

At SONA, we believe that we deliver great value to our clients by combining our deep understanding of senior management issues (based both on our own long experience of being in senior management ourselves and our many subsequent engagements with top executive teams) and our wide commercial knowledge of the media sector.



This combination has allowed us to become trusted partners to management teams rather than simply remaining consultants to them. We are able to create a coaching and development environment in our engagements whilst also providing valuable business insights that our clients respect.

To consistently succeed in this way, we have found it critical to establish excellent groundwork foundations in our understanding of the detailed specifics of our clients' businesses right at the start of any engagement. Because we already understand the commercial dynamics of our clients' industry, we can do this very quickly.

But, we decided that we wanted to do more than being simply a passive receptor of information from our clients in this "discovery" phase of a project. We decided that we wanted to add value to our clients from day zero.

So, in conjunction with our colleagues at Fagandini Associates, who specialise in strategy development for companies in the media sector, we have created a two-day workshop experience which both draws out the necessary critical business information for us and, more importantly, provides new frameworks and approaches to our clients which move them forward in the way they think about their businesses.

Having used this workshop experience at the front end of extensive client projects, we realised that the workshop could deliver stand-alone value to businesses who want to walk away from the sessions with both actionable results and new strategic analysis skills that they can use themselves without necessarily committing to further engagement with SONA. Although, of course, we hope and fervently believe that you will not want to give us up once you have realised the benefits of working with us.



In fact, we are so confident of your satisfaction in the results of the workshop that we offer a money-back guarantee if you are not. How can we feel comfortable taking on a risk like that? Well, the feedback we have received from participants who have already experienced our workshops tells us that we are not really taking on much risk at all.

So What Are Your Next Steps?

In this brochure, we can only give you a broad outline of the workshop process itself and the preparation which we do in advance to ensure that you get best value from the experience.

To discuss your specific circumstances and requirements on a commercial in confidence basis, please contact us via Shane O'Neill, either at shane@shaneoneill.co.uk or on 07710 350214.

About Us

Shane O'Neill Associates (SONA) provides practical consulting and interim management services to private sector, public sector and third sector clients. We operate across a variety of markets and very different

cultures - but we have particularly deep experience and connectivity in information businesses and the public sector. Our value proposition to clients includes strategic market mapping, workflow needs analysis, stakeholder engagement, market research and 'go to market' effectiveness analyses. We do see the blue sky - but we are also highly focused on pragmatic deliverables!

Fagandini Associates is an established consultancy firm offering strategic business expertise and services, to the media, information, e-commerce and related sectors. Our assignments principally cover business planning, strategy development, product/service launch, change management, acquisitions, disposals and assistance in raising capital for our clients. Clients range from major corporates (including Pearson, Daily Mail & General Trust, TNS and BMJ Publishing) to start-ups. Specific details of selected projects can be found at www.fagandini.co.uk/3.html.

3a. Key Buying Criteria & Key Business Capabilities Assessment – optional session

With some clients, we have found it useful to drill down further into their understanding of their customers, We do this by conducting a session to examine each major customer group and what are the main criteria that underpin the buying decision of the customer in relation to you and your competitors and how you perform relative to your competitors. Beyond this, we also ask what these criteria mean for you, specifically where you need to be particularly successful in your internal business capabilities to service these customer requirements efficiently, effectively and profitably and, again, how you perform relative to your competitors.

Together, we will then integrate the outputs from the first three elements of the workshop.

4. Breakthrough Objectives Estimation

In our final session with you, we will be able to formulate a list of opportunities for the business which you have identified through any one or more of the three analytical frameworks through which we will have progressed during the course of the workshop. We will list these and use a simple yet powerful methodology to estimate the scale of revenue and margin opportunity that each might reasonably be estimated to deliver on a strategic business development timeframe. We commonly ask clients to think about five years out but, in faster moving environments, three years may be more appropriate and our approach is entirely flexible to the right timeframe for you. At the conclusion of the process, we will be able to rank our opportunities with confidence so that the whole senior management team can identify and agree upon those which have the level of ambition in scale and scope allied to a level of achievability in practice that can produce a step-change in your business, opportunities which we call your “breakthrough objectives”.

“We have our strategy but it did need external challenge. What we liked about the workshop was its participatory nature, and the way in which the business analytical structure was 'lightly worn'. The whole Team engaged with the process, and we were able to consolidate and extend our thinking. Plus the subsequent process of articulating that strategy upwards and outwards was immeasurably speeded up and improved by this (enjoyable!) process.”



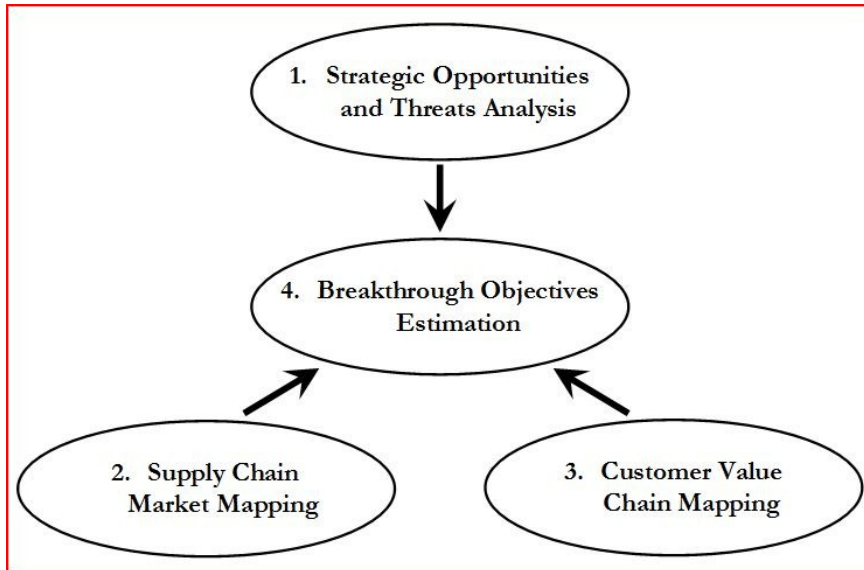
Stephen Stout
Group Managing Director
Landmark Information Group



“Working at a fast pace, the workshops were very effective in delivering structure without reducing our creativity and focus without blinking our options. Our Team emerged with greater clarity about the key opportunities for the growth of our business and about the development of our strategic relationship with our customers. And we gained the confidence to engage further with the SONA team after the workshops knowing that they would be able to work with us more like ‘insider’ partners than simply being ‘outsider’ consultants .”

Mark Milner
Chief Executive Officer
The Digital Property Group

What Does The Workshop Cover?



1. Strategic Opportunities and Threats Analysis

This is a SWOT with a difference. The difference is that our novel methodology of characterising and ranking the key opportunities and threats as you see them in your business enables you to create clarity and commitment within your team to a clear prioritisation and a broad strategic approach and timeline to addressing the top opportunities and threats. Meanwhile, we gain a clear understanding of your current business position and, in particular, the balance between opportunities and threats for you in the short, medium and long term. Managing this balance successfully towards being opportunity-driven rather than threat-driven is a critical component of controlling the destiny of your business going forward.

2. Supply Chain Market Mapping

In this phase, we use visual market mapping tools to plot the flow of value in each major, identifiable end user market segment in which your business operates and from which, either directly or indirectly, you derive your revenues. We look at each level of the relevant supply chain of information products and services, starting with the end users and working methodically through all the intermediate levels of the supply chain, identifying each level where your business operates, its direct competitors, its direct customers (who may or may not be the same as the end users) and its suppliers, right the way to the raw data providers. The results of this mapping process, and an assessment of the way you believe the map will change in the future, provide your team with clear guidance on key issues about dealing with competition and the potential benefits of either forward or backward integration.

3. Customer Value Chain Mapping

It is critical to understand your own value chain in order to drive your core activities and maximise your performance. But, we believe that it is equally critical to deeply understand the value chains of your current and future customers. By putting yourselves in the shoes of your customers, you can most effectively plot the development of your business proposition by targeting your thinking on those areas of customer activity (and hence expenditure) which are, or are becoming, significant and are not currently either managed efficiently by the internal resources of your customers or serviced effectively by external suppliers. Together, we will drive out these value chains, estimate the value in each major customer process and map your current position onto the total customer opportunity.