# The New England Consulting Group
## Strategic Planning Process

Most companies begin every year's strategic planning process much as they have begun previous years'. That presents two very serious problems:

1. The next several years will be nothing like the last several years.
2. Most strategic planning processes are broken to begin with.

Consistency requires little in the way of true insight. One need only project the past several years into the future (give or take a few points) and rationalize the result. (Remember Einstein's quote!)

Discontinuities are different, by definition. They require analytics into "what", insights into "why", precision into "how much", and creativity into "what if".
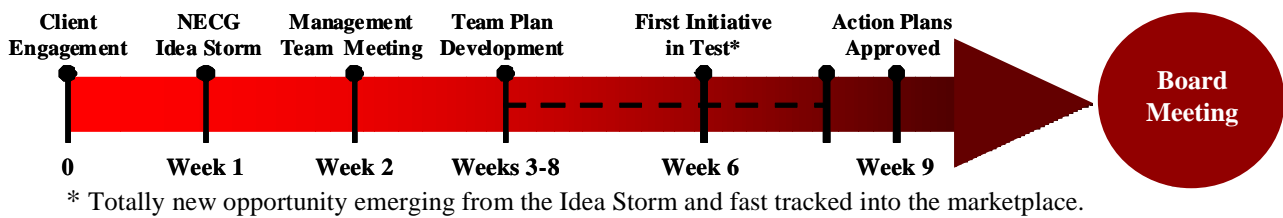
We recently presented a strategic plan to the Board of a new client whose share price had fallen precipitously. The CEO is ex-Procter and Pepsi (i.e., very sophisticated). The meeting could have been ugly.

Instead, the Board was overwhelmed; the management team was in total alignment; the strategy was fact-based, insight-driven and the strategy was presented on one page – ONE PAGE!

The process we use is bold (bottoms-up; customer-driven), disruptive (we do not start with last year's strategic plan) and innovative (we focus on real insight, not popular opinion).

Most importantly, it results in a strategic plan so simple (this client's business is very complex) that it can be reduced to a single page. It is also very fast (we began the project ten weeks before the Board meeting).

## Actual Strategic Timeline



* Totally new opportunity emerging from the Idea Storm and fast tracked into the marketplace.

The engine driving our process is a proprietary analytic tool best known as prediction markets. Yes, the same process that correctly predicted the vast majority of last year's elections. (You may know prediction markets from the best selling book *The Wisdom of Crowds* by James Surowiecki.)

This innovative approach accelerates idea flow several-fold, but it's disproportionately effective for a totally different reason – the KDI (key decision influencer) chain.

This influencer chain is large, experienced and closest to the decision – to consider, to purchase, to use, to expand and to recommend. By engaging key decision influencers in this fashion, incenting them to participate and focusing them on key performance metrics, truth emerges, even/particularly during uncertain times.

This is how Google conquered advertising, with nothing more than applied mathematics. Google didn't pretend to know everything about advertising; instead, it just assumed that better analytics would win. And Google was right.

Here's how the aforementioned client's management team evaluated our process and its results. (We always grade our work at the conclusion of an engagement.)

## Client Management Team Evaluation