

CASE STUDY

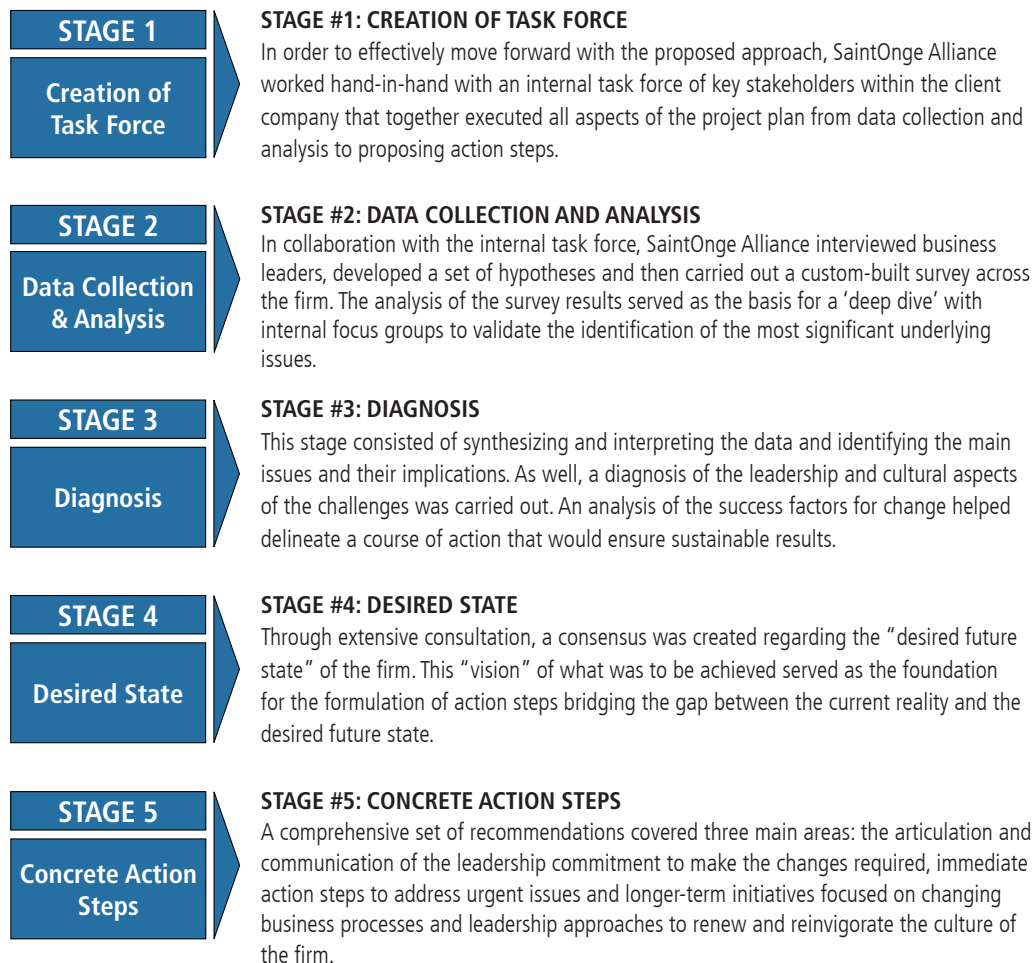
Professional Services Firm

THE CHALLENGE

The client's industry experienced a rapid change in regulation that dramatically affected their business. The client responded by implementing internal controls and oversight that adversely affected the internal climate of the firm. This in turn had a negative effect on client relationships and overall performance. SaintOnge Alliance was tasked with researching and synthesizing the underlying issues and set forth tangible recommendations for action by the leadership team that would place the firm in a position to enhance client relationships and attain a new level of performance.

THE APPROACH

SaintOnge Alliance implemented a five-step process to research, synthesize and formulate tangible recommendations for action.



INDUSTRY

Professional Services

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Rapid industry changes in regulation led to internal responses that were counter-productive.
- Loss of strategic focus and emergence of trust issues.
- Negative effect on customer relationships.
- Constraints placed on the overall level of performance.

APPROACH

- Task Force Creation
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Diagnosis
- Desired State
- Concrete Action Steps

MAJOR FINDINGS

- Need to shift from compliance-driven behavior to foster the exercise of judgment.
- Need to build the level of trust for more effective collaboration.
- Need to ensure business processes are aligned to strategic focus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendations on leadership commitment**
Clearly articulate and communicate leadership commitments and concrete action steps to realize the strategic intent.
- **Immediate Recommendations**
Remove unnecessary obstacles preventing the exercise of judgment and realignment of key processes
- **Long-Term Recommendations**
Develop well-defined leadership principles and measure the adherence to these principles in order to renew the culture with a higher level of trust across the firm.

CASE STUDY

Professional Services Firm

MAJOR FINDINGS

Through the collection and analysis of information, SaintOnge Alliance worked with an internal taskforce to identify the underlying causes of issues that became impediments to enhancing the overall level of performance of the firm.

THEMES UNCOVERED

- The application of professional judgment was being subjugated to compliance-based procedures.
- The emergence of a more imposing leadership approach eroded the trust level in the firm.
- Key business processes were not aligned to the strategic intent and did not have broad staff support.

CONSEQUENCES

- Team members didn't feel empowered to exercise judgment and adopted a compliance-driven, "play-it-safe" attitude.
- A reduction in the level of engagement and initiative had a negative impact on productivity.
- Preoccupation with inadequate internal processes took the focus away from client relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The path to effective change required the firm to first show its commitment to change (symbolic changes) and then implement immediate and long-term changes.

AFFIRMATION OF LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

The SaintOnge Alliance recommended that the senior leadership clearly state its strategic intent and support this commitment with a set of concrete action steps to affirm its resolve to drive forward with immediate or long term changes.

IMMEDIATE CHANGES

SaintOnge Alliance recommended immediate actions to address urgent issues. This was designed to bring visible changes that would confirm the commitment of the leadership. It was also geared to create the credibility and momentum required for the deeper leadership and culture change.

LONG-TERM CHANGES

Long-term recommendations were focused on changing business processes and developing well-defined leadership principles. For instance, it was recommended that the client implement a 360 degree feedback process to measure the progress being made.

RESULTS

The consultative approach adopted throughout the project resulted in the introduction of incremental changes as the study unfolded. These changes gave the work credibility and confirmed that the firm was serious in responding to the issues that were identified.