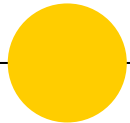# Building Aligned Strategies

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You're stuck in the middle

Strategic Leadership provides the way out

The Right Details
Leadership Bench
Trust through Predictability

Strategic Communication
Strategic Execution
Strategic Planning

Strategic Communication

Goals of Strategic Communication

Create Understanding

Get on the same page about the current situation, the context and concerns

Drive Agreement

Make decisions about priorities, actions, next steps

Build Trust

Provide transparency into your thought process, work process, and impact of past decisions/actions

Status Updates as Strategic Communication

Wins and Challenges

Reflection

A bi-weekly exercise that looks back on the highlights and lowlights of what has happened

Education

Teach others about what is happening, help them understand what we think is important and what is hard about the work

Visibility

A place to highlight impact, things we see as most important/points of pride, or areas that are high risk

Common Questions/Complaints

Rollout of kubernetes change to use the open source model for POD DNS names caused an incident (linked). The impact was limited to one cluster but systems depending on kubernetes had a global outage, including CritSystemX. Postmortem scheduled.

What does this mean?

Why did we work on this?

What difference did this change make?

Why should I care about this?

So What?

Elements of Effective Updates

Storytelling with SAR

Situation

What was the situation when we began? Provides the context the audience needs to understand why we took an action, define terms that might be unfamiliar

Action

The work we did to address the situation. Speak to the size and/or shape of the solution to the problem, and tell the audience what actions were taken.

Result

The outcome of our actions. Speaks to the value of our work.

The most important thing when it comes to sharing broadly!

Credit to Deirdre Athaide for the SAR Framing

Exercise: Rewriting a Win

Strategic Execution

Goals of Strategic Execution

Keep your organization aligned and focused

Make sure that the right people are working together, that there is understanding of work, that priorities are regularly revisited

Identify Problems Early

Prevent unnecessary drift, keep projects and initiatives on track, raise issues quickly

Develop Leadership

Get exposure to people outside your direct reports and inner circle in order to develop leadership throughout your team

Forcing Function Meetings

https://leaddev.com/culture-engagement-motivation/gaining-insight-and-preventing-misalignment-without-micromanaging

Update Meetings

Scheduled Cadence

No more than monthly

Might be only twice a year

Be careful about moving them around too much

Reporting on Results

Grading of OKRs, progress of initiatives
Should cover in more depth impact and challenges
Your engagement makes or breaks these meetings

Opportunity to Shine

Gives more junior people a chance to present detailed projects
Provides exposure to you

Gives managers a carrot/stick to use

Takeaway Exercise: Strategic Initiative Owners

Strategic Planning

What is strategic planning?

What is strategic planning?

Time Based

Occurs based on time intervals rather than project intervals

Commonly:

Yearly down to **quarterly**

Broad view with top-down elements

Should reflect prioritization and direction-setting

The point of all this can't come from each team individually

Provides information to answer the "whys"

Why are we doing this? Why is this important? Should answer that broadly for the individuals, teams, and leadership

What do I need to learn?

What do I need to learn?

No universal method

No one way to do this, every company does it differently:

OKRs

KPIs

6-Pagers

Context Memos

Problem/Solution Pairs

Build your toolkit

Develop your own ideas of the essence of good plans, and apply them to whatever process your company is using to produce high-quality plans in whatever format

Be flexible

Build a plan that is adaptable to the circumstances of your business, that you can explain and sell to partners, and that makes your team feel inspired

Good outputs require good inputs

Outputs

Outputs of the process

Shared Understanding

Agreement on where we are currently

Agreement on where we need to go

Understanding of critical dependencies, timelines, risks

Objectives and measures

High-level objectives and measures for objective success

Narrative objectives, measurable indicators

3-5 objectives, 3-5 measures per objective

Costs and investments

Sense of the resources (people, money, systems, time) needed to achieve these; don't forget to think about who will lead these initiatives!

Inputs

Inputs

Current state of things

Headcount

Existing projects

KTLO (Keep The Lights On) Overhead

Leadership and Talent depth and gaps

Variety of Perspectives

Teams, senior ICs, product managers, partner

Top-down, bottom-up, and sideways

Retrospective

A reflection on what happened over the last cycle, to ground your optimism

Exercise: KTLO

What does winning look like?

Storytelling and Inspiration

Leadership Bench

Trust and Resilience

Communication Execution Planning

Thank You!
@skamille