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Integrated Planning

Embedding a Culture
of Joined-Up Thinking

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Often Used, Rarely Seen

Healthcare organisations and the environments in which they operate are transforming. Rapidly.

Technology advancements, virtualisation of service delivery and changes in consumer expectations – to name a few – are in a constant state of evolution.

Yet, in this period of extraordinary change, our strategic thinking is still shaped by traditional planning, existing work practices and familiar experience.

Instead, we should be integrating. Strategically moulding our organisations through new approaches that evolve with changing conditions and work practices.

In our experience, integrating the many parts of an organisation into a seamless service is challenged by more than just internal factors. As a consequence, impacts of siloed thinking continues.

While some parts of the organisation may operate together for convenience or reporting purposes, there are always opportunities for improved integration. Indeed, most organisations can embrace a number of approaches in order to capitalise and enhance collaboration.

When we link the desired future state of our organisation to an integrated and holistic view of our existing operations and the settings within which we operate, we undergo a powerful and transformative process that leads to clarity and outstanding results.

Ultimately, this process can unlock the creative and strategic thinking of an organisation.

We call this Joined-Up Thinking.

A Joined-Up Thinking Approach

In his 1994 article *The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning*, Henry Mintzberg demonstrated the evolution from strategic planning to thinking – an evolution from analysis of data and outputs to vision setting and creativity.

The article was ground-breaking.

It established a new paradigm for organisational planners.

Move forward over 20 years and more has changed than even Mintzberg could have predicted;

- The rapid evolution and introduction of technology, enabling more effective and efficient service delivery in new settings
- The cost of healthcare in acute environments is becoming increasingly unsustainable – new approaches to service delivery are required

- Patients expect the right service delivered in the right time at the right place
- Consumers view their role in healthcare as active participants and shared decision makers with their clinicians – not as medical experts, but as experts of self
- The burden of disease is changing; consumers have to actively participate in self-management for chronic illness and engage more with a network of clinicians over their lifetime

In spite of this evolution, the paradigm for strategic planning in many organisations has remained largely the same; lagging behind - rather than leading - transformation planning.

The Challenges to Joined-Up Thinking

Healthcare v are frequently challenged to forecast factors outside of their local environments.

Factors such as technological innovation, demographic changes, new demand markets and new ways and approaches of thinking, working and delivering services can all affect the future of a health service.

To navigate this uncertainty, a health service must capitalise on transformational and organisational planning; routinely reviewing its strategic direction and aligning this with its operational and asset portfolio.

While simple in concept, Joined-Up Thinking is often constrained due a number of factors:

Process driven

In our experience, the strategic planning process for healthcare organisations – whether for corporate or clinical governance, capital delivery or other requirements – is often viewed as a mandatory organisational process, rarely capturing true innovation and transformation initiatives.

But planning should not be viewed as a static and isolated event. It requires regular review and should be driven by end-to-end requirements.

Isolation

We often see organisations working in internal silos. In most instances, these silos are unintentional, but appear due to the nature of the work environment. In some cases, they are due to conflict or communication breakdown. Whatever the cause, this lack of integration can result in providers becoming disconnected from their markets and result in further barriers to service access.

The presence of siloed working should be seen as an alarm bell for the organisation. It is a key cultural limitation that strategic organisational planners should identify and challenge.

Disconnect between strategy and implementation

Often organisations are on the right path with the right approaches, however structural limitations, insufficient planning and lack of coordination limit the effective implementation of Joined-Up Thinking.

Innovation

Day to day operational requirements often take precedence over strategic planning processes. Joined-Up Thinking requires a consistent approach to creativity and vision setting. Often, the future state of the organisation is unknown, but a focus on innovation seeks to bridge this gap, providing a vision for how the organisation can function in the future.

Joined-Up Thinking allows individual activities to be coordinated to meet the ongoing needs of people and communities; achieving value for money and the best solutions. Without integration, individual activities will deliver unintended impacts on other activities, hindering the realisation of outstanding results.

What Does Joined-Up Thinking Look Like?

Healthcare organisations must build integration frameworks with their people – clinicians, patients, consumers, administration and support staff, government agencies, community networks and other partners – to ensure planning considers the full range of stakeholders and interests

Importantly, Joined-Up Thinking should look to the future and find more effective and creative ways to deliver services.

Joined-Up Thinking starts with a few key questions:

1. **What are we trying to achieve?** The long term aspirations, vision, mission statement and strategy of an organisation need to be clearly articulated and shared between members to ensure collective understanding and drive.
2. **Why are we trying to achieve this?** What does success look like and does the vision reflect our core business?
3. **What will help us achieve our goal?** What are the key impediments and what is required to overcome these challenges? Joined-Up Thinking promotes diverse and interdisciplinary thinking, collective ideas which may often not be considered if addressed in isolation.
4. **Who will help us achieve our goal?** Joined-Up Thinking promotes engagement between those who can help best rather than working in isolation. This may include a combination of internal and external support.
5. **Where can we innovate?** Often innovation starts by asking the question and proactively looking for new ways to deliver and plan. Are there ways to achieve less with more? Are there ways to be more flexible and accommodating to consumer requirements?



The Elements of Joined-Up Thinking

Approaches to Joined-Up Thinking must be comprehensive and consider the full suite of stakeholders, processes and requirements, both internal and external to the organisation. Embedding a culture of integration is not an overnight process – it must be supported by leadership with senior stakeholder participation to actively promote enhanced collaboration.

Foundation to Successful Joined-Up Thinking Approaches

Healthcare organisations can recognise significant benefits by promoting enhanced collaboration to achieve strategic and operational organisation objectives. The approaches we have seen are different in each organisation – but there are a number of commonalities:

Engagement

While strategic planning has traditionally sat at the head of the organisation, it should invite participation from all levels in an encouraging, open and active manner. Collaboration should occur vertically, horizontally and cyclically. Planning should actively seek new ways of doing the things you do every day – and the best way to encourage this is through integration between teams.

Strategic Foresight

There are always new and better ways to achieve. Often there are other ways to do more with less. Strategic planning processes look to the market and seek to include innovation in service delivery. Healthcare organisations who are leaders in transformation and organisational change, seek to actively implement new technology, engage differently with consumers and seek new ways to do things.

Continuity

A well-documented and integrated planning process should span throughout the organisation, promoting a culture of engagement, innovation, planning and support. The vision should continue to be tested throughout the year(s) to ensure relevance and success.

Specificity

An integrated planning process should communicate, in specific and measurable terms, the outcomes of the process and when they will be implemented. Effective governance controls should ensure the articulated vision is achieved.

Our Approach to Joined-Up Thinking

Donald Cant Watts Corke has seen the benefits to a Joined-Up culture internally and knows this approach directly benefits our clients.

Instead of bringing siloed consultants to our projects - internally and for our clients - we embrace an integrated approach that brings together strategic health, cost, project and facilities planning.

By having multiple disciplines under the one roof, our experts don't work in isolation; they inform, energise and boost each other.

Even when only one of our discipline teams is involved in a project, they still bring with them the Joined-Up Thinking that frequently results in reduced costs and increased efficiencies.



Interested in Hearing More About Joined-Up Thinking?

Advisory is the Donald Cant Watts Corke solution to the challenges facing the health sector.

Our experts cover strategic health planning, cost planning, project planning and facilities planning – so you can bring one or more of these services to your project.

We approach health in a different way:

Our solutions are people centric

We generate new ideas and thoughts by collaborating with your teams and actively working with you to understand your organisational challenges.

We challenge the status quo

Our solutions are built on a best practice framework that integrates governance, change and risk management.

We understand health

We understand each organisation is different with unique challenges. Our team of thought leaders and technical experts can work with you to understand these challenges, identify objectives and implement solutions.



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