

# CASE STUDY: MANHEIM AUSTRALIA CREATES NEW STRATEGIC PLAN USING FACILITATION

*“Facilitation is an accelerator.”*  
– David Head, Chief Financial Officer  
Manheim Asia Pacific

## BACKGROUND

Manheim Australia, a division of Manheim International – the leading global provider of used vehicles to the wholesale and retail markets, recognized an existing, but untapped, opportunity for growth that had not been achieving in recent years. In the last two years, its business had done a good job stabilizing issues but still experienced an underperformance and needed to get back to growth trajectory. Changes took place. The company replaced its top leadership team to begin a new direction. Enter David Head, new Chief Financial Officer of the Manheim Asia Pacific business. His mission – to help lead the Australia business in revitalizing and reigniting growth. David and the other new faces of the leadership team immediately recognized that new trust needed to be built. The starting point was to create and clarify a new strategy going forward.

**“FACILITATION IS AN ACCELERATOR THAT FOSTERS BROAD THINKING, CONSENSUS BUILDING, QUICKER DECISION MAKING AND BEYOND.”**



Manheim’s United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) offices had previously enlisted Leadership Strategies, Inc. (LSI) for strategic planning in 2012, which proved successful. The new leadership team welcomed the continuation of that successful effort for its Australia and Asia Pacific group to round out strategy alignment worldwide. Enter Michael Wilkinson, Certified Master Facilitator and CEO of LSI. His mission – to get the new leadership team aligned to see the vision and set the foundation going forward.

## DESCRIPTION OF ENGAGEMENT

Senior leaders of Manheim Australia and Asia Pacific as well as some from Manheim UK convened in Australia for a week-long strategic planning session with Michael as the facilitator. Michael approached their need utilizing LSI’s strategic planning methodology, the Drivers Model.

“Michael did a good job explaining the overall path that we would go through – starting from the very basics, to creating the vision, to refining each step along the way, to ultimately getting us to end up with key strategies to execute our vision,” David shared “We made actionable decisions a quick timeline.”

The strategic planning process and its involved exercises were a first for several in the group. The team commended Michael for effectively explaining the strategic planning process, which David described as a “journey.”

“It was an intense week,” David commented. “In these fast-paced and hyper-focused strategy sessions, a participant could easily lose sight of the big picture, but Michael continually reinforced where we were and where we were going with enthusiasm.”

## BEST PRACTICES USED

Michael incorporated several interactive activities during the strategy session to build consensus and collaboration within the team. Using the Drivers Model, Michael organized a structured, facilitated approach, which the team has now adopted. He also presented the team with tools on how to execute and make decisions actionable. Michael also guided the team to outline its action steps that underpinned the vision, which David felt was a key ingredient.

The process also involved facilitation techniques and tools for group voting, prioritizing, and breaking out into teams to generate ideas. The group found the activities and tools helpful in sharing ideas, refining them, and eliminating confusion.

**“THE FORMAT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN ENABLED US TO EASILY CASCADE DETAILED ACTION PLANS AND RELATED ACCOUNTABILITIES DEEPER INTO THE ORGANIZATION SHORTLY FOLLOWING THE WORKSHOP.”**

## BENEFITS

The Manheim leaders walked away from the session with positivity, enthusiasm, and confidence as well as a sense of accomplishment and collaboration from the healthy discussions – and even healthy debates – that took place over the several days. David stated, “For the first time, many felt they had a voice. We addressed the ‘elephant in the room’ and were able to speak about it as adults – openly and honestly. If we had kept these uncomfortably-sensitive issues tucked away, it would have been an impediment to our future success.”

David continued, “Overall, the session demonstrated that facilitation is an incredibly powerful skill. If companies had this skill internally, their people could

achieve so much more. Facilitation is an accelerator that fosters broad thinking, consensus building, quicker decision making, and beyond.”

## OUTCOMES

The senior leadership team successfully created its new strategy and is currently in the early stages of executing the plan. While tangible results from the new strategy are premature to report at this time, the team recognizes the overwhelming confidence and commitment to carry forward the actions as immediate outcomes of the session. With helpful tools and guidelines provided by Michael to aid the team going forward, the group feels action oriented and well armed to execute.

David shared, “We came to decisions, and now, we have a plan. We also got to really see what we’re made up of and how strong we are in support of our efforts. We’re all part of the same team under the same direction – we’re all part of the solution. Importantly, we developed accountability and monitoring plans during the workshop to reduce the risk that a great strategy doesn’t get lost in the day-to-day heat of battle. The format of the strategic plan enabled us to easily cascade detailed action plans and related accountabilities deeper into the organization shortly following the workshop. Michael’s facilitation to get us to this point has left meaningful impressions with us.”



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