# Powering Innovation
# in the Face of Scarcity

Today's organisations need to have everyone pushing in the same direction, driving innovation and channeling entrepreneurship to outcomes… this requires technical experts and executives to be on the same page.

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By: Faheem Mohammed                                    Article: 3pages.

You have probably heard this before, if you haven't said it yourself, "I told them exactly what they needed to do, but they didn't listen." Or perhaps the expression, "The (expensive, or foreign…?) consultant told them **exactly** what was proposed to them before, but they didn't listen then… now they decided it's a good idea."

All too often the suggestions and ideas of the technical experts are ignored at the expense of solving problems, capitalizing on opportunities or achieving business goals faster or more efficiently. Of course, on the flip-side, businesses are also replete with executives who constantly have to grapple with technical experts demonstrating commitment to a profession more than the business. High investments in projects or assets yielding marginal ROI, or imposition of standards that are misaligned with customer expectations are some examples of such instances.

This struggle is not new – it has been ongoing across decades with the advent of Industrialization. It has been recognized in business literature as a commonly recurring source of conflict in organisations (See ['Working in Organisations' A. Kakabadase & Vinnicombe](#)), or otherwise seen as the gap in moving Technical Expertise into Business Leadership ([see HBR's article on same here](#)). But although it is been recurring for some time, the operating context today is very different and less forgiving for businesses where this divide leads to dissent, resentment or misalignment. Increased competition, digital disruption and a more interconnected, chaotic environment characterized by scarcity and volatility across markets.

Although the response to today's reality requires a deep-seated, multi-pronged approach that engages the entire team, to address dynamics in the internal and external environments of the organisation. The basis of organisational modelling requires both the use of widely-available technology and the accompanying innovation of the operating core of the business – powered by the entrepreneurial abilities of the available technical expertise to drive transformation in ways that would create a deliver value to key stakeholder groups – be they key customer segments, regulatory bodies, shareholders or internal decision-makers.

The simple reality today is that organisations do not have the luxury of misalignment and divergent agendas / split loyalties across decision-makers and technical experts. Rather, all have to be focused on moving the organisation in the same direction and towards the same goal – to future-proof sustainability and growth (See for e.g. ['The Future of Strategy: A Transformative Approach to Strategy for a World That Won't Stand Still' by Aurik, Fabel and Jonk](#)). But if strategy belongs now and into the future to everyone in the organisation, then what this translates to is that technical experts must now be able to see what the executive sees, and be able to communicate in ways that build bridges and foster alignment, not erect barriers that push people apart. In the same vein, executives must be able to leverage the autonomy and experience of technical know-how to be able to empower and fund the innovations that would yield advantage – whether we see it as competitive or transient.

At the center of this dialogue – this alignment, if you prefer – is the ability to hone focus on specific projects that would drive agility and responsiveness of, and generate the returns that would propel the organisation as a whole into the very murky future. The expectation is that the presenter of the project in question must be robust in their assessment, and convincing in their justifications, to champion the cause and weigh the risks against the returns. With the entire organisation supporting such thrusts to fail fast and fail forward.

To this end, a powerful tool available to technical experts is that of the [Business Case](#) – which would allow the synthesis of experience,

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expertise, opportunity and business acumen, showcasing the process and outcomes, the risk alongside the reward, the technical in tandem with the business perspectives, all coming together to identify, design and deliver value for the benefit of all stakeholders involved. Forbes agrees (From Tech Expert to Business Leader: Four Keys To Navigating Your New Role).

These skills are easily attainable and adaptable – with some guidance and enough practice, this can become a weapon that allows the seasoned expert to tap into a sphere of influence and unleash a battery of resources that can reshape the future of the organisation, and its industry, to the advantage of everyone involved.

PDMA is pleased to offer its Business Case: Design and Delivery course as a self-study option to anyone, anywhere, who needs to develop or shape their business case and get the buy-in from above that would future-proof the organisation and its stakeholders in the turbulent years to come.