

Four principles for successful strategy



Through our strategy engagements with clients, we have identified four principles that will help neutralize common strategy obstacles—actions that will ensure your strategy lives past the week it was created. You might think some of them are obvious but we have found they are rarely practiced. *Spoiler alert: they all have to do with people.*

Include everyone

1

By taking the time to ask for and consider the opinions of everyone in your sphere of influence, you are improving the likelihood of success because you are starting from a place of knowledge, and ensuring a higher level of staff engagement because you have given them a stake in the results.

Create a shared image of success

2

People fight for what they believe in, especially when they feel a sense of ownership. For strategic initiatives, a leader should help create those conditions for his or her team by giving them the opportunity to discuss and help establish the picture of success. Without this collaborative foothold within the organization strategies are weaker and less likely to succeed.

Identify a reason to care

3

People want to know that their hard work and personal contributions make a difference. When there isn't a compelling answer to why a strategy matters, you miss the greatest opportunity to capture the imagination and ambitions of your team. We call that answer a Strategy Purpose Statement.

Commit to growth and development

4

Create space for your team members to explore their leadership styles and practice their capacity to lead through experience. Of course, if you want your team to swim in a different ocean, then as their leader, you need to dive in first.

Bring your team together to create a shared image of success

- What would need to be true about the organization in 3 years to call this initiative successful?
- What evidence would we need to see to confirm we are making headway?
- What conditions do we need to satisfy through the execution of this initiative?

Use these four questions to identify a reason to care

- Does, this strategy matter to you? If so, why?
- If not, what's missing that, if included, would make it more relevant?
- If successful, what impact do you think it could have beyond the business outcomes already defined?
- What difference could that impact make for you, our company, and our community?

Growth and development commitments

Leaders who are successful at creating this space:

- Invite my team to contribute, take action, and share their experiences with new ideas
- Provide my team with the resources (developmental and otherwise) they need to be successful
- Demonstrate my commitment to the team by living their story
- Own my mistakes and take their leadership development seriously