Contemporary strategy in a changing world

Mastering the Dynamics of Innovation
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Introduction

Capgemini Consulting’s recent study on strategic planning and innovation, reveals that Norwegian CEOs view innovation as crucial in delivering growth and prosper in an increasingly competitive market. As much as 73% of Norwegian CEOs have implicitly or explicitly included innovation in their business strategies. Although innovation is prioritised by Norwegian CEO’s, the same survey reveals some key challenges in mastering innovation. This paper takes a closer look at these challenges, investigates how leading innovators organise to deliver consistently high innovation performance and present the key dimensions businesses must manage to be a successful innovator.

Key insights, discussed in more in-depth in this paper, are listed below:

**Key insight 1** - While Norway is heading towards the rock bottom of the European Innovation Scoreboard, Norwegian CEO’s are rather confident about their innovation capabilities.

**Key insight 2** - Norwegian CEO’s are particularly satisfied with product innovation, but admit severe challenges in pursuing other innovation types which, according to research, offer superior returns.

**Key insight 3** - Norwegian companies have challenges across the innovation value chain, in this paper represented by three distinct phases: idea generation, conversion of ideas and diffusion of ideas. To improve, they need to bring more structure into their innovation processes.

**Key insight 4** - Norwegian companies should investigate their innovation strategy and practices across the innovation value chain, and selectively introduce new approaches to fuel their innovation process and competitiveness.

**Key insight 5** - By looking at leading innovators and their practices, Norwegian companies can learn and selectively adapt their innovation processes.

**Key insight 6** - Innovation success requires a marked departure from traditional innovation practices. By looking at common denominators of leading innovators and learning from numerous projects, Capgemini have identified seven dimensions of innovation success.

Norway is heading towards the rock bottom of the Innovation Scoreboard

The European Innovation Scoreboard (SSI) is a comparative analysis of innovation performance among EU countries. While our Nordic peers Sweden, Finland and Denmark are considered as innovation leaders, Norway is lagging behind. Among the moderate innovators, Norway has the lowest growth rate, indicating that we are losing ground and risk hitting the rock-bottom of the scorecard in a separate category along with Turkey.

Of course, the scoreboard doesn’t tell the whole story regarding innovation performance and there are underlying structural factors of the Norwegian economy that contribute to a low score. Norway is putting a large part of the national brainpower into the oil & gas industry and doesn’t have any major global players in innovation intensive industries like consumer electronics, pharmaceutical or fast moving consumer goods like our Nordic peers. However, it is alarming that Norway is not even close to keep the same pace as the average innovation performers, and that the situation is becoming worse for each update of the scoreboard.

In the light of the recent CEO study, it’s unnerving that Norwegian CEOs are so confident about their ability to innovate. As much as 65% of interviewed CEO’s perceive their company to be ahead of competition on innovation which is much higher than their Swedish peers representing the innovation leaders on the scoreboard.
Innovation differs strongly in type and impact

Innovation can be understood both as an outcome and a process, which embodies ideas, conversion of ideas and diffusion of ideas. Later, when we take a closer look at the innovation value chain, each of these innovation phases will be revisited.

First, we will briefly introduce a broader view of innovation to set a context for the forthcoming sections. New products and services often come to mind when thinking of innovation, but the value derived from other types of innovation could represent a much higher potential for many companies. When Dell revolutionised the IT business and built a leading IT company in few years, it was not due to the product invention of superior PC’s. Dell’s success came from an innovative distribution model where they sold directly to consumers via the Internet instead of using an extensive network of resellers enabling lower cost and price. Furthermore, they enhanced the user- and buyer experience by enabling custom specification of PCs using the Internet. In our study, Norwegian CEOs are generally confident about their innovation capabilities in new products and services, but admit there are severe challenges in pursuing other types of innovation in areas like business models, networks and processes. Larry Keeley, a recognised innovation expert with extensive research on different innovation types and their returns, brings bad news if your investments are directed solely towards product performance improvement. According to his research, product innovation is by far the largest area of investments, but offers the lowest returns of all innovation types. Innovation in Business Model and Network- ing on the other hand are the smallest areas of investments, but offer superior returns compared to other types of innovation. If a company mainly focus on linear product development today, this could imply that investments in innovation should be balanced to pursue other types of innovation. Such innovations could include new busi-
Innovation can be further categorised according to their impact in the marketplace. A key reason for the relatively poor performance of product innovation is that this type of innovation is strongly dominated by linear innovation. Companies often bring marginally better products to the marketplace. Such innovations are sometimes well suited to maintain a market position as a response to new competitor offerings. However, to excel in innovation a company also need to pursue innovations with a higher impact. One way is to pursue more strongly differentiated products, often labelled “Category Killer” innovations which will bring recognised leadership within a category. Gillette’s frequent introduction of new razors typically falls into this category. However, the fastest growing class of innovation is based on the vast amount of customer data companies’ capture and process to better understand their customers. The fastest growing category is customer-driven innovation or innovation responding directly to demands for personalised product like Nike’s Internet service “designs your own sport shoe”. A few innovations fall into a fourth category called “Paradigm-shifting” innovations. Such innovations radically change the marketplace or create completely new markets by shaping the customer demand. Not surprisingly, these innovations offer superior returns for the successful innovator. An example would be when Sony introduced the walkman. They changed the consumer behaviour, created new competitive space and dominated a market for years. Companies that want to lead their industry should aim to produce paradigm-shifting innovative ideas, as these provide the greatest source of potential revenue and returns. A key characteristic of innovation leaders is that they have a balanced portfolio with 50% or more of its product development programs targeted at “non-linear” innovation. Followers, on the other hand, primarily base their presence in the marketplace on “Linear Innovation” with 80% or more of its product development programs targeted at “linear” innovation.

**“Category Killer” Innovation**
- Helps a company capitalize on their existing offerings and to consolidate their current market position
- Typically products, services or processes that differentiate to maintain or extend brand leadership within a category

**Paradigm-shifting Innovation**
- Innovation with so strong impact that it changes the market place
- Paradigm shifting innovations creates completely new market opportunities and shapes consumer demand
- Introducing a new concept to the market which is not too complex but enough to entice the consumer

**Linear Innovation**
- Introduction of marginally improved products
- Innovation with the intention of maintaining market pace related to competitors and the competitor’s offerings

**Customer-driven Innovation**
- Innovations that respond to customer needs
- Innovations focus on recombining, modifying or tailoring of products and services based on customer demands
Norwegian companies have challenges across the innovation value chain

There are several structural and organisational challenges when developing strong innovation capabilities. Looking at the innovation value chain, there are three distinct phases that must be mastered: 1) Idea generation, 2) Conversion and 3) Diffusion. An example of the innovation value chain with three distinct phases and important sub categories of the process are showed in the figure below. Mastering the first phase is foremost about fostering creativity within the organisation. The value chain above highlights different aspect of this capability – ideas can be sourced internally within a R&D or business development department or externally with partners in the business value network. In addition the ability to collaborate across functions and divisions, labelled as cross-pollination, is a critical factor in getting access to the best ideas. To develop an organisational culture with strong innovation performance, a range of organisational levers should be applied. Secondly, there must be an innovation process or structure in place to capture, prioritise and manage new ideas. Looking at the response from Norwegian CEOs, 48% admit that there are strong deficiencies in the idea management process and only 39% of the interviewed CEOs have an efficient process for idea management in place.

Once ideas are managed, successful innovation requires mastering the conversion phase, where ideas are turned into inventions with potential to create business value. As the illustration of the innovation value chain indicates, the conversion process represents both the selection and management of the project portfolio and the execution of selected projects. Whether the invention represents a new product or service introduced to the customers, or a new process to cut cost in the manufacturing process or the supply chain, this is usually the phase where major investment decisions are taken to launch a promising initiative to enhance competitiveness. The majority of the costs are usually spent in this phase, and the company’s ability to manage initiatives to ensure timely delivery has a huge impact on the business value derived. To successfully master this phase, companies must commit sufficient human and financial resources to turn promising initiatives into successful inventions. According to the Capgemini study, Norwegian CEOs do not have a structured process to fund innovation initiatives.

68% of Norwegian companies are funding its innovation initiatives through the operations without any defined project budgets and only 5% of the interviewed CEOs have separate budgets allocated to innovation initiatives. Although it is possible to manage innovation projects within operations, our experience show that innovation spending are the first to be cut when the pressure to cut costs arise.

The third and last phase in the innovation value chain is diffusion, or the process of transforming an invention into products or activities in order to successfully create business impact or value of the invention. As pointed out in our recent study, there are severe shortcomings in Norwegian businesses ability to track its innovation spending and as much as 48% of the companies are unable to quantify its spending on innovation initiatives. Actually, few of the interviewed companies have structured measures in place to track their innovation performance. Although it is difficult to identify adequate measures of the return on innovation initiatives, strong evidence suggest that focus on measuring efforts and impact is critical to be a successful innovator in the long term.

Although innovation is acknowledged as a key strategic factor for most Norwegian businesses, it seems like many companies struggle to master innovation across the three phases. We believe it’s high time for Norwegian companies to bring more structure to their innovation efforts.
Learning from the dynamics of leading online and software players

Looking at the leading innovators, it is clear that leading online players have a very strong position. Although there are some important differences between traditional players and online players when it comes to dependency of infrastructure, employee base, geographic reach, complexity of product launch and business models, the way they drive innovation should not be overlooked. Online players like Apple, Google, Microsoft, Yahoo and YouTube all represent the dynamics of innovative companies that are admired around the world. By looking at these companies’ specific organisational characteristics in each part of the innovation value chain, there could be some important lessons to learn for traditional players as well.

Leading online and software players have a strong commitment to innovation from the top management. At Microsoft, every employee is encouraged to send their ideas and suggestions for new products to the chairman. The suggestions are read, filtered and the most promising ideas are selected for further development. Microsoft also regularly arranges “hack days” where all developers can participate and compete for the best new product ideas. After listening to presentations from different product groups, the developers break into groups and start coding. Some of the ideas from Microsoft “hack days” go live within a few weeks. Similar events are conducted by Yahoo, which allow internal developers to showcase self-developed products. Google encourage their employees to spend 20% of their time on projects of their own design to foster creativity and new ideas. Gmail was a result of an engineer’s “20% time” spent on a side project and according to their product evangelists, 50% of product launches were produced in the engineers’ “20% time.” To institutionalise a culture of innovation, not having a “20%” project could even have a negative impact on the employee’s review. Developers are also strongly encouraged to fix bugs on or add features to any Google product they want, even if they are not in the product team. This strongly contributes to increase the cross-pollination of ideas across the company. Blogs report that recent employees are astonished as they suggest product improvements to the product management team whereas they are told to download the development kit and within weeks they implement and go live with their own suggestions. In addition, players like Google and Microsoft are constantly scanning the external marketplace and bring in innovation through acquisitions. Some of Google’s most successful products, like Google Adsense and Google Earth, were results of acquisitions as opposed to internal incubation.

These online players are well aware that creativity is only part of being a successful innovator. When converting ideas to commercial products, structured processes and discipline are critical to tap the value potential from promising ideas. Google has eight brainstorming sessions each year with 100 engineers building on existing ideas and to support the idea selection process. Further Google follow a “70-20-10” portfolio strategy where 70% of the development projects are located within the core capabilities (like search and ads), 20% of the projects are related to the core (like News, product search and Maps) and 10% of the projects are exploratory (like Picasa, Wi-Fi, Orkut). Even if new products ideas emerge from everywhere in the organisation, there is a strong commitment to prioritising projects based on rigorous data support and the executive team having an analytical and fact-based decision process. As they are launched, successful applications can be moved to a new category, like Gmail which has developed from an exploratory project on 20% time to be part of the Google core.
Early Adopters of New Approaches to Innovation

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<td>Leverage data from betas</td>
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<td>Spread</td>
<td>Balanced exploration</td>
<td>Leverage customer data from betas</td>
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- **Initiatives**
  - Idea submission to top executives
  - Hack Days and Code contests
  - 20% time
  - Brainstorming Sessions

- **Conversion**
  - Leverage data from betas
  - VC funding for employee ideas
  - Tapping into open developer communities

- **Diffusion**
  - Prototypes and beta releases
  - Open API’s and platforms
  - Consumer-led innovation
  - Social networks
  - Mashup applications
HP, another IT company with a long history of innovations originating from the founders, manages its innovation portfolio through fairly mature stage-gates (or filters where ideas are screened at multiple levels across the enterprise). Yahoo has built an in-house incubator as a platform to talented employees for execution of new venture ideas. The objective is to create a start-up culture and retain talent that would otherwise look elsewhere for funding their ideas. Yet another invention from the software players is the use of prototyping and beta releases. By enabling public access to premature products, software companies get their products tested and assessed by thousands of users to receive feedback on bugs as well as suggestion on new features. This dramatically reduce the development times of new products, but also increase the relevancy of the product making it more likely to succeed when finally launched.

Leading online players also involve consumers in improvement and enhancement of already launched products and services. Flickr, a web site enabling photo sharing and now owned by Yahoo, developed in short time into one of the Web’s fastest growing companies. Being a small player with limited software development resources, a user-friendly programming interface where users can add own applications ensured a critical enrichment to the original application which fuelled the fast adoption of the Flickr application. When Google opened up its mapping technology to the public, a myriad of new applications (“mash-ups”) combining Google maps with other services or features were launched. Both AOL and Skype have developed an open software platform allowing the open developer community to improve their existing product offering and develop new commercial applications. AOL has more than 50 000 developers in its Open AIM community contributing to improve and customise the AOL Messenger.
Innovation success requires a marked departure from traditional principles

Fostering creativity within an organisation requires access to talented people and incentives to encourage creativity. Google has a comprehensive hiring process with series of interviews to ensure they hire the right people. They target extraordinary people in terms of intelligence, students from elite universities and Olympic athletes. Furthermore Google’s headquarters “Googleplex” is built like a university campus with gym, restaurants, child care facilities, etc to allow employees “living their life” at work. Google also follow a strict performance review process with quarterly objectives for each individual and publicly available feedback. To encourage collaboration among employees, each employee has the possibility to nominate colleagues to a bonus, based on team spirit and knowledge sharing.

Traditionally, larger organisations have had separate R&D or business development departments as their main source of creating new ideas. One of the problems with this approach is that these employees seldom are really close to the daily business. Often frontline personnel with close customer contact or shop floor employees facing daily operational issues, represent a large potential for innovation. Another key obstacle to innovation is that companies struggle with functional silos leading to very few employees having a holistic view of the business. People in sales do not recognise challenges in IT, manufacturing and distribution and vice versa. Significant value can often be created if a company succeed in combining multiple disciplines in their innovation efforts. New internet technologies including blogs and wikis, commonly denoted as Web 2.0 tools, offer great opportunities to increase collaboration within the company and beyond, to inspire increased cross-pollination. In several industries, there is also a significant shift towards opening up the innovation process to external players including suppliers, external R&D labs and customers. By introducing external players with different views and needs into the innovation process, companies can fuel the idea generation process and increase their success-rate dramatically.

There are many hidden assumptions in closed innovation models like the presence of a market, IPR protection and access to the best people. Often large companies with extensive R&D resources discover that innovation actually happens in small companies. Factors like an emerging marketplace for ideas and availability of venture capital are also reducing the viability of the closed innovation paradigm. Since Procter & Gamble, a global leader of consumer brands across 50 categories, radically changed their innovation model to rely on an extensive external network in 2000, the external sourcing of innovations has increased from 20% to 50%.
A critical part of the conversion phase is the selection of ideas to prioritise and make financing available to selected initiatives. Traditionally funding has been very dependent on organisational priorities and budgets while the winning strategy today is to select the best idea with highest business impact regardless of the department or function. Visibility of ideas and a structured screening with business executives are critical to uncover the real potential of the idea portfolio. According to Keeley’s research, fewer than 2% of the projects produce more than 90% of the value. To increase the success rate and return, selecting the right opportunities and allocating sufficient resources are paramount for success.

“Selecting the right projects is the key to increase innovation success rate and returns”

Slow development times are often cited as the No.1 obstacle in today’s innovation processes. In the development process where ideas are detailed and implemented in the organisation, there’s a shift towards a more iterative process with a stronger ownership of the idea across all phases in the innovation process. Outsourcing select parts of the development may also accelerate the time-to-market. The software industry leverages large online communities to test their products through beta releases to increase the product quality and reduce the time-to-market. When Apple introduced the iPod they set a new benchmark for openness and speed. It all started when an outside entrepreneur came to Apple with a promising idea. Apple hired an independent contractor to lead a 35 person team from Philips, IDEO, General Magic, Apple, Connectix and WebTV to develop the iPod, and in eight weeks they developed a complete iPod/iTunes product solution. Apple developed the user interface and design, while Portalplayer managed the technical design. Within six months Apple launched its iPod player which rocked the industry with a highly innovative concept. Apple didn’t introduce a superior MP3 player, but they introduced a new network (including music companies) and business model (selling songs for a “buck” online) as well as a delivery model creating substantial switching barriers (lock-in by the integration of iTunes and iPod) for the users together with the already branded Apple experience of ease and feel.

Fast innovators have a strong commitment to innovation from top management and link rewards to innovation. In General Electric, a long-standing business leader with an outstanding history of innovation dating back to Thomas Edison’s first commercially viable light bulb, they have developed tools like “imagination breakthroughs” aimed at identifying ideas with the potential of gen-

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**P&G’s External Innovation Initiatives**

- **P&G turned 70 R&D staff into technology scouts.** Technology scouts or entrepreneurs search for the latest breakthroughs and write technology briefs to identify opportunities.

- **P&G co-invent products with consumers through Affinova.** Affinova ([www.affinova.com](http://www.affinova.com)) is a global leader in optimization technology for marketing innovation. The offer advanced evolutionary algorithms for development of concepts or ideas based on consumer choice.

- **P&G leverage global talent network through Innocentive.** Innocentive ([www.innocentive.com](http://www.innocentive.com)) connects companies, academic institutions, and non-profit organisations, searching for breakthrough innovation. Innovation seekers can post their challenges and get access to more than 125,000 bright minds ready to solve their problems to receive cash rewards up to 1,000,000 $.

- **P&G invests in Yet2.com.** Yet2com ([www.yet2.com](http://www.yet2.com)) is a company focusing on bringing buyers and sellers of technologies together. At their website you can browse available technologies or technology needs in different categories.

- **P&G invests in Ninesigma.** Ninesigma ([www.ninesigma.com](http://www.ninesigma.com)) use a global network of scientists, university research departments and technology incubators to solve clients science- and technology related needs.

- **P&G created Yourencore.com.** Yourencore.com ([www.yourencore.com](http://www.yourencore.com)) helps companies accelerate innovation by connecting them with retired scientists and engineers to leverage their expertise.

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“The need for speed in the conversion or product development phase is increasingly important to remain competitive.”

“Executive commitment is paramount to succeed in consistently delivering innovative solutions and products”
Operating more than $100 million in revenues within five years. Every business unit leader must develop at least three new proposals every year and there are currently more than 100 such initiatives underway. Furthermore, GE invites some of its most senior customers to discuss and debate future trends in so-called “dreaming-sessions”, where the GE CEO Jefferey Immelt participates himself and urges his customers to provide advice. These sessions are used actively to prioritise R&D project spending.

**“Be prepared to use customer feedback to introduce upgrades adapted to customer needs”**

Numerous companies fail in the last phase where the invention is actually turned into business value. Just think of all IT applications implemented in all kinds of organisations, without the necessary training or changes of relevant processes, which then fail to deliver the value promised. Furthermore, our experience shows a whopping 90% of new products fail in the marketplace. Xerox is frequently mentioned as unsuccessful in commercialising and profitably exploiting brilliant inventions from PARC, its research facility. PARC has been credited for great inventions like GUI, Mouse, Ethernet and laser printer. Companies like Microsoft, HP and Apple have made fortunes on these inventions while Xerox failed to make an impact in the marketplace. Similarly Bell Labs originating from AT&T’s research department invented the Telefax, Transistor, Laser, UNIX operating system, C programming language and earned six Nobel Prizes for work completed at the laboratories. However, none of these breakthroughs were leveraged by the originators to spin out new successful technology ventures.

Bringing new innovations to the market will always include risk, but a thorough market-entry strategy can help overcome some hurdles. Most companies overestimate the initial impact of a new product. Very often there are malfunctions and a strong need for adaptations and upgrades before a new product becomes really useful. To bring in customers early in the process is a way to get insight about the real customer needs, and uncover necessary changes to your products. In networked markets, like banking infrastructure and software, there are even bigger challenges as the consumers are reluctant to switch before they believe most other players will. Leading players are finding new ways to quickly introduce a new invention to the market. Especially online players are opening up their software source to leverage a huge online community and accelerate the spread of new online services. Other companies introduce new products at low costs to speed up distribution and create lock-in to secure revenue from transactions or consumables like Nespresso, Gillette and Telecom operators.

We have seen that the application of structured measurement of innovations is very limited among the surveyed Norwegian companies. Indeed, similar results can be seen in international surveys – managers struggle to find ways to measure the return on innovation. There is no right answer to what should be measured, but usually critical measurements include cycle-times like time-to-market, new product success-rate and share of revenue from new products. Neither is there an answer to how many metrics you should include, but with too many you will not be able to manage the metrics. According to our experience there should be something between 8-12 metrics covering different parts of the innovation value chain.

By looking at a traditional innovation approach, we see that we can learn from the examples discussed that a new approach to innovation emerges. A comparison of the new and the traditional approach to innovation across the innovation value chain is showed in the figure below.

**The Innovation Value Chain**

**“Without adequate measurement you are not likely to be a successful innovator in the long term”**
Getting innovation right – the way we see it

Although there is no single recipe for what practice you should apply to your business context, leading innovators seem to share a set of common characteristics. Getting innovation right is complex and success requires careful considerations across several dimensions. By working on numerous projects on innovation with leading businesses, we have learned that mastering innovation requires success in seven different, but certainly interdependent, dimensions which are formulated below:

To be a successful innovator today, you don’t have to take up on all the ideas discussed in this paper, but to strengthen your innovation capabilities it is a good idea to investigate your innovation value chain. Assess the effectiveness of each step and selectively introduce new approaches to fuel your innovation process. The first and most important step is maybe just to pay attention to your innovation processes and review and revise your overall innovation strategy. This is also the first step in Capgemini Consulting’s service offering to enhance innovation capabilities.
Capgemini Consulting
- A trusted strategy advisor when results matter

Capgemini Consulting is a leading provider of Management Consulting services in Norway and worldwide. We constantly strive to exceed our clients’ expectations by delivering achievable solutions and introducing lasting change. We assist large and innovative Norwegian organisations in making the right strategic decisions and implementing strategies for sustained improved performance. In Norway we offer a broad range of Management Consulting services in the areas of strategy, transformation and optimisation of support processes within finance and HR.

Capgemini Consulting has one of Norway’s most experienced strategy practices with leading subject matter experts and a wide range of tools and methodologies applicable to different strategic challenges. Our strategy work is comprehensive, covering all aspects from developing the overall strategic direction of an organisation to implementing operational strategies. Strategy projects vary in terms of scope and duration, but will typically include strategic analysis, identification and evaluation of strategic options, strategic decisions and strategy formulation. Capgemini Consulting also has extensive experience from projects focusing on innovation, and has supported numerous organisations in developing their initiatives across all recognised forms of business innovation.

Our strategy practice consists of three disciplines. Business Strategy, Strategic Marketing and Mergers & Acquisitions. The topics of this study are core competencies within our Business Strategy discipline. From our perspective, business strategy consists of three robust components: 1) Selecting the competitive arena; 2) Formulating a differentiated strategy; 3) Applying organisational resources and capabilities to realise the strategy. To create a robust business strategy and achieve get the right results, we believe it is critical that the formulated strategy is aligned with an organisation’s ability to implement it.

Capgemini Consulting’s experience shows that there is often a missing link between the business strategy and the actual implementation. The reason for this is that no transformation strategy exists. Our core competence, developed and optimised over 40 years, is the ability to develop both business and transformation strategies, as well as securing implementation that ensures results. We believe these combined capabilities are what make Capgemini a truly unique advisor.

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Capgemini, one of the world’s foremost providers of consulting, technology and outsourcing services, enables its clients to transform and perform through technologies. Capgemini provides its clients with insights and capabilities that boost their freedom to achieve superior results through a unique way of working – the Collaborative Business Experience – and through a global delivery model called Rightshore®, which aims to offer the right resources in the right location at competitive cost.

Present in 36 countries, Capgemini reported 2007 global revenues of EUR 8.7 billion and employs over 88,000 people worldwide.

Capgemini Consulting is the Strategy and Management Consulting division of the Capgemini Group, employing 5,000 consultants worldwide. Leveraging its deep sectorial and business expertise, Capgemini Consulting advises and supports organizations in transforming their business, from strategy through to execution, and delivers successful outcomes by working side by side with clients to identify the best solutions to critical business challenges.

More information about our services is available at www.capgemini.no