



Visa Consulting & Analytics (VCA)

# Strategic execution in payments: A guide for financial institutions on implementation excellence



Each month, the experts at Visa Consulting & Analytics (VCA), Visa's advisory arm, deep dive into one of [10 key priorities for payments-industry stakeholders in 2024](#) using anonymized VisaNet data and insights. This month, with additional insights and resources from the Visa Managed Services (VMS) for Advisory team, financial institutions (FIs) and payments providers can learn how to successfully implement and execute on new strategy.

The following five considerations are designed for FIs looking to grow their businesses by re-evaluating their strategic-implementation measures and by prioritizing nimbleness, which tends to allow organizations to be better-adjusted to adapt quickly to changing consumer and economic trends.



# Bridging the execution gap: Overcoming implementation hurdles

**Effective strategy execution is essential for a company’s success, as it transforms the hypothetical into the tangible and the measurable; helps ensure alignment with organizational goals, optimize resource allocation, and enable adaptability to changing conditions; and provides a framework for monitoring performance to guide decision-making.**

An optimized strategic roll-out can strengthen employee engagement and customer satisfaction by providing teammates clear communication, procedural support, and follow-through. In essence, execution bridges the gap between strategic vision and practical achievement, driving growth, efficiency, and a competitive edge.

Despite its importance, many companies struggle with execution, according to recent findings:



A recent survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit found that **"only**

## 56%

**of strategic initiatives meet the original goals and business intent."**<sup>1</sup>

A report from the Project Management Institute found that **"nearly**

## 50%

**of strategic initiatives are unsuccessful due to poor execution."**<sup>2</sup>

A study by Strategy& reveals that **"up to**

## 64%

**of strategic initiatives fail due to inadequate execution capabilities."**<sup>3</sup>

These findings underscore how commonplace it is for businesses to encounter inefficiencies around strategy implementation, which can quickly stunt a strategy's effectiveness. Inefficiencies can carry a hefty price tag—whether directly to the bottom line or indirectly in opportunity cost.

1. Economist Intelligence Unit, Why good strategies fail, 2018: <https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/thought-leadership/why-good-strategies-fail-report.pdf>  
 2. Project Management Institute, Transforming the high cost of low performance, 2017: <https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/thought-leadership/pulse/pulse-of-the-profession-2017.pdf>  
 3. Strategy&, The strategy crisis, 2019: <https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/gx/en/unique-solutions/cds/the-strategy-crisis.pdf>



# Five imperatives for successful strategy execution

**In the rapidly evolving financial-technological landscape, FIs face increasing pressure to devise innovative strategies and to implement them quickly.**

**For industry stakeholders, the real challenge lies in translating a strategic vision into tangible operational success—technological, regulatory, and cultural shifts considered.**

**Having a winning execution and implementation strategy is not necessarily complex, however it does require the consistent, complementary application of the following five imperatives.**

**Continue reading to learn how real-life clients saw winning results after implementing these imperatives.**



## 1. Frame a clear vision

A clear vision is a concise and compelling statement of the desired future state of your organization, product, or project that aligns with your company's strategic goals and behind which the teams can gather to execute in the same direction.



## 2. Build the right team

The right team has complementary skills, showcases shared commitment and mutual accountability, and works together to achieve the vision.



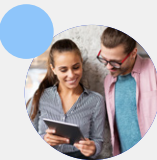
## 3. Implement effective governance

Effective governance comprises a system of rules, roles, and processes that define how to work together to achieve the common vision for the product, or project and ensures alignment, transparency, and accountability.



## 4. Measure what matters

Measuring what really matters is the practice of selecting and tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) that reflect the progress and impact of your organization, product, or project on the desired outcomes and objectives.



## 5. Communicate consistently

Constant communication is the habit of sharing relevant and timely information, feedback, and expectations with your team, stakeholders, and customers using appropriate channels and formats to build trust and engagement.



Here are real-life, successful applications of each of these imperatives across the globe:

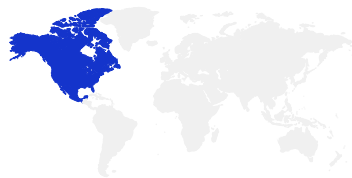


## 1. Frame a clear vision: The guiding light

### Unlocking competitive advantages by creating a framework for the adoption of device binding and tokenization features

#### Client

A leading retail bank in North America



#### Context

A great user experience is a central aspect of modern banking services and is expected by consumers. Features such as device binding are essential with the adoption of wallets, tap-to-pay or instant issuance, etc.

#### Brief

The client wanted to adopt device binding and tokenization capabilities to increase payment security and improve the cardholder experience. Key to this strategy was the implementation of the Cloud Token Framework suite of APIs. The client had an aggressive timeline to implement the capabilities, and other competing projects meant that the client did not have the resources to be able to meet the deadline.

#### Key Challenge

With many people and teams involved, there was a need to agree on a common denominator to help steer the execution. Creating a clear vision, including a plan for seamless integration and executing, was key to success. Doing so jointly with the client team helped immensely in having a shared vision which was understood by everyone, and which teams could use to work against.

#### Approach

VMS created a proposal to design, build, and implement APIs from the token suite. After agreeing on the delivery approach and scope, a joint team worked with the client business and IT teams on delivering the respective products under an integrated program leveraging on Visa expertise and implementation support along with the engineering resources needed on the client end for capability stand-up.

#### VMS Value-Add

The project helped the client increase confidence in multidevice payments, reduced friction in the process, and helped minimize account takeover fraud. Leveraging our product-integration expertise, we clarified the client's vision by identifying gaps across multiple dimensions, from technical architecture to organization and processes, which then served to solidify the implementation plan.

#### Success Metrics



Increased security

40%

decrease in the number of data breaches after implementing the use of cloud tokens over passwords or other credentials.



Improved user experience

92%

of users reported positive feedback on the ease of authentication and authorization.



Reduced operational costs

7%

reduction in customer service requests due to the rollout of enhanced authentication options.

**A clear organizational vision is pivotal for navigating through complexities, acting as a guiding light that aligns efforts towards a common goal. A vision-driven approach helps ensure that strategic decisions and actions are steered in the right direction, setting the stage for successful execution.**



## 2. Build the right team: The engine of execution

### Securing future growth by implementing a visionary product roadmap

#### Client

A global retail bank headquartered in Asia Pacific



#### Context

In today's digital world, customers expect seamless, fast, and convenient access to certain financial services through digital channels like mobile applications or online portals. Customers also prefer a personalized experience catering to their unique behaviors and needs, which, when successfully implemented, can significantly boost satisfaction and loyalty.

#### Brief

Facing increased competitive forces and evolving customer expectations, the retail bank wanted to enhance its digital offerings. As part of the long-term strategy setting with Visa, the client articulated that, while they wanted to prioritize the digital customer experience, they did not have a specialized team in place. VMS was able to step in and fill the gap with the right expertise, workflows, and resources.

#### Key Challenge

The main challenge was the capacity constraints within the client teams. The early identification of these constraints was key for filling the gap with dedicated resources prior to implementation.

#### Approach

The VMS team analyzed the bank's current digital offering, benchmarked it against similar businesses in the industry, and began focusing on the gaps. VMS identified and helped implement various digital solutions, such as push provisioning, digital card issuance, merchant dashboard, and others. Together, VMS created a digital-capabilities roadmap and assembled the right team and resources to execute it.

#### VMS Value-Add

The project advanced the client's market position and enabled them to offer new digital products to their customers. Leveraging our market-data insights, we supported the client in developing an effective delivery structure and operating model, embedding the new capabilities into their operational frameworks, and exercising their new strategic roadmap as a result of the implementation.

#### Success Metrics



##### Customer satisfaction

increase in Net Promoter Score

**2%**

due to an enhanced value proposition.



##### Customer adoption

transactions grew

**6%**

after the implementation of the new digital features and services.



##### Customer retention

churn rate decreased

**23%**

as customer experience improved.

**Having the right team onboard can make a huge difference and brings every company closer to reaching its strategic goals. Good teams are composed of diverse and complementary talents, skills and perspectives that enable them to collaborate effectively and deliver high-quality results.**



### 3. Implement effective governance: Checks and balances

## Enabling efficient and frictionless strategy implementation by transforming governance structures

#### Client

A leading FI based in Latin America



#### Context

The client has a significant market share in its regional markets and, together with Visa, is continuously developing its value proposition. Due to the size and complexity of the organization, many different initiatives and projects run simultaneously.

#### Brief

Based on its past experience of a complex implementation project, the client had identified the need to revamp its approach to governance. With several strategic initiatives already in flight, and keen for new perspectives, the client asked VMS for support.

#### Key Challenge

One of the main challenges was getting executives in the right meetings to make decisions at the right pace without swamping their calendars. An onsite kickoff meeting with all decision makers helped raise awareness of the challenge and agree on a clear structure to implement going forward based on a clear Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) Matrix.

#### Approach

The VMS team began by analyzing how the client had previously set up its governance. A governance revamp was then proposed, which was aligned with the client and subsequently implemented, including new meeting structures, an improved reporting format, and an efficient monitoring system.

#### VMS Value-Add

The engagement enabled the client to keep the wheel of execution spinning and execute on its vision with efficiency and excellence despite operating in a complex environment. We pulled our experience from similar payment-strategy use cases for comparable organizations and tailored it for the client. We implemented the new governance model and established a functional and a technical project management office (PMO) to manage complex competing priorities between departments. Almost immediately, the client saw increased transparency, better leadership engagement, and expedited results.

#### Success Metrics



**Stakeholder satisfaction**

**100%**

positive feedback from senior stakeholders.



**Time reduction**

**7%**

reduction in average time of completing projects, as well as much less variance from the planned schedule.



**Cost reduction**

**5%**

drop in total project cost due to the time saved from improved efficiencies.

By having effective governance in place, organizations can avoid common pitfalls like scope creep, budget overruns, missed deadlines, and stakeholder dissatisfaction. Effective governance also enables continuous learning and improvement, by tracking and evaluating the performance and outcomes of projects, and applying the lessons learned to future initiatives.



## 4. Measure what matters: The signal, not the noise

### Enhancing strategic data across different business lines to inform drive decision making

#### Client

A commercial bank based in Central Europe, Middle East and Africa



#### Context

The financial services industry is often highly data driven, and companies can gain a competitive edge by effectively utilizing data, gaining new insights, and making evidence-based decisions. Being able to do so unlocks business opportunities and enables growth.

#### Brief

The client wanted to make better use of its data assets from different areas of the organization to drive strategic commercial decisions. To bring this to life, it teamed up with VMS, bringing in experts to help drive the execution.

#### Key Challenge

The primary challenge was integrating disparate data sources and ensuring data accuracy. The team addressed this by establishing robust data governance practices, and using advanced analytics tools for seamless integration.

#### Approach

The VMS team collaborated with the client to develop a tailored measurement strategy. This involved identifying critical KPIs, implementing a data-gathering infrastructure and tracking mechanisms, and integrating these into a real-time dashboard for ongoing performance monitoring.

#### VMS Value-Add

The client's ability to execute an ecosystem strategy was significantly enhanced, allowing it to stay ahead in a competitive market by continuously optimizing its offerings based on valuable data insights. By focusing on relevant KPIs, we leveraged our experience drawing insights from data sets, like anonymized VisaNet payments data, and enabled the client to extract actionable insights, facilitating data-driven decisions that aligned with strategic goals. The measurement strategy encompassed both operational metrics and customer-centric indicators, ensuring a holistic view of performance.

#### Success Metrics



**Data driven decisions**

**30%**

uptick of business decisions that are supported by data insights, compared to those that are not.



**Coverage**

**98%**

coverage of data sources from different areas.



**Insight speed**

**100%**

real-time data insights using automated dashboards.

**Measuring what matters is essential for execution excellence. By selecting and tracking relevant KPIs, businesses can focus on the right activities, make data-driven decisions, and learn from feedback. This also helps with effectively communicating with stakeholders and demonstrating the value of your work.**





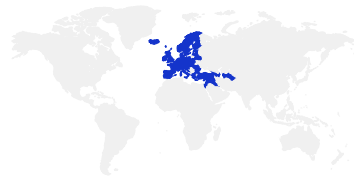


## 5. Communicate consistently: The lifeline of collaboration

### Differentiating the business model and enhancing the value proposition through a transformational and inclusive program of work

#### Client

A retail bank in Europe



#### Context

Due to the overall macroeconomic situation, many markets are currently in consolidation. Only innovative and adaptive companies are surviving the increasing pressure from capital markets and competition. The client understood this development and decided to widen its product offerings and extend its infrastructure, which entailed a sophisticated transformation program.

#### Brief

The complexity and scale of the program, combined with the client's organizational capabilities, required the implementation of a central orchestrating function and a clear and continuous communication approach to help ensure efficient execution. The client knew the capabilities of the VMS team and asked for support in this area.

#### Key Challenge

The main challenge was how to most effectively include all stakeholders along the journey of transforming the business model and value proposition. Ensuring consistent and clear communication across different teams and strategically planning shared messages and updates ensured the inclusiveness of the program.

#### Approach

The VMS team established a Directive Project Management Office promoting a comprehensive communication approach, effective regular updates, transparent reporting, and open feedback mechanisms. This included centralized control and authority, standardization of processes and methodologies, and strategic alignment across the company to ensure all projects are synced and linked back to the overall strategy.

#### VMS Value-Add

Through the Directive Project Management Office, the client's projects became aligned with their strategic goals, optimizing project selection and prioritization for maximum impact. Leveraging on our market insights and our expertise in standardized processes and methodologies for large scale transformations, we improved project success rates whilst ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. An effective resource allocation minimized conflicts and boosted productivity. Finally, transparent reporting and clear communication enabled informed decision-making and fostered continuous improvements.

#### Success Metrics



##### Delivery times

**30%**

reduction of average delivery time for work packages due to improved communication.



##### Alignment

**100%**

positive feedback from program stakeholders on improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of communications.



##### Inclusivity

**94%**

of program members reported to have understood their roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the overall strategy.

**By implementing the right structures (e.g., a Directive Project Management Office) to promote consistent and effective communication practices, companies can significantly improve the likelihood of success and foster high-quality outcomes to reach their strategic goals.**

# VMS: Your partner in strategy execution

Visa is committed to helping clients accelerate innovation in payments issuing, acceptance, risk and identity, and open banking. VMS serves as the execution and implementation arm of Visa, covering all areas of the payments ecosystem. VMS supports the implementation of strategic recommendations from our consulting team and for the suite of products of our Value-Added Services (VAS) team.

Effective strategy execution is more essential than ever for a company's success, as it transforms the hypothetical into the tangible. It helps ensure alignment with organizational goals, optimize resource allocation, enable adaptability to changing conditions and provides a framework for monitoring performance to guide decision-making. A clear vision, the right team, effective governance, key metrics, and consistent communication enable organizations to navigate complexities and drive sustainable growth. VMS leverages Visa's global footprint, comprehensive suite of services, and value-added solutions to support clients in strategy execution.

## How can VMS help?

VMS provides a comprehensive suite of services to support strategy execution, ensuring clients achieve their strategic goals effectively.

### Portfolio Optimization

We boost portfolio efficiency and effectiveness by enhancing the customer lifecycle from acquisition to retention. Constant monitoring and fine-tuning keep services valuable and relevant. Aligning with customer priorities enhances satisfaction and loyalty through targeted actions.

#### EXAMPLES

Targeted campaign execution, technical portfolio migration

### Operational Enablement

We use customer insights and VisaNet data, we implement strategic operational changes. Our iterative design and testing create user-friendly, reliable card products. Emphasis on innovation ensures unique customer experiences.

#### EXAMPLES

Process improvement, collections optimization

### Risk Management

We streamline fraud and authorization strategies and processes. Identifying pivotal changes allows for proactive risk management. Constant performance tracking and reporting to enhance security and safeguard against financial losses and reputation damage.

#### EXAMPLES

Fraud mitigation strategies implementation, authorization optimization

### Tech and Digital Enablement

We provide hands-on support for digital strategy delivery and implementation, and for enabling VAS product adoption. Tailoring our scope to meet your requirements ensures effective systems integration and software development.

#### EXAMPLES

Custom digital solution build, digital experience/CRM

### Data Science Enablement

We offer a customized experience to improve solution relevance through action-oriented approaches. We support clients with Visa's data scientists for accurate insights and provide practical experience backed by Visa's proprietary data to enable long-term performance improvements.

#### EXAMPLES

Data science lab, business intelligence enablement

## Our Operating Models

VMS adapts to client needs by offering a diverse range of operating and governance models, starting with subscription products for risk and data solutions, and extending to project support, program management, up to embedded teams:

### SERVICE SOLUTIONS

#### Subscription Services (Shared-Service Approach)

Subscription models for optimization leveraging VisaNet data.

**Example:** Rules-based risk products, Visa data usage for optimization

### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

#### Master Agreement Accompaniment (Expanded Support)

Turnkey solution support for a period of time (year) with contractual recurrence.

**Example:** Customer management programs (activation and usage)

#### Embedded Presence (Full Support)

Highest level of program support including onsite, ongoing presence.

**Example:** Ongoing staff placement for data governance and payment compliance

### BUSINESS OUTSOURCING

#### Customer, Portfolio, Product and Risk Management as a Service

Complete portion of critical processes managed on behalf of clients.

**Example:** Leads and acquisitions management, risk authorization management





# About Visa Consulting & Analytics (VCA) / Visa Managed Services (VMS) for Advisory

We are a global team of 1550+ payments consultants, digital marketing specialists, data scientists, and economists across six continents.

- Our consultants are experts in strategy, product, portfolio management, risk, digital, and more with decades of experience in the payments industry.
- Our data scientists are experts in statistics, advanced analytics, and machine learning, with exclusive access to insights from VisaNet, one of the largest payment networks in the world.
- Our economists understand economic conditions impacting consumer spending and provide unique and timely insights into global spending trends.
- The combination of our deep payments consulting expertise, our economic intelligence, and our breadth of data allows us to identify actionable insights and recommendations that drive better business decisions.

For more insights like this, [subscribe to the VCA Payments Pulse newsletter.](#)

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