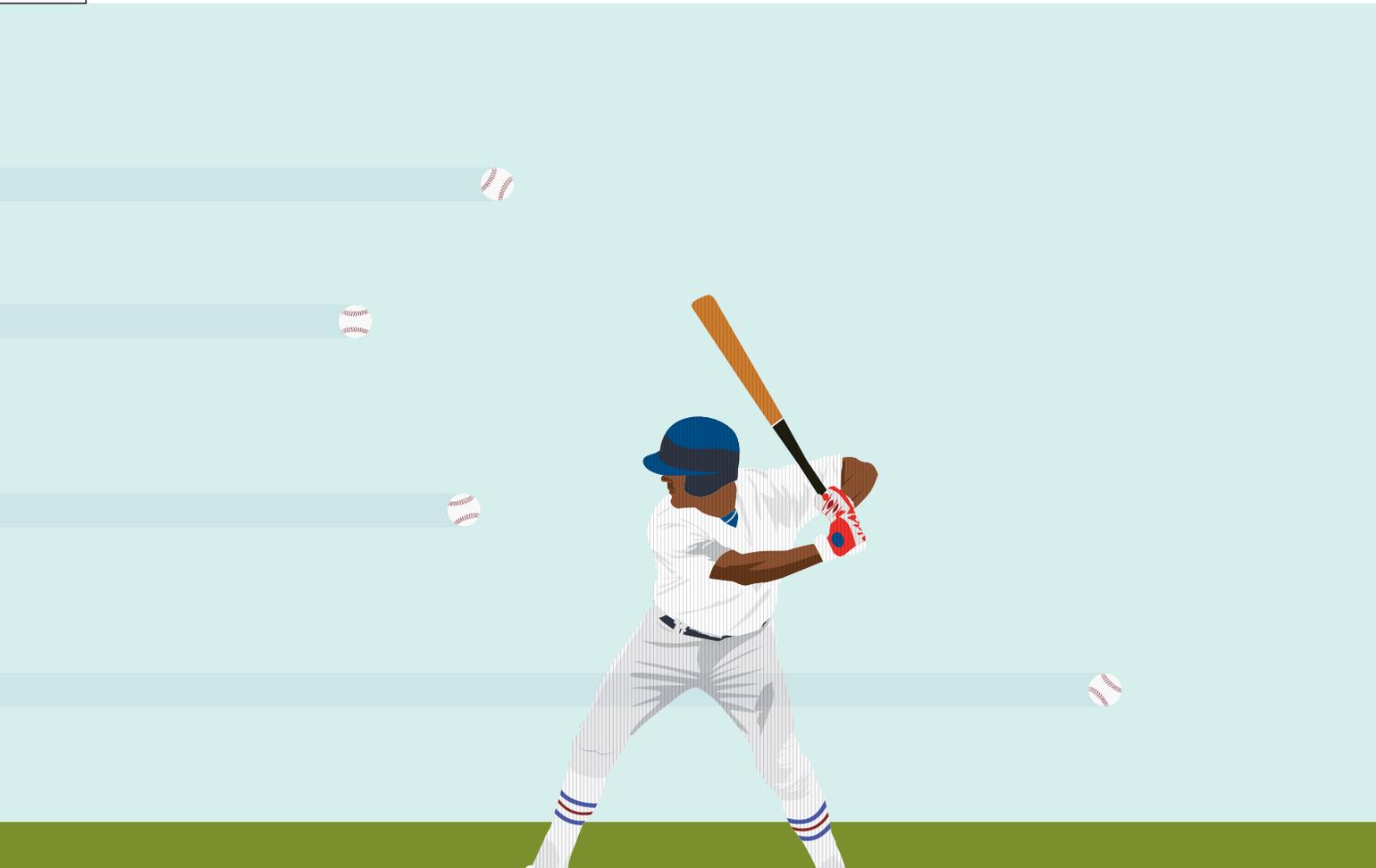


# Why the Right Planning Could Have Sent the Yankees to the Playoffs

BY REBECCA PARKER



Aligning your company's products, operations, customers, and technologies behind a common strategic plan could yield a home run.

Strategic planning enables a business to transform new opportunities into tangible outcomes through the execution and development of aligned goals and initiatives. Business and Process Analysis (BPA) is a framework consultants use to identify business needs and problems and determine solutions to them. BPA provides value by enabling the alignment of strategic objectives to its products, operations, customers, and technologies.

Strategic planning and BPA — how do we connect them? Using a baseball analogy, the 2014 Yankees team could have used strategic planning and BPA. The New York Yankees spent a lot more money than any other baseball team on older players who were constantly hurt and not at their peak, and still missed the playoffs in 2014 and saw their attendance decline.

So why didn't the Yankees make it to the playoffs? What could they have done differently? Why did their attendance decline? Why didn't they win more games since they spent so much money on players? In order to answer these questions, let's compare the Yankees to a company by breaking it down into products, operations, customers, and technologies.

## PRODUCTS

A product has value that can be purchased by a customer and also serves a need or want in a market. The Yankees' product is the entertainment factor they provide to their fans and sponsors. Fans are most entertained by and interested in a product when it is prestigious and successful, or in the Yankees' example, when they win games. Winning measures the success of the Yankees' product, and since attendance was declining in 2014, we can assume the product was not successful. How does a company prevent this from happening? How do they know if the products align with the customer and business needs?

## OPERATIONS

Business operations are those tasks and activities that a company carries out to produce the services or goods (aka product) that it provides to its customers. If the Yankees' product is the entertainment they provide, then the internal operations of the Yankees are the team's focus on player development, scouting, talent development, etc. Management may decide if it needs to invest more money to get the bigger names and build a strong defense and offense. But how does a company ensure its operations support its strategic objectives? If the Yankees want to sell more of their product, then they need to make sure they are getting the right players, not just the expensive ones.

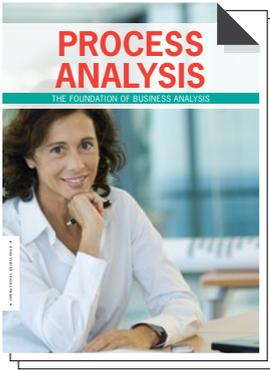
## CUSTOMERS

A customer is the recipient of a product obtained from a seller in exchange for financial or other valuable consideration. If the Yankees' product is entertainment, then their customers are their fans. Customers buy into the team's product through attending games, purchasing goods with the team logo, and supporting the team throughout the season. Customers care about the product, and if the product is not good or not what they expect, they will stop buying. In this example, customers will stop attending games and purchasing goods. So if the Yankees knew their customers were not satisfied with their product, where did they go wrong? What could they have done differently to ensure customer satisfaction?

## TECHNOLOGIES

Technology is the application of information in the production of goods and services (products), and it exists to enable and empower a company. Let's say the Yankees' technologies are how they evaluate their individual players, the overall team, and potential talent using scouts and statistics, as well as the support staff who develop the talent, heal injured players,





#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Refer to the “Process Analysis: The Foundation of Business Analysis” article from the spring 2013 *Jabian Journal* for detailed insight into why business analysis and process analysis are tightly coupled.

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provide coaching, etc. The data they use might seem important, like on-base percentage and batting average, but are they using the right statistics and scouting strategies? Are the coaches investing in the right players to enable more wins? How do companies know if the technologies they use are telling the right story and supporting their business? The Yankees invested more money in players than any other baseball team, but it was clear they invested in the wrong players.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING

Now that we are thinking of the Yankees as a company, let’s assume they went through a form of strategic planning and developed a vision for 2014 to make the playoffs. While strategic planning enables organizations to determine a practical course of action, the strategy isn’t always successfully executed. According to Helen Mitchell with Strategic Management Resources, the No. 1 strategic planning mistake is lack of integration: “For strategy to be effective, it must be aligned and integrated with the organizational or people plans and the operational or business plans.”

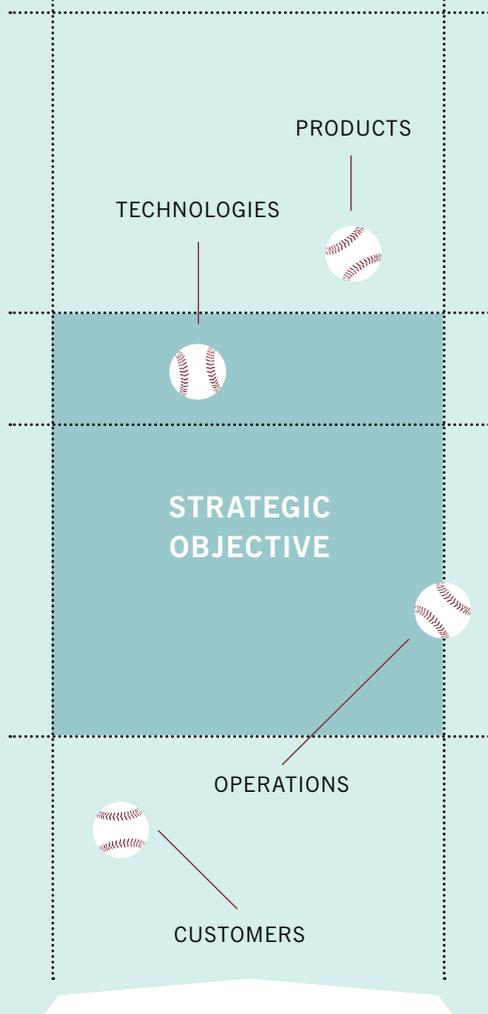
The entire Yankees’ organization should be focused on evolving into its envisioned state of making the 2014 playoffs. But how do you arrive at the end state? If there is not a plan with tactical and tangible steps to realize this vision, the products, operations, customers, and technologies could be misaligned and executing towards a different vision. The individual efforts of IT and the business could contribute to a company’s success, but will not guarantee the overall goal is achieved.

#### BUSINESS AND PROCESS ANALYSIS

The purpose of BPA is to enable the alignment of strategic objectives to its products, operations, customers, and technologies. This alignment operationalizes a company’s strategy to achieve targets – it puts priorities into action.

How could the Yankees have more clearly articulated their vision and ensured their products, operations, customers, and technologies were being driven towards the same goal? Let’s say the Yankees identified the following strategic objectives to realize their vision of making the playoffs: improve pitching and increase the number of players to get on base. If the Yankees’ goal was to make the 2014 playoffs, then the best approach would be to get the key representatives in the room to ensure alignment to the vision: their players, coaches, scouts, customer reps, and even team management. When the Yankees were driving towards getting more players on base, they should have made sure everyone understood why this was a priority. The scouts should have been looking for new recruits with speed to steal bases and recruits who had patience to get walked, rather than looking for stronger defensive players. If one area of your company has its own priorities, chances are it is not aligned to the overall organization’s goals. According to the Bleacher Report, the Yankees have decided that “going after mid-market pitchers and position players – where the better values can be found – is a better idea, particularly after ponying up last season didn’t exactly do wonders for the franchise’s fate in 2014.” The Yankees have learned an important lesson about not being able to properly execute against a strategy.

THE PURPOSE OF BPA  
IS TO ENABLE THE ALIGNMENT  
OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES TO  
ITS PRODUCTS, OPERATIONS,  
CUSTOMERS, AND TECHNOLOGIES.



Imagine your company is starting a project that you feel is important to your company's success and your own. How do you know if the project aligns with your strategic objectives and is worth investing in? By applying BPA, you will be able to identify business needs or challenges and correctly respond to them. BPA begins with a process-based conversation to make sure everyone (business and IT) is speaking the same language and involved in key decisions.

BPA helps identify and define the key processes across your company (not just the area the project falls into). This enables you to identify all impacted areas up front – across stakeholder groups, technologies, and process areas. Since BPA engages both the business and IT through the entire analysis effort, it naturally facilitates collaboration between the two. Once you've got the key players in the room who represent your customers, products, operations, and technologies, only then can you ensure your project will be successful. BPA is the tool that will get your organization aligned and focused on fulfilling your goals. If BPA can help the Yankees, what can it do for you?



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