

SYMPHONY

A Dynamic Management Methodology with Modular and Integrated Methods and Tools for Knowledge Based, Adaptive SMEs Controls

IMS Project No. 00005

- Created software to help SMEs develop and increase their capabilities to grow
- Developed management methods and tools that facilitate the constant creation, exploration and exploitation of business opportunities within strategic networks
- Symphony product portfolio consist of seven products including SymStrategy, SymResources, and SymCockpit



Small to Medium-sized Enterprises, or SMEs, are the backbone of any economy. Therefore, creating new and more relevant pathways for growth of SMEs is a critical path precondition for healthy organisations, communities, regions, and nations.

The vision of the Symphony project was *to create a dynamic management methodology with modular and integrated methods and tools for knowledge-based, adaptive SMEs*. The main target group of Symphony consists of high-tech or service oriented companies with a high-information part in their value chain:

- SMEs (up to 250 people);
- Modular units of bigger companies;
- Start-up companies.

Symphony has produced results that significantly enhance management practices of small- and medium-sized enterprises, by increasing the capability of SMEs to grow differently and deliberately - through smart combinations of exploring new and exploiting actual options of development.

Growth in organisations has been typically achieved through investment in developing new competencies organically inside the organisation, or through mergers and acquisitions. This way of growing involves high investment and high risk, especially in a turbulent environment, and this is why SMEs often find it difficult to adapt. Growth involves a trade off between preparing for today's and tomorrow's challenges.

The purpose of the Symphony project has been to develop and increase the capability of SMEs to grow differently and deliberately. In Symphony we believe that *knowledge-based organisations can grow fast and with low risk by becoming networked and adaptive*. A networked and adaptive organisation is sensitive to stakeholder signals and it leverages its potential for responsive action as a member in a national and/or international network. Networked and adaptive enterprises will find ways for profitable growth

through developing their most strategic asset, the competences of their people, in line with stakeholder demand and enriched by collaborative partnerships.

To promote strategic networking and to stimulate capabilities for renewal, the Symphony consortium has developed management methods and tools, which facilitate the constant creation, exploration and exploitation of business opportunities within strategic networks.

The Symphony product portfolio consists of 7 products, whereas 3 of them have been developed by the European/Swiss, 2 of them by the Canadian and 2 of them by the Australian consortium:

- **SymStrategy:** is a collection of visualised methods that facilitate strategy development and implementation through a guided decision making process. SymStrategy is applied as a consulting service for strategic planning, available in the form of a product package (incl. visual templates, moderator guide, checklists, etc.). The main aim behind SymStrategy commercialisation is to achieve a big impact in industry, to have a broad take up and adoption through intermediaries (e.g. consultants) and to develop further through a learning network and community. Fraunhofer IAO will act as a focal organization and facilitator for an open source community.
- **SymResources:** is a method based IT tool that enables managers to design their organisations, especially with regard to network integration, and to develop competences. Harmony-Solutions SA, a company located in Fribourg, Switzerland, is committed to commercialise internationally the SymResources platform. It will act as the focal organisation of the international exploitation network of SymResources. Harmony-Solutions SA has hosted the annual and international TII conference in April 2005 and has opened a window for Symphony to be presented to a broad international public.
- **SymCockpit:** is a method based IT tool that allows evaluating the firm's performance and potentials with regard to adaptability and allows monitoring strategic actions. Software licenses are available, combined with consulting services for implementation & customization. Moreover, longer term maintenance can be provided. More can be learned about SymCockpit through trade shows, roadshows, newsletters, presentations and publications.
- **eCO:** is a web-based tool that helps companies from various sectors of the economy categorise their electronic commerce product-service offerings.
- **e-Skills:** is a dynamic web-based database that contains a detailed description of jobs grounded on emerging trends in e-commerce and all the specific e-skills related to these jobs.
- **Values:** is a suite of methods that assists organisations to identify the values which underlie their operations, to better describe the values to which they aspire and to undertake suitable development activity.
- **Agility Measurer:** is a method that allows an organisation to assess its readiness to increase agility and to measure its progress in this regard.
- **SymPlant:** is a methodology and concept to implement the Symphony solutions.

Symphony was a three-year research project with organisations from Europe, Canada, Switzerland and Australia. Symphony was led by the European and Swiss Participant regions where it was supported by the European Commission's Fifth Framework Information Society Technologies Programme.

