Objectives
So how do you make it happen?

Strategy
Probably the most misused word in the business dictionary

Ideas
The science of creativity

Execution
A great idea is nothing without innovative execution

Measurement
Measuring the success of your marketing communications campaigns
The creative industry is easy meat for those keen to ridicule the committed right-brainers amongst us. Too much freethinking and not enough pragmatic application just don’t serve any useful purpose, they cry. You can dream as much as you like, but left-brainers want solutions that work. Why can’t the solution be beautiful?
Designers, engineers, architects often get it wrong, but when they get it right, life is enriched. Yes, the Millau viaduct in south west France helps solve a notorious traffic black spot, but doesn’t it do it in the most uplifting and dramatic fashion? When the best of the left and the right brain are working in synch, then the most creative and the most practical ideas result.

So committed are we to this approach at Fifth Ring, brilliant ideas being the output of rigorous thinking, that we’ve created our own mnemonic to make sure that no one forgets.

OSIEM (objectives, strategy, ideas, execution and measurement) is the battle cry. With a rather pleasing symmetry, these FIVE phases capture the process, and inside this issue of FIVE magazine, our contributors demonstrate the singular importance of each part to the delivery of the whole. Alison Lyall, director of Harnser Group outlines both why and how to set your corporate objectives, and critically offers a methodology for managing your performance to check that the objectives are being met.

As director of business positioning I review landmark thinking in the strategy arena, stressing the importance of not only how a business differentiates itself, but critically, how to articulate this differentiation. Knowing what you want to achieve and how you are going to compete then opens the field for ideas to make this happen. Creative head, Stewart Fallowfield, flies the flag for the right-brainers, with some stimulating and provocative thoughts on finding that killer idea. So what? Even with the idea, if you can’t execute, then what have you achieved.

Rachel Camm, Fifth Ring’s recently appointed UK client services director, knows full well that clients only come back for more when the promise has been fulfilled. Faultless and timely delivery is essential. And it must be on or under budget too. Which just leaves Susan Parker, Fifth Ring’s PR senior account manager in Dubai to argue the case for the importance of measurement. In a fascinating article, pulling all the strings together, the evidence is there for all to see. Demonstrable and in line with the objectives, the results have been delivered.

OSIEM works for us, it works for our clients, and it could work for you too. At the very least, it will give you a proven methodology to make your thinking visible, thereby satisfying your left brain and within the parameters of the challenge, appeasing your right brain too.
Creating and sustaining a performance culture throughout a company is something many senior executives want and need, but find almost impossible to achieve. So how do you make it happen?
Don’t reinvent the wheel
Achievable objectives that reflect external benchmarks, but adjusted trends, are a good starting point. Some objectives are hard to determine, but be clear about where the gaps are and what you are doing to fill them.

Use a dashboard – regularly updated
A simple, one-page report with all of the above on it, which will work at each level of the company – with the same headline value drivers that continually reinforce the message from the top. A regular monitoring process that has teeth linked to the 12-month tactical plan and budget. Traffic lights are effective – the visual impact is immediate and hard to ignore.

Let it run
Be confident in the framework you have developed and let the system run for at least 12 months before reviewing any of the measures. It takes time to get the system up and running, to communicate what the outcomes are and to create enough trend data that can be used to forecast performance.

Have an effective internal communication strategy
Never assume anything – keep the messages simple, but give the detail and be prepared to be challenged. Going through the process creates visibility and can secure a small group of ‘champions’ who can deal with questions on an informal basis working in parallel with any written material.

Offer well-structured incentives
Good performance is a prerequisite of business success whatever the company does. Having a transparent performance culture leaves no doubt about the relationship between effort and reward. Those who are uncomfortable with this approach need to be able to raise their concerns and there is a good way of doing this.

Use an appraisal system
A company will not get the performance it needs unless staff are able to deliver it. So let staff raise concerns about development needs, forthcoming objectives and to secure the support they need from their line manager.

Finally, to turn a performance framework into part of the way we do things, that delivers on your objectives, you have to have clear leadership. If the CEO or MD doesn’t care deeply about the performance of their business, why should anyone else?
Whenever you see or hear the word strategy, an adjective or qualifier is often attached. There’s corporate strategy, marketing strategy, communications strategy and PR strategy. Occasionally strategy is relegated to role of adjective itself. ‘Strategic visions’ compete with ‘visionary strategies’ for our attention. Add in a soupçon of ‘mission’ and a drizzle of ‘values’ and what have you got? Confusion, probably. The winners are the gurus, with books and seats to sell; the losers are those on the end of the message. Just what is it that you are saying to me? What am I supposed to do next?

Strategy by Peter Lyall, Group business positioning director, UK
Simplicity must be the driving force. The challenge between strategy and action totally transparent. You have to make the thinking visible.

But what is the thinking, the strategy bit all about? If you scour the airline bookshop shelves and dip into the DIY MBAs, freely available online, you’ll end up none the wiser. However, if you do alight on the name Michael Porter, stop. Go no further. At $250,000 a day, he is a bit pricey, but he has added to the sum of management knowledge, not just with his famous ‘Porter’s Five Forces’, but critically with his own views on strategy. For Porter, strategy is not about ‘operational effectiveness’. Being good at what you do (“assimilating, attaining and extending best practice”, as he describes it) is just part of the game. Having a strategy is about “creating a unique and sustainable competitive advantage” and this will mean making trade-offs. You will know you have a strategy when you have decided not to do something, something that may have been instrumental in getting you to where you are today.

Porter’s distinctions have been simplified even further. Ask yourself, what does it take to ‘play’ and what does it take to ‘win’ in our market? Being able to define, articulate and maximise the win factors sets you apart. That’s what makes the difference; and that’s how others come to recognise you. It also helps add discipline to an organisation. If everyone knows what makes the difference, then they can avoid wasting time and resource of the ‘play’ factors that others might be better placed to supply. Outsourcing becomes an attractive option.

Of course, it’s one thing to beat the competition, when everyone is playing (roughly!) by the same rules. But what if you could change the rules, to your own advantage? When everyone is promoting mobile phones, create and own your own marketspace by including a digital camera and an MP3 player too. Doing things differently has been defined as having a ‘blue ocean’ strategy. In the red ocean (blood-red, through margin-shredding competition) everyone is battling after a share of the existing pot. In the blue ocean, you are making the competition irrelevant. For a time, you are breaking the cost/value trade-off, as customers will see the value you offer, but be unable to ascertain your costs. You will need to align your whole business around this model, but until the competition catches up, you will know that you have created and captured new demand.

Strategically, then you are out on your own. You have a simple story to tell and it’s clear how you differentiate yourself from the competition. Now comes the challenging piece of articulating your story as quickly and as simply as possible. Can you express yourself in four words or less? If you can, as Nike so brilliantly does, then you know that not only do you have a strategy, you also have a ‘strategic principle’! But of course, that’s another story.

Assimilating, attaining and extending best practice, is just part of the game. Having a strategy is about creating a unique and sustainable competitive advantage.

References
- Gadiesh, O and Gilbert, JL, (May 2001) Transforming Corner-office strategy into frontline action, HBR On Point
The capacity to create and understand ideas is a defining feature of human beings and the world we live in today is a result of those ideas. Thinking is just as much an organ of perception as our eyes and ears. Just as the eye perceives colour and the ear sounds, thinking perceives ideas.
Well, yes, in a way, there is. With regard to the ‘scientific’ principles which underlie the production of ideas, James Webb Young, ‘Ad man’, copywriter and professor, suggested there are two really important ones, the first – that an idea is nothing more nor less than a new combination of old elements and the second – the capacity to bring old elements into new combinations depends largely on the ability to see relationships. Webb suggested that this is where minds differ the most; some see facts or elements as separate bits of knowledge, while others see them as links in a chain of knowledge. So what makes an idea, a great idea? Well, it’s a combination of things, but the two most common criteria people judge a ‘good idea’ on are uniqueness and effectiveness.

Uniqueness is probably the most challenging, because it depends on how you define ‘unique’. If you were to take the dictionary definition – ‘there is one and only one’, then it’s likely that no idea is truly unique. Instead, as per the process described by James Webb Young, it is simply a new combination of old elements and it’s the more ‘creative’ of us who are able to do this successfully, time and time again.

So how can we guarantee an idea’s effectiveness? Well this is where, objectives strategy and measurement all come into play. Being able to ‘prove’ the worth of an idea through the strategic thinking that preceded it and the measurement tools that follow it has not only made it easier for business managers to see the real value of creative thinking in relation to their own business objectives but has also allowed creative teams to produce ideas for marketing communications that really accomplish what it’s supposed to. Inform and influence. When it comes to a buying decision or a brand preference the idea has to persuade people towards a specific course of action or perception. Wally Olins, renowned practitioner of corporate identity and branding, describes this as “seduction”.

So in summary, the partnership of sound strategic thinking and good creative ideas is a powerful tool and it gives a new and exciting approach to marketing communications that produce results not just uniquely, but more importantly, results for the business that actually does have a positive effect on the bottom line. Simply put, ideas without strategy is not enough and will not necessarily have a positive effect on your profits.
Once objectives and strategy are agreed and the creative ideas are flowing, those responsible for its delivery should be engaged in the process to make the strategic thinking visible. The most creative of ideas can fall by the wayside if the delivery is not handled correctly, so it’s important to get it right.

Execution by Rachel Camm, client services director, UK

Execution
A great idea is nothing without innovative execution
The best execution depends on a number of factors and throughout the process it is vital that the team working on the campaign or communications plan understands the bigger picture in terms of the objectives of the business. Everything should be done for a strategic reason and an approach should always be challenged to ensure it meets the brief and is the best and most efficient option. The ultimate aim should be to increase the value of the business.

It is important to operate in an honest, transparent way, keeping lines of communication fully open. This should involve listening and then giving targeted recommendations. Every business is different in terms of how they prefer to interact and communicate with each other; but regular updates and feedback are always necessary and it’s important to be flexible.

When working with third-party consultants on the delivery of a communication plan it’s crucial that both parties secure and maintain each other’s support and both should play a part in the creation of the idea and the execution. For example, a successful ad campaign should see creatives and client working as one formidable team, both driving towards the ultimate goal.

A great idea can be ruined if it is not planned and thought through properly. Is the idea tying in with an event? What is the lead-in time? Thinking of the desired result and then plotting the actions back helps to ensure all angles are covered. Once a plan is in place and a timeline agreed, it is vital that you stick to it. If things do change then immediately review the plan and make the necessary adjustments in timelines, so that expectations are still met.

On multi-disciplined projects involving a number of creative teams it is important that the different strands come together to meet the common goal. This may involve regular team update meetings and sharing information using tools like project management software, which help bring together the whole marcomms planner.

Flexibility is key for successful execution, as there may be times when goalposts need to move to tie in with a change in the business's objectives. For example a merger gets brought forward or an office relocation is delayed. This is when the open channels of communication come into their own and the marcomms planner is adapted to suit.

What’s important to remember in all of this is to enjoy making the thinking visible and have fun. An energetic, enthusiastic, ideas-filled team focused on the overall objective is a winning one.
Measurement

Measuring the success of your marketing communications campaigns

Measurement by Susan Parker, senior PR account manager, UAE

Measuring the success of your marketing communications campaigns has become more than simply an overload of lots of figures and percentages. Clients are seeking a greater level of detail in regard to their return on investment that are not just monetary.
Accountability, transparency and consistency are critical across the global communications sector. Short-term measurement like advertising value equivalent ‘formulas’ and circulation figures are excellent tools to determine immediate marketing results to help steer investments from less productive activities to those that are more productive. But the real effectiveness of marketing communications can only be revealed in the more long-term measurement criteria like brand building value and ROI analysis.

In order to measure long-term success and effectiveness, objectives must be set at the outset and the measurement methods put in place should take into consideration the way the industry has developed over the years. For example, in measuring the success of PR, simply producing a doorstep of clippings, with media space calculations attached is meaningless. The system has to get more sophisticated, for instance, is the article positive or negative? What is the client’s share of voice? How many mentions does the client get in the whole article? You may think your ‘name in lights here and there’ makes you look good, but of all those readers who scanned the paper that morning, how many actually read your article and how many of those were actually your target audience? If you are lucky, it will be around a measly five percent.

The industry must accept that a new model has to be adopted – one that includes short-term and long-term measurement methods and defines not just how much ‘exposure’ there is of the brand in the relevant market places, but how behaviours changed, because of the exposure. It needs to highlight what ‘engagement’ there has been with key audiences, what interaction has resulted, how much target audience perceptions were ‘influenced’ and what ‘action’ has been taken as a result of the communications.

A recent step forward in the measurement area was the official launch of the Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles in July 2010. The Barcelona Principles redefine the ways in which communications campaigns should most effectively be measured. There are seven principles to be followed:

1. **Set goals and objectives:** goals and measurement are the fundamental principles of any campaign. Goals must be quantitative and address the audience the campaign is designed to influence – see our first article in this issue for more on this subject.

2. **Measure outcome not output:** outcomes include shifts in awareness, comprehension, attitude and behaviour. Measurement should be tailored towards business objectives and there should be quantitative measures in place, such as benchmarks and tracking surveys.

3. **Measure the effect on business results:** measure the effects of the quantity and quality of outputs on sales and other business metrics.

4. **Quantity and quality of media measurement:** overall clip counts and general impressions are meaningless as a single show of success. Media measurement should account for impressions among the audience, the tone of voice, third-party endorsement, prominence as relevant to the medium, credibility and relevance to the audience.

5. **Advertising Value Equivalents are not the value of PR:** AVEs do not measure the value of PR or inform future activity; they merely measure the cost of media space. If a comparison between paid media is to be made, it should be done using negotiated ad costs and reflect the quality of coverage, physical space of coverage and portion of relevant coverage. Multipliers should never be applied.

6. **Measure social media:** social media measurement is a discipline, not a tool. There must be clearly defined goals and outcomes and media content analysis should be supported by web and search analytics, sales and CRM data, survey data etc. Focus on ‘conversation’ and ‘communities’ and understand the reach and influence these have.

7. **Transparency and ‘Replicability’ are paramount to sound measurement:** criteria for measurement should be set and adhered to – specify methodology, include sources, analysis.

When so much time, money and creativity is spent on making sure brands are communicating with their audiences, why fall down at the last hurdle and the one step, which most solidly shows the value of marketing campaigns? A robust model for measurement is a vital tool and choosing one that best reflects the objectives of your campaign is imperative.
Contributors to Five

Peter Lyall
Group business positioning director, UK

Peter Lyall started life in advertising in London then became a management consultant. As well as his role at Fifth Ring he works with a number of business schools and specialises in getting senior people to agree as to what it is that they actually do, and how they should describe it. He loves the thought that business can be international, integrated and intelligent.

Alison Lyall
Director of corporate strategy, Harnser Group, UK

Alison has over 20 year’s experience of working with boards and executive management teams in the financial services and energy sectors on strategic and risk-management issues designed to create and protect shareholder value. She works with clients to ensure an integrated approach to the development of strategy and the management of risk-focusing.

Stewart Fallowfield
Creative director, UK

Stewart brings over 25 years’ experience of working in the UK with high-profile clients in the creation, implementation and management of corporate identities and corporate communications. He has been responsible for managing several large branding projects in the energy sector and hands-on experience in many other aspects of design.

Rachel Camm
Client services director, UK

Rachel joined Fifth Ring in 2002 after working in agency PR in London, Leeds and Newcastle. A graduate from the University of Leeds, she headed up the PR team at Fifth Ring before being appointed client services director in 2010.

Susan Parker
Senior PR account manager, UAE

Susan worked as a journalist before moving into PR in 2006. She spent two years with a PR and events company in Glasgow before moving to Dubai in 2008 and joining Fifth Ring. Susan is Fifth Ring Dubai’s energy specialist.

Annette Fernandes
Director and editor of Five magazine

Having worked in the industry for 17 years both on client side and agency, Annette has been involved in most aspects of marketing. Now as a director of Fifth Ring she applies her experience to various aspects of the business.
Right People, Right Place

As a member of BBN, Fifth Ring is an integral part of a global organisation consisting of 24 member agencies and 1,700 people. Together, their marketing communications specialists give clients international and local capabilities in all major markets.

Fifth Ring’s mission is simple. It increases the value of their clients’ business by making thinking visible

FIFTH RING is a fully integrated corporate communications agency working with its clients on an international level. Since its formation in 1991 the company has grown rapidly, both geographically and in terms of the range of services it offers. It has an outstanding track record of dramatically enhancing the value and reputation of its clients’ brands, through effective communication. Fifth Ring’s client portfolio is full of companies and businesses that have been with the organisation since it started, and indeed, more and more of these clients are buying into Fifth Ring’s portfolio of services and enjoying the results that integrated communication brings.

This is a differentiated approach, as many rush to delivery without thinking first. All Fifth Ring projects are conceived and managed on an individual basis, with clear decisions made concerning the need for strategic input. Other clients are less clear and require a different approach to help them articulate their vision and strategy. Nevertheless, all Fifth Ring’s clients are looking for measurable results, based on behavioural changes.

It is this interplay of vision, culture and image that is at the heart of Fifth Ring’s strategic brand development approach, together with the capability to deliver the tactical programmes of communication appropriate to the strategy. Our services can be accessed as a stand-alone provision or as part of an integrated approach with one or a number of inputs acting in unison.

Mostly things happen as a result of planning for them but on other occasions opportunities just come along. Or do they? Fifth Ring’s vision was to be represented in the key oil producing centres of the world, but it also recognised that a further network of associates in the secondary oil & gas regions would be beneficial to the proposition. As a result of an initial chance meeting leading to awareness of their international, energy-leveraged development model, Fifth Ring was invited to join the international network of business-to-business agencies: The Business Branding Network (BBN).

BBN was formed back in 1987 and is made up of independent agencies. Their vision is to be a networked resource that will meet the need of developing international brands. BBN is a global organisation consisting of 24 member agencies and 1,700 people. Together, their marketing communications specialists give clients international and local capabilities in all major markets.

One of the magical aspects of BBN is that all members choose to become a member. Members are also the shareholders, so have a vested interest in the success of BBN, which is directly linked to their clients’ success.

Each international account is guided by a lead agency. The lead agency acts as a focal point for communication between the client and the BBN network, harnessing their global resource and implementation of the client’s international strategy. When agencies are working with clients across multiple geographies, there is constant communication between the agencies and the client. This concept has now been taken further to ‘sector’ lead agency with Fifth Ring leading BBN Energy, the specialist division of BBN, which concentrates on the global support of clients in oil & gas and renewables.

BBN has some of the most respected marketing minds in the world available to their clients. Their business is all about people. They have considerable experience collaborating with clients to build multinational marketing programmes and gain consensus among country managers. The processes and techniques to make it all happen are in place. And it’s BBN’s passion that makes the difference day in and day out.