilization focus</b> within relevant vertical group, for a standard 1+3 or larger team configuration</li></ul>   |
| <b>Value:</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Premium pricing</b> incongruent with efficiency-focused firms</li></ul>   |

## HighPoint Associates

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Team Leader has 15+ years experience</b> with both McKinsey / Bain-equivalent tenure and industry line roles <b>in like verticals and functions</b> = greater <b>insight, pragmatism, and client influence</b></li></ul>                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Targeted Senior Advisor</b> involvement with the <b>right vertical and functional background</b> – a <b>weekly 1-2 days / week partnership informing content</b>, able to listen and drive results and change, with limited disruption</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Flexible team size</b> that may start 1+3 in upfront sprints, and adjust size quickly for downstream implementation support</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consulting <b>fees at a fraction of similar-sized traditional strategy teams</b></li></ul>  |

## OUR TEAM

# LEADERSHIP

### Sumeet Goel - CEO



Sumeet founded HPA in 2002 and serves as the firm's Managing Director in charge of company strategy and client service delivery.

Sumeet has over 25 years of management consulting experience and has advised senior executives across industries, including financial services, real estate, technology, healthcare, consumer goods and media.

Prior to founding HighPoint, Sumeet served as Head of Strategy for Digital Media Campus, an early-stage venture firm that operated at the intersection of technology, media, and entertainment.

Before joining Digital Media Campus, Sumeet led efforts with dozens of clients across industry and functional sectors from McKinsey's New York and Los Angeles offices.

Sumeet holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BS from the Wharton School of Business.

### Justin Moser - COO



Justin brings over 20 years experience leading and advising company growth strategy, sourcing, efficiency, operational improvement, and go-to-market optimization.

Prior to HighPoint, Justin served in executive leadership roles for Mattel, Inc. over a 15-year tenure from 2003 to 2018. Most recently, he was SVP / Group CFO, guiding the company through restructuring, high-yield debt capital raises, and revenue stabilization.

Previously, he headed Mattel's NA Online business, including its Amazon Sales team and internal e-retail operations, driving +25% annual segment growth. In addition, Justin led Corporate Strategy and brand marketing roles in multiple businesses, including the development and optimization of Asia-based sourcing.

Pre-Mattel, Justin served clients across industries from Bain & Company's Los Angeles office, and co-led Bain Ventures, Bain's early-stage business incubator.

Justin holds an MBA from the Kellogg School at Northwestern, where he was an Austin Scholar, and a BA from Pomona College.

### Richard Berger - Partner



Since 2008, Richard has been a Partner with HighPoint Associates and leader of the firm's East Coast Practice.

Before joining HighPoint, Richard spent nearly 20 years in a variety of consulting, operating, and start-up leadership positions.

Most recently, he was a Principal at Katzenbach Partners, a boutique management consulting firm, where he led client engagements and developed new business in industrials, consumer, telecommunications, and financial services.

Before his time at Katzenbach, Richard led acquisition and consumer marketing for the largest customer segment within AT&T Wireless. His professional experience also includes leading consumer and customer development at Financial Engines, America's largest independent investment advisor, and brand management and finance roles at Procter & Gamble.

Richard holds an MBA from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and a BS from Washington University in St. Louis.

## OUR TEAM

# SENIOR ADVISORS

HighPoint is distinguished by the strength and commitment of our Senior Advisor group. With extensive industry experience and expertise, they are invaluable resources for our clients, providing thoughtful collaboration and partnership on projects at all stages.

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### **Alex Nesbitt**

Former Managing Director at the Boston Consulting Group who led the firm's West Coast Industrial Practice; founded a third-party logistics firm, sold to Ryder Logistics

### **Christian Frank**

Former McKinsey Associate Partner who also served as VP for IBM's Healthcare Business Processes Group, and as VP of Corporate Strategy in charge of ADP's health and wellness strategy

### **Bob Kaplan**

Former Director at McKinsey and head of the firm's IT and Systems Practice and Managing Partner of BCG's San Francisco office; has held multiple Board & C-level positions, including CIO of Silicon Valley Bank

### **Katie Liebel**

Former MD and Head of Strategy for JPMorgan Chase's Consumer Bank and Chief Strategy Officer at both Fifth Third Bank and Nationwide Insurance, where she also served as SVP of P&C Transformation

### **Pamela Thomas-Graham**

Former McKinsey Partner and senior executive at CNBC (CEO), Liz Claiborne (President), and Credit Suisse (Chief Marketing and Talent Officer); Board member at multiple public and private companies

### **Fiona Dias**

Former senior executive at ShopRunner, GSI Commerce, and Circuit City; current Board member at Realogy Holdings Corp and Qurate Retail Group

### **Karen Schoen**

Former Partner in Booz & Company's Healthcare and Financial Services Practice and senior executive at American International Group (AIG) and Bank of America (Countrywide Financial)

### **Phil Arrata**

Former Associate Principle at McKinsey who then served as Chief Financial & Administrative Officer for Best Buy Canada and CEO of Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC)

## CASE STUDIES

HighPoint's flexible, client-driven staffing approach allows for a wide variety of engagement models.

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### PROJECT TYPE

Five-year Strategic Plan Development and Implementation

### CLIENT NEED

U.S. subsidiary of a multibillion-dollar EMEA-based bank had recently appointed a new CEO who **wanted to evaluate the division's current position and develop a five-year strategic operating plan**

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint deployed a team of four, all with extensive consulting and operating experience in the financial services sector. The team was led by a former Partner in Booz's Financial Services Practice and senior executive at two Fortune 100 financial services companies.

The team conducted a competitive analysis for each of the bank's lines of business, as well as a deep dive on internal processes and industry best practices.

HighPoint laid out a series of a dozen interrelated recommendations with implementation plans for each, including responsibility, timing, and targets, ultimately working with management to execute against selected plans over an 18-month period

### PROJECT TYPE

Enterprise Architecture and IT Strategy Turnaround

### CLIENT NEED

Multibillion-dollar regional healthcare system needed to **assess and turnaround their enterprise architecture and IT strategy**

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint team, led by a former F100 CIO, assessed the company's current enterprise architecture and IT environment, and reviewed the company's IT organization including process maturity, budget, Architecture/Infrastructure, IT integration approach, application stack, and operational issues.

Project resulted in a road map for future state architecture, BI & Data Warehousing solutions, organization, and outsourcing requirements.

At the conclusion of the assessment, team was asked to stay on to lead execution, as well as development of the long-term strategy for organizational processes, improvements, and data initiatives



HighPoint's flexible, client-driven staffing approach allows for a wide variety of engagement models.

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### PROJECT TYPE

Go-to-Market Assessment and Strategy Development

### CLIENT NEED

\$5B publicly traded specialty technology company was demonstrating signs of stress, including slowed services growth, market share erosion and vulnerability to cloud services market shifts. Company needed a **thorough evaluation of services strategy and performance**

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint deployed a team led by a former Partner in BCG's Technology Practice who also held executive positions in the services groups at Cisco and HP.

Team benchmarked best-in-class peers to understand drivers of successful services models and identified inhibitors to growth and areas for improvement, including the need for a segmented GTM approach, new channel partnerships, portfolio evolution, tuck-in acquisitions, and a global factory model for services delivery along with recommendations on organization and P&L management.

As a result of the work, the client revamped its approach to services and achieved 50% revenue growth over 3 years. Client also strengthened its position with customers and partners through a focus on services and solutions

### PROJECT TYPE

Merchandise Supply Chain Transformation

### CLIENT NEED

Publicly traded multibillion-dollar entertainment company's ecommerce merchandise arm and fulfillment business had disparate systems resulting in significant inefficiencies. Client needed a team to **analyze the current state and develop a process map to transform the supply chain**

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint team of four was led by a former McKinsey Associate Partner in their High-Tech Practice with experience leading supply chain redesign initiatives.

The team assisted the identification and evaluation of the optimal e-commerce IT platform, staffing solution software, and pick/pack/ship fulfillment and customer service provider, while developing pricing models for each vendor.

HighPoint identified the appropriate tools and internal resources for implementing and maintaining the systems on a go-forward basis, building recommendations into an implementation roadmap which was executed against



## CASE STUDIES

HighPoint's flexible, client-driven staffing approach allows for a wide variety of engagement models.

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### PROJECT TYPE

Strategy Planning and Implementation

### CLIENT NEED

Subsidiary of a multibillion-dollar public utility needed additional resources to **revamp the company's annual strategic planning process, develop the next year's annual budget, and create a five-year strategic plan**

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint deployed a team led by a former McKinsey Senior Partner in that firm's Energy Practice, and a former BCG Managing Director who led that firm's Industrial Practice.

The team analyzed the utility's product and market focus, customer value proposition, business model and economics, competitive dynamics, alliance strategy, and scalability to create recommendations.

Following the completion of the effort, team was re-engaged to help drive implementation and assist in development of a PMI playbook for the company's anticipated acquisition strategy

### PROJECT TYPE

Post-Merger Integration and Cost Reduction

### CLIENT NEED

Industry leading electronic systems and products company merged with a complementary player of equal size and needed assistance **integrating functions across the IT, supply chain, and product teams, identifying synergies, and consolidating operations of the two organizations**

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint deployed a team led by a former McKinsey Senior Partner with post-merger integration and industry expertise. After a targeted HighPoint team of four was leveraged to drive pre-close planning, an integration team of twelve HighPoint consultants was deeply embedded in major functional areas throughout the company, including being engaged to work directly with the CFO to prepare for management meetings, lead staff integration efforts, and track synergies on a corporate-wide basis.

From pre-close to final integration, this effort spanned 18-months

## CASE STUDIES

HighPoint's flexible, client-driven staffing approach allows for a wide variety of engagement models.

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### PROJECT TYPE

Operations Improvement and Execution Acceleration

### CLIENT NEED

Industry-leading, technology-driven healthcare services organization sought assistance to **accelerate, design, and support the consolidation and integration of their back-office operation centers** across four areas as they scaled during a period of **hyper-growth**

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint team was led by a former McKinsey Associate Principal and a former McKinsey Engagement Manager, both with technology and operations experience.

Partnering with the client to prioritize billing office integration as the first initiative, HighPoint began by assessing and understanding the client's current and target systems, rollout plan, resources, and project management approach, followed by the development of an implementation plan to standardize centers of excellence, while simultaneously identifying and implementing consolidated Tax Identification Numbers for revenue upside.

HighPoint team subsequently stayed on to implement recommendations and address the additional identified areas for consolidation

### PROJECT TYPE

Cost Reduction and Process Improvement

### CLIENT NEED

\$1.5B consumer products company was experiencing rapid growth but EBITDA had decreased over the last three years. Company wanted to determine the cause of the decrease and identify areas for **cost reduction and process improvement**

### HPA SOLUTION

Team of six former McKinsey consultants with extensive experience in corporate strategy and cost reduction in the consumer products industry evaluated the company's previous cost savings initiatives and designed a process to identify additional opportunities.

Team worked closely with company management to identify synergies and developed metrics to monitor progress and savings, increased budget accountability, and enhanced the use of analytics.

Efforts resulted in a bottom-line impact of \$30MM on \$200MM of annual spend, which was fully realized in the first 12 months of execution

## CASE STUDIES

HighPoint's flexible, client-driven staffing approach allows for a wide variety of engagement models.

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### PROJECT TYPE

Sales and Field Operations Organization Redesign

### CLIENT NEED

Fortune 500 publicly traded SaaS company wanted to **assess and increase the effectiveness of its sales and field operations organization** as it adjusted to much larger scale

### HPA SOLUTION

HighPoint team, led by two former McKinsey consultants, one of whom acted as Chief of Staff to the new VP of Sales & Operations, built a go-forward plan for the sales operation's organization including sales analytics and metrics, field technologies, and change management approach.

Team translated key near-term change programs into a digestible approach for the Field Sales team, diagnosed current pipeline and conversion metrics, and designed a new end-to-end pipeline reporting approach. The work also identified key gaps in near-term revenue recognition.

Following initial effort, team stayed on to support the next wave of sales operations organizational strategy and change programs

### PROJECT TYPE

Market Assessment and Portfolio Strategy

### CLIENT NEED

International publicly traded consumer product manufacturer and retailer wanted to **undertake a comprehensive market landscape assessment across the U.S., UK, China, and Japan to develop their next brand portfolio strategy and identify organic and inorganic growth opportunities**

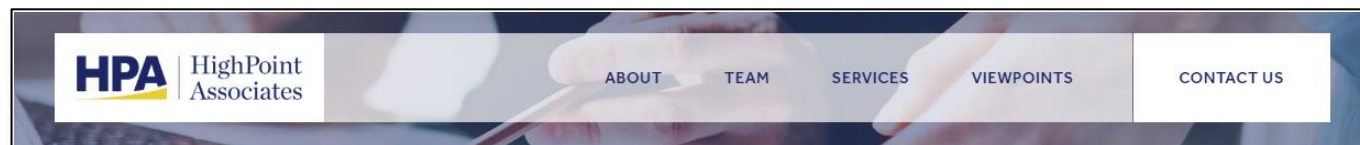
### HPA SOLUTION

Advised by a former McKinsey Partner in the firm's Consumer Practice, the HPA team was led by a former McKinsey Associate Partner who had served primarily CPG clients along with two former Bain consultants with expertise in consumer product market sizing and go-to-market strategy development.

Beginning with the U.S., the HighPoint team, working alongside internal stakeholders and the client's recently established global Centers of Excellence, analyzed the existing landscape and category-disruptive trends; leveraged and built upon the client's current consumer segmentation efforts, with target profile depth; assessed the competitive environment by applying multiple strategic portfolio lens to offensive and defensive brand threats; and mapped the current product portfolio to their findings in building recommendations for capturing competitive advantage opportunities.

Findings were presented to client executives and brand presidents and subsequently executed against

# HPA INSIGHTS STRATEGY



## Strategic Planning vs. Business Planning. Yes, There's a Difference.

By: *Justin Moser*

Too often when companies embark on a strategic planning process, they are calling it a strategic plan, and according to a recent Strategy Officer Survey noted, "The most important area – most CSOs are..."

So, what's causing these frequent...

In "Strategic Planning: You're Probably Missing These Pitfalls" is understanding the...



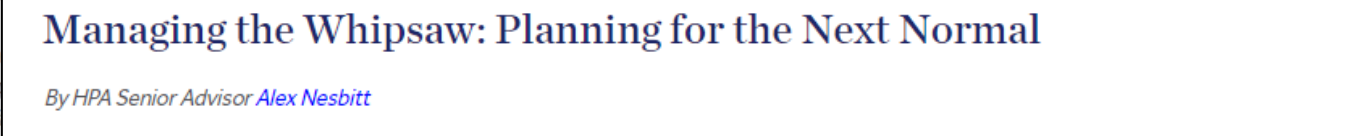
## Four Principles for Successful Strategic Planning

An impactful Strategic Plan centers on making strategic **choices** around a company's most critical go-forward imperatives, and then **aligning** its executive team and **resourcing** around those choices. A well-crafted strategic plan will chart a path to profitability. However, all too often, in the process of strategic planning, they miss the mark, resulting in ineffective at best and a waste of resources at worst.

If your company is contemplating a strategic planning effort, below are four core principles we recommend to sidestep pitfalls and maximize the effort.



## BUSINESS PLANNING VS. STRATEGIC CHOICE SPOTLIGHT

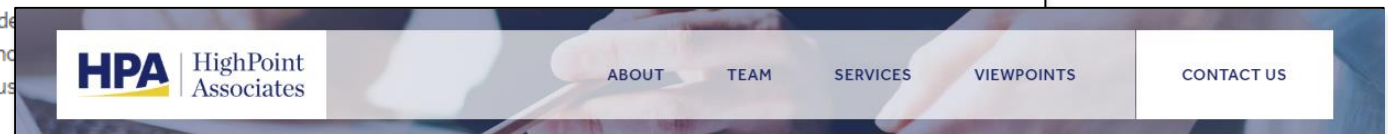


## Managing the Whipsaw: Planning for the Next Normal

By HPA Senior Advisor *Alex Nesbitt*

Managing strategic change under uncertainty is a challenge, however, it can test even the most resilient organization upside down, and business as usual is a thing of the past.

Because of this ongoing public health crisis, massive swings in consumer behavior, and a global panic in buying and shutdowns in many industries, we are in a state of uncertainty about everything: at the company level, the industry level, and shortages of common essential goods.



## How Strategy Development Changes in a Downturn

By HPA COO *Justin Moser*


As we've watched the difficult pandemic unfold globally, I've had conversations with current and previous clients over the past two weeks on near-term ramifications and been consistently pointing to forthcoming market dynamism in each firms' respective marketplace. Most clients initially hoped for a "V-shaped recovery," with a sharp resurgence post viral curve flattening.

Time will tell. Yet market dynamism is understandably the furthest thought from most minds currently, vs. an interest in the health and well-being of each firms' teams, business continuity planning, revenue retention, the servicing of customers with a more remote team, and stress-tested liquidity with disrupted revenue, supply chains, and cash flow.

Concurrently, many firms are entering their medium / long-term business planning or 'strategic planning' seasons. And as I've shared in the past, business planning is very different from [strategic planning](#). Some firms have chosen to forego longer-term plans in the immediate term, yet others require them for their supply chains, technology investments, or other medium-term capital schedules.



# EXECUTION & CHANGE MANAGEMENT




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## Accelerate and Scale Your Most Important Initiatives, Efficiently

By: *Justin Moser*

May 29, 2019

Let's assume you've worked through the next 12-18 months, as part of your strategic plan. From those few decisive strategies, a portion of those imperatives remain. In the throes of embracing change, they rarely do this well. Not for a moment and solve the inherent ad-hoc issues (able to deliver on adoption and/or change imperative).



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## 5 Ways to Get More Value Out of Your PMO

By: *Alex Nesbitt*

October 24, 2018

A well-run Project Management Office (PMO) can drive improvements. Building an effective PMO to get things done. Equally important, Will the PMO be a passive organization and performance? If yes, what information as a direct resource for project management the PMO to show its value by ensuring. If your executive team has setting up help this team deliver value to your organization.

1. Establish Candid Reporting and




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## Keep the Change: Making Business Transformations Work

ALEX NESBITT & KRISTEN

Implementing change is risky and do well. Academic research consulting firms, and personal implementation efforts fail to. The reasons why companies change are reasonably well documented list are the challenges of change.



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## Rethinking Enterprise-wide Initiatives in a Disrupted Market

By HPA Senior Advisor *Chris Fox*

As the United States moves beyond peak coronavirus cases in many locations, attention is increasingly turning towards the phased re-opening of our country. At HighPoint we observe three general approaches in how companies are dealing with enterprise-wide initiatives in this context. Some senior executives continue to hunker down while their companies remain in shutdown mode and attempt to avoid additional layoffs; these executives say that internal decision-making processes are still largely frozen. Others have pivoted cautiously toward a limited set of initiatives, such as cost reduction or opportunistic M&A. A third group of executives are taking the advice of HighPoint Senior Advisor, [Chris Fox](#), recognizing that in the new business environment they must in fact move faster on key enterprise-wide initiatives and reimagine how things are done. Chris, a former McKinsey & Company consultant, Fortune 500 VP of Strategy and expert on leading large-scale enterprise program management efforts recently shared an interesting set of observations on how companies should think about existing and planned Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) efforts.

# MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

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## Extension Mergers

### Part 1: Why Roll-Ups Succeed or Fail

Alex Nesbitt

Extension mergers, often referred to as roll-ups, have a cost structure and relies on local franchise owners to provide historically been one of the models. Whether pursue products, or some combining primarily on revenue synergy growth for companies like extensive sales and distribution sales of products from the addition to their effective mergers have a strong track telecommunications, and of regional players into national

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## Extension Mergers

### Part 2: Secrets to Success in Industry Roll-Ups

The first article of this series, *Extension Mergers: Why Roll-ups Succeed or Fail*, discussed the ups and downs of these types of mergers. It also introduced the a useful tool in identifying opportunities. This is a hard, multi-dimensional problem; a tangled web of micro-economics, people, culture, processes, systems, and

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## Why Intentions Matter in Making Mergers Work

### INTRODUCTION

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) represent substantial opportunities for companies wanting to consolidate, grow, and/or diversify their strategic a significant level of economic economy. According to JP Morgan, global M&A activity in 2018 reached \$4.1 trillion—the third year was dominated by "mega size), followed by a deceleration from geopolitical volatility and environment. U.S. activity maintained volume, surpassing number JP Morgan anticipates 2019

- How well was the merger integration process executed?
- Is the new company both more competitive and a better place to work?

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## Key Steps for Post-Merger Integration Success

### INTRODUCTION

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are substantial opportunities for companies wanting to consolidate, grow, and/or diversify their strategic positions. According to JP Morgan, global M&A activity in 2018 reached \$4.1 trillion – the third-highest ever. JP Morgan expects 2019 M&A activity to remain strong despite ongoing global uncertainty.

As noted in [Part 1](#) of the HighPoint Associates' Insights series on post-merger integration, while there is a tremendous opportunity, a great deal of expected value from M&A never materializes. Various studies estimate between 40% and 80% of all M&A ventures fall short of achieving their stated

closes. This principle applies to all kinds of mergers, regardless of the desired end-state. Mergers can be instigated to save costs, extend revenues, or achieve strategic differentiation. Once end-state goals are identified, organizations go through the same basic integration processes regardless of the kind of business combination – most commonly **efficiency**, **extension**, and **transformation** – it is.

If different kinds of mergers result in different end-state organizations, how should the success of any particular merger be judged? Is there a general principle for determining merger success?

The key criterion for judging merger success is that the

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## The Key to Creating a Successful IT Strategy? Simplify. Simplify. Simplify.

By: Richard Berger

December 18, 2018

As with any business strategy, effective IT strategies require collaboration between leaders and stakeholders across the organization. This involves a balance of centralization, and virtualization, and a least amount of risk, and enabling the organization to move forward.

Although technology itself and data compliance don't have to be the most complex, it is best to minimize complexity. In addition to creating unnecessary complexity, it is best to minimize complexity.

Yet decisive simplicity is not an easy thing to achieve. It is a process of thinking clean to make it simple.

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## Future Matters: The Importance of Developing a Long-Term IT Strategy

March 19, 2019

Simplifying and thereby becoming more strategic with your IT is a multi-year, enterprise-wide effort that incorporates standardization, optimization, automation, and, as appropriate, virtualization. The goal is to boost performance efficiency and reduce more strategic spending. You must focus on other parts.

### Why long-term IT strategy

By longer-term, HPA typically refers to a multi-year, and require choices and trade-offs that they fit together. Over time, it's critical to create incompatible systems and processes, and longer-term simplification by three

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# Is Big Data the Answer?

**KRISTINA TOBER & BOB KAPLAN**  
**CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALON BOCHMAN & IVÁN MARKMAN**

Big data. It's THE game changer everyone is looking for. It can drive productivity improvements, help you understand your product and transform your market.

After all, big data helped UPS save \$500 million every time it reduced a delivery. Companies are even using big data to provide insight on the best people to hire.

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## Common Sense: The Missing Factor in IT Management

By Bob Kaplan

In my decades-long career in IT and strategy consulting, I have worked with some brilliant CIOs and CEOs who have transformed their businesses through the intelligent application of information technology. I have also been witness to the thoughtless management of the information technology function in many companies, leading to operational problems, slow response to market changes, and even the dramatic loss of market share.

I puzzled over what separates these two types of companies and executives. One day when I was describing a particularly bad situation to my wife, she solved the puzzle for me when she said, "They just have no common sense. No one would do that." Suddenly it all made sense. In the poorly managed situations, there was a lack of common sense thinking. It was not about abstract technical issues or architectures, but rather poor (or no) planning, denial of obvious facts and an unwillingness to take action for fear of political repercussions.

The following case situations highlight the importance of using common sense when it comes to IT management. These cases are all true stories, but the names have been changed, and the situations disguised, to avoid embarrassing the guilty.





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