

Staying Connected

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Business services

PRISM is expanding its regional business and partnering with other firms for work across the nation.

Aligning resources

PRISM assists the Washington, D.C. Metro Area Transit Authority align its resources with newly developed strategy.

Group genius

PRISM was a member of the "knowledge worker crew" for The Foresight Institute's "group genius" weekend in Palo Alto, California.

Consensus building

CoNexus® helps a diverse twenty-four member Union-Endicott Central School planning team accelerate through a comprehensive district planning process with powerful results.

Optimal thinking

Do you get in thinking ruts? The battery's dead...but you continue to turn the key. Check out these tips for recharging, starting the engine and moving down the idea highway—pedal to the metal.

Business services

PRISM Decision Systems helps you accelerate and improve planning with

- Efficient group decision processes
- CoNexus®, a state-of-the-art group decision system.

Efficient strategic planning

Using the full suite of CoNexus® voting applications, PRISM can accelerate a team's ability to

- Formulate a mission and vision
- Agree on performance targets
- Understand priorities
- Align resources
- Plan for implementation.

The unique CoNexus® "profiling" capability helps planning teams quickly distinguish between high- and low-leverage strategies—and therefore identify immediate, high-impact priorities.

Stakeholder planning

Recently, PRISM used CoNexus® to assist multiple-stakeholder planning efforts for the Greater Boston Visitor and Convention Bureau, the Broome Workforce Development System, and the Union Endicott School District. (See article on back page.)

Multiple criteria decision-making

Faced with a controversial decision? Saddled with positional and emotional debate? The CoNexus® decision matrix allows teams to make sound decisions by assessing multiple options against weighted criteria in a rational decision process.

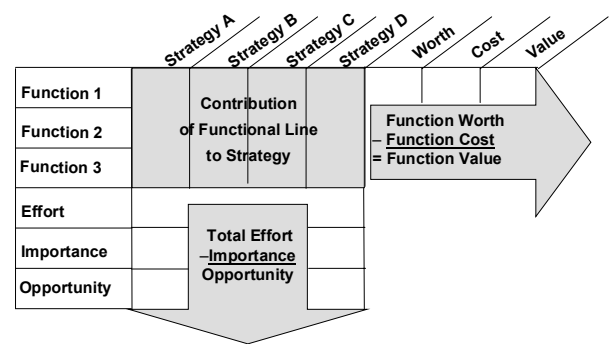
Training

PRISM offers training in efficient team decision-making, including creative problem solving, conflict resolution and consensus building.

Aligning resources

PRISM recently led the Washington, D.C. Metro Area Transit Authority's HR group through a dynamic five-year strategy session. Over two intense days in May, the group agreed to a mission, a vision, a set of weighted strategies and one-year

CoNexus® Systems Analysis Matrix



priorities. They also used CoNexus® to assess current resource allocation against the newly prioritized strategies. They found critical gaps.

The CoNexus® matrix allows for the organization's functions to be evaluated for their contribution to each strategy. The idea is that there needs to be a match between a strategy's relative importance and the resources devoted to implement it.

Matching resources to strategy

CoNexus® dropped the HR group's newly weighted strategies across the top of a matrix. Each HR function was listed down the side. The team then used radio response keypads to assess the degree to which each function contributed to each strategy on a 1 to 9 scale.

After the group voted the last cell in the matrix, CoNexus® displayed

- *Function worth*: the contribution of each function to strategy. (*Over*)

Aligning cont'd

- **Function value:** a function's worth minus its cost to the organization. Functions that cost more than they are worth are ripe for re-allocation. Or they need to refocus and better contribute to strategy.
- **Reallocation opportunities:** if the total effort of the organization is less or greater than a strategy's importance, there is opportunity to reallocate or deploy new resources.

The matrix vote revealed that two functions within the HR group cost significantly more than they were worth. The vote also showed that there was a huge gap between the current and required resources to implement the most critical strategy.

"Because of the rapid prototyping by CoNexus® and PRISM's superb facilitation, the HR group gained great insight into its future direction," said Dr. David J. Koehn, Chief Learning Officer at McDonald Bradley, Inc., the lead consultant on the HR group intervention.

Group genius

Imagine manufacturing at the atomic level with atomic precision. Building one atom at a time at a scale 1000 times smaller than done today. Recently in California's Silicon Valley, The Foresight Institute hosted its "Group Genius" weekend to map a thirty-year future for nanotechnology. As a "knowledge worker" at the event, PRISM had a unique glimpse into the future.

Nanotechnology

Nanotechnology will involve atomic-sized computers called "nano-disassemblers" that create "atom streams" from any raw material. "Nano-assemblers" use the stream of individual atoms to manufacture anything the laws of physics allow.

The implications of such a breakthrough are staggering and include possibilities for radical life extension, creation of "designer" people, and machine intelligence. Since all manufacturing will be done by nano-computers, there will be

Optimal thinking tips

You're in a dynamic, collegial planning session. Suddenly the great excitement and creative energy deflate as the group moves to select a set of options. Participants retreat to their parochial interests. Negotiation supplants invention. Turf rules. What to do?

Redefine the pie

Identify key unmet interests by asking *why* the solution set is inadequate. Then innovate—design new options, enlarge the solution set, and address each key unmet interest.

A parable

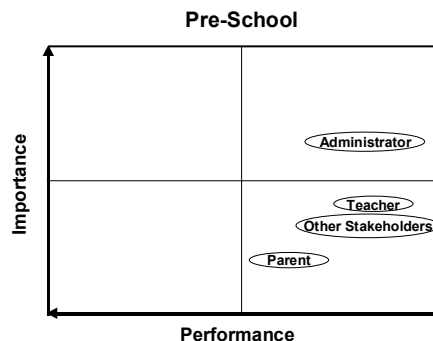
A camel driver willed half his estate to his oldest son, a third to his middle son and a ninth to his youngest son. Unfortunately, his estate consisted of seventeen camels—a real problem for the boys! As they argued vehemently, a stranger with a single camel passed by and inquired what was the matter. Upon hearing of their difficulty, he gave them his camel. After thanking the stranger and accepting his camel, the sons immediately agreed that the oldest should have nine of the eighteen camels; the middle son, six; and the youngest, two. They then returned the remaining camel to the stranger, who went on his way.

- Thanks for the parable to Angel Sanchez, my good friend from Mexico City

little need for human labor. Further, what we now consider the source of a nation's wealth—coal, oil, uranium, etc.—will have little value, since each could be manufactured.

Consensus building

School districts are renowned for deadlock. With so many stakeholders, reaching agreement seems nearly impossible. Or is it?



Understanding diversity

After drafting five-year strategies for improving student performance, a Union Endicott Central School (UE) team used CoNexus® radio response keypads to vote on

- The relative importance of each strategy to great success
- Current district performance on each strategy.

CoNexus® immediately displayed an "opportunity profile" showing very important strategies that are currently under performing. This picture of the

group's assessment of strategy is a powerful tool for moving to agreement. If there is disagreement, the vote can be disaggregated by sub-group within the room. In the scatter diagram below left, for example, we see how four sub-groups assessed the pre-kindergarten strategy.

UE Superintendent Dr. Dennis Sweeney believes "we now have a comprehensive plan with high-level consensus on key priorities for improving academic performance. This is exactly what we sought in the multi-stakeholder planning process."

Engagements

Annot Medical Services
Blue Marble Corporation for work with the United States Navy
Broome County, New York
Innovation Systems Group for work with *The Los Angeles Times*
Irma S. Mann Strategic Marketing for work with the Greater Boston Visitor and Convention Bureau
Leadership 2000 for work with Telcordia Technologies and SAIC
Litton-Tasc for work with The National Institute for Health
McDonald-Bradley for work with the Washington DC Transit Authority
New York State Electric & Gas
Numerous educational institutions
Times Mirror Company
United Health Services, Inc.
United Medical Associates