

# 4 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

Break down silos and build  
strategies that last.

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**Published:**  
2020

**More information:**  
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# Intro

This ebook is for you who operates on a strategic level and who is looking for inspiration to progress with your new or your current strategy. We will make sure you know some of the pitfalls to avoid and give you concrete tools how to avoid them.

A strategy design process is for most companies a long, expensive and complex process. But it doesn't have to be, if done right. We are here to help.

We will introduce you to agile strategies, so you easily can change direction when reality changes.

We have collected tips and tools for you to create a flexible, but clear strategy for your company, while also providing you with insights to how you can start involving your employees to gain ownership, agility and speed.

Please don't hesitate to reach out for more information.

Enjoy!



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# 1. Let's get things straight first

## - what is a strategy?

A strategy is a high-level plan used to achieve the vision of the organisation under conditions of uncertainty. It breaks down the vision into smaller bits, describing which goals and initiatives you hope to accomplish. A strategy also describes what resources you will need and what targets will tell you if it succeed.

This is also called your decision framework, which will make it possible for the organisation to adjust accordingly. Most importantly the framework enable you to delegate and cooperate internally as well as externally around your vision.

*A good strategy can answer the **where are we now** and **where do we want to be***





## ***Purpose creates impact and lasting change***

Great strategies have few, but clearly defined, goals describing what results or impact the company is aiming for, it could be a target revenue, value for stakeholders or other financial targets, but also non-financial results such as customer or employee satisfaction and/or benefits for the society.

The strategy must also describe uncertainties and risks short term and long term and will serve as your framework for later strategy iterations.

In addition, you want to create buy-in from your organisation, describing the **Value** of your choices and the **Why**. This also includes explaining what hasn't been chosen and is one way of creating purpose and giving people the ability to contribute.

## 2. What you want to avoid

### - how not to execute your plan

- X Communication doesn't equal execution.** Leaders often assume that once they have communicated the strategy, even once, that execution will happen automatically.
- X Never say "no"!** Good leaders understand the strategy, but fail to assess realistic capacity. They don't clearly prioritize actions and/or say "no" to the least important initiatives. Only 11% of leaders feel that all their company's strategic priorities have the resources they need for success.
- X Doing everything at the same time.** "Fire-fighting" and the immediacy of daily operational issues (the "whack-a-mole" approach) can challenge a leader's ability to stay clearly focused on strategy execution.
- X Impact focus vs. activity focus.** "Checking the box" on a project plan may cause leaders to miss the triggers to adapt actions to respond to changes in staffing, customers or market. A lot of activity may not ultimately execute the strategy.
- X Not creating ownership.** A lack of clear accountability for strategic results and delegated decision creating ownership can undermine or lengthen the time to deliver strategic results.

Leaders struggle because execution is tough, but don't give up yet. If you can recognize these pitfalls, you can avoid them or steer out of them.

## 3. Get started

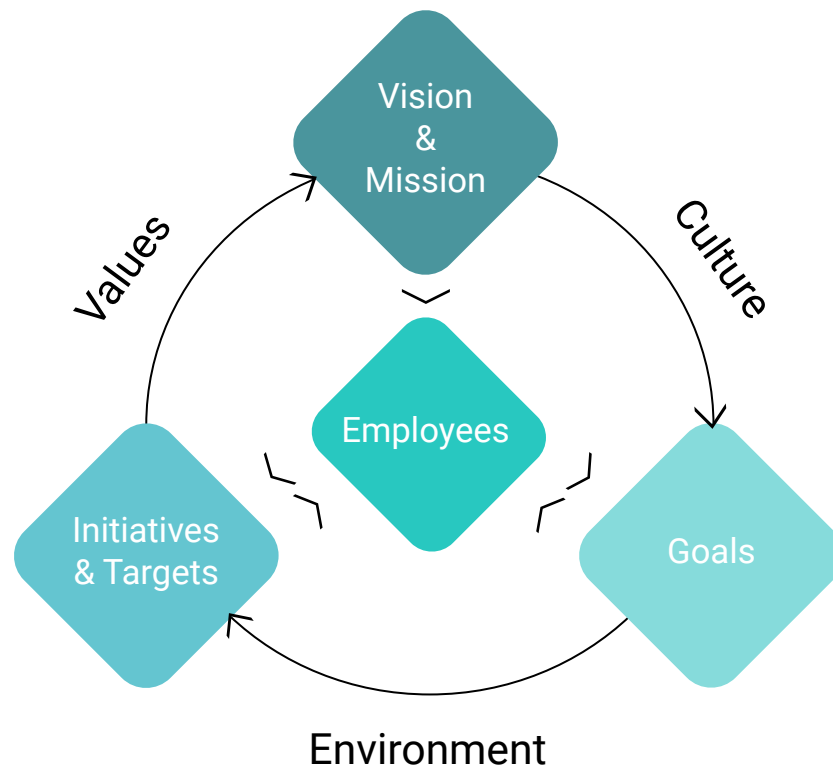
### - how to develop a strategy?

Building your strategy is often based on a series of difficult decisions.

***Where do you want to go? How do you want to reach that goal? How much time do you have?*** Your strategy needs a solid framework to help your organization and employees to work towards a common goal and to achieve the vision.

Your strategy will start out as a broad idea and should result in an actionable plan. No matter if you are running an agile strategy or not, an execution plan is important and often neglected because most time has been spent formulating the strategy.





Usually, strategies consist of 4 essential blocks: **vision/mission**, **goals**, **initiatives/targets** and **employees**.

It is highly important to include these **4 blocks** in your strategy development. If done right it will increase commitment, engagement and results.

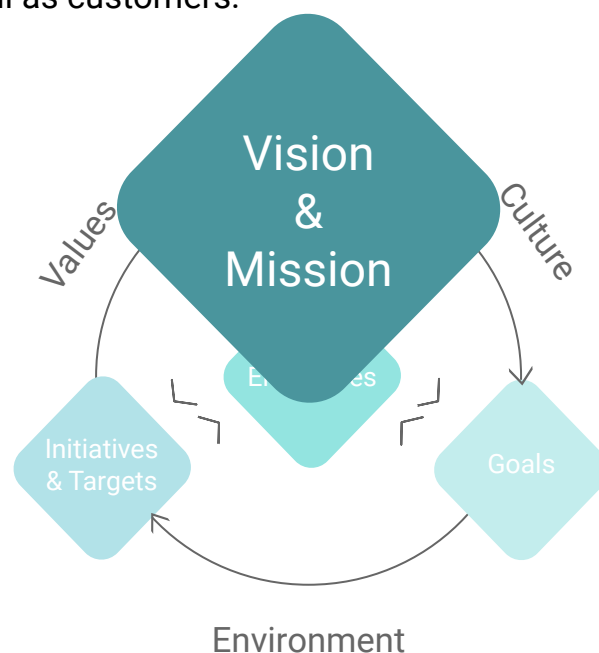
In our framework, above, the blocks are constrained by the company's **values**, the geographical and organisational **culture** and the **environment** surrounding your organisations. such as the market and customers.

**Let's dig deeper into this!**

## What do you envision?

Your vision is a statement to describe your company's long term aim. It is a great tool to steer the overall direction for the future and explain what the company aspires to be upon achieving its mission. The vision must be **easy to remember and to understand**. The greatest visions inspire people.

Employees as well as customers.



## Where do you want to go?

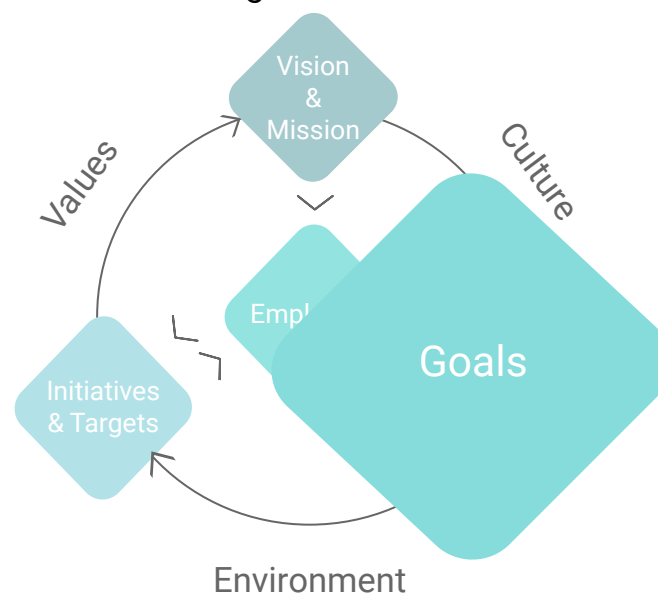
The mission goes beyond the vision and explains into depth what purpose the organization serves its audience or customers. Your mission statement drives the company forward

The statement is explaining what you do and the core of your business. It includes your objectives and finally, what it takes to reach those objectives. Most importantly the mission is supposed to be embedded in the behavior and help shape the company culture.

## What are you aiming for?

Once you have defined your mission, you need goals to achieve it. The goals are defining your idea even further and in more detail. They are the first step to actual actionable tasks.. Defining a series of goals will help drive the strategy towards achieving the mission and vision. The goals could be considered as mini-missions and serve the purpose of cropping the strategy into smaller pieces, making it easier to overview and communicate.

When creating your goals, many use the well-known approach BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal). By setting a BHAG you think of a goal that is stimulating and exciting and almost unreal, but real enough to be able to reach at least parts of it. It functions as a long-term direction, and pulls people out of short-term thinking.



BHAG's used right can enhance the process of thinking freely, but must be complemented by an impact analysis as well as a cost & effect analysis. After the analysis you will know which goals to move ahead and which to save for later. The analysis will also help you communicate and explain the decisions to the rest of the organisation.

## Now, what actions to take?

Goals are directions, whereas initiatives are actions on a strategic level, which are not to be confused with actions used in daily project management. We need initiatives because goals are too hard to estimate, delegate and almost impossible to complete if they belong to more than one department. When all initiatives belonging to a goal is accomplished it means you also completed the goal and is one step closer to your vision and mission.

Initiatives is where the **What, How and Who** is described. This includes questions like: What is the scope, and what is not? How are we going to do it and why? Who has which responsibilities?



But also details such as **time frame, budget, customer benefines** and **targets**. With these details it becomes possible to involve mid-management and employees and work across departments and countries. Usually initiatives are the foundation for the project plan and the project roadmap, which if you are lucky you have a project manager to manage and drive along with top management.

## How to know if you succeed?

After you have set your initiatives, you need to be able to measure them to control their success and to see if they work. Targets are used to determine the progress, to see trends and to react on changes during the process.

The pitfalls with targets is that they often are used as KPIs connected to employee incentive or bonus agreements. If the KPIs are not constructed carefully they might not drive behavior in favor of the strategy, but the individual.

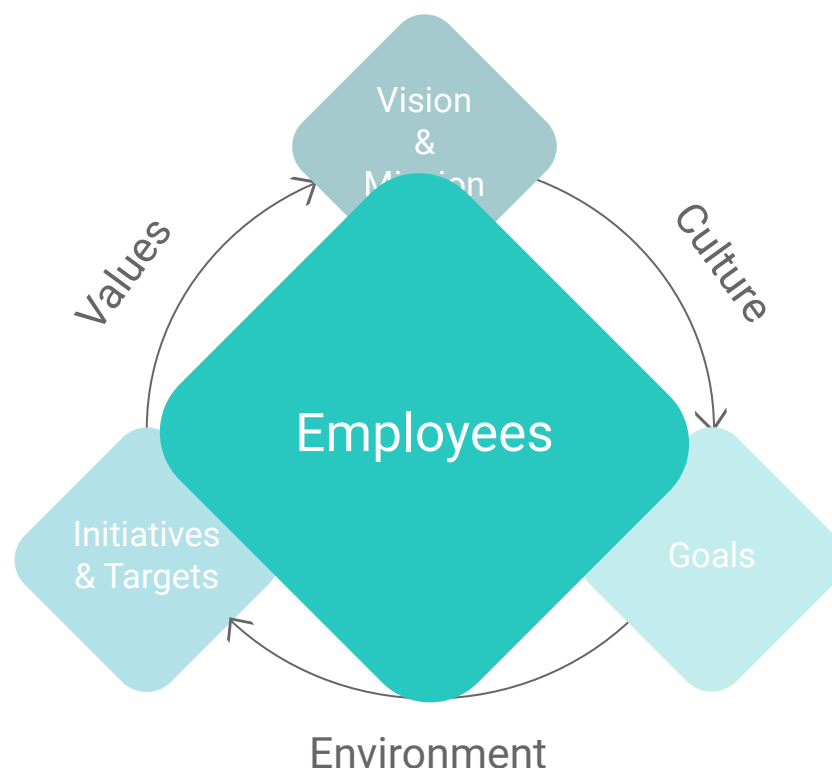
A way to avoid this is to make an initiative or goal as a team KPI, but it will require management to be flexible and adjust initiatives if needed so they become achievable. Another benefit by not tying targets to individuals is it increases the willingness to experiment.

The SMART-method can help you describe the targets:

- ✓ **Specific:** clear & precise
- ✓ **Measurable:** numerical & can be graphed
- ✓ **Actionable:** can be easily interpreted & shows which actions affect it
- ✓ **Repeatable:** consistently able to gather information over time
- ✓ **Time Based:** measurable at an appropriate frequency

## Should you involve employees?

The short answer, is yes. Employees are the center of your strategy and will have a big part in your strategy's success or failure. Therefore you should consider how you are going to involve your organisation.



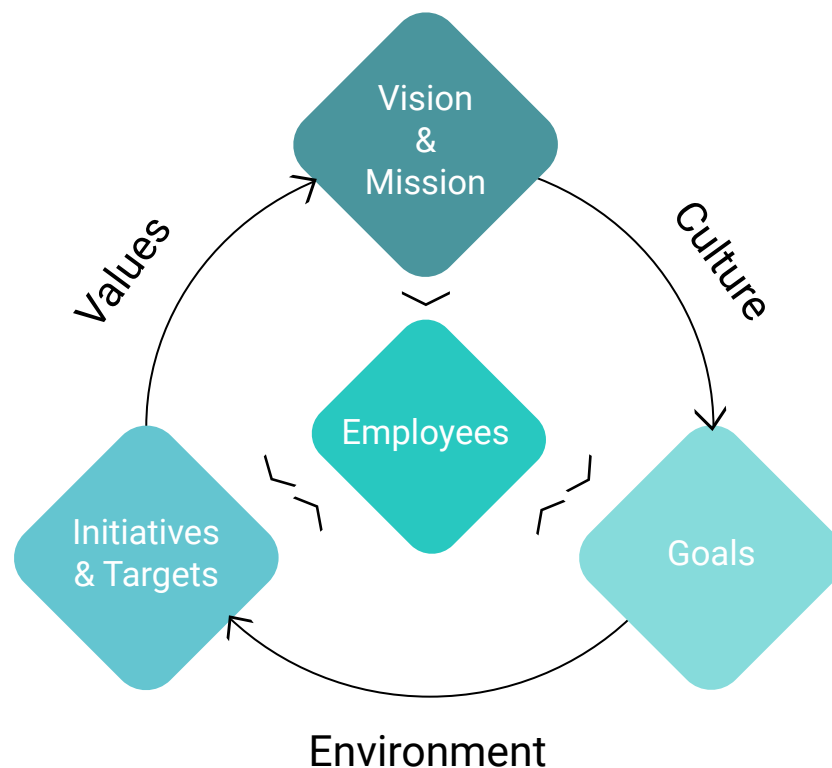
Involving a lot of people might seem like overcomplicating and dragging out things, from experience I can tell you, that it is not - it will pay off. You might be lacking some tools and processes in your existing setup, but the earlier you involve the organisation, the faster you will get to execute.



When involving your organisation you should consider:

- ✓ Collaborating with your employees when you define your initiatives and targets, which will create commitment.
- ✓ Asking your team what skills they can offer and how much they are able to contribute, which will make them accountable.
- ✓ Employees are often also the closest to your customer, which will provide you more insights and new perspectives.

## Consideration before kick-off.



**What are your values?** Do you already have a list of values and are these embedded in your company? Do your values correspond with the behavior you have in your company? If not, you should start here.

The values should portrait the core beliefs of your company and should remain constant. Values are not dependent on current trends, economic circumstance or profits. They represent what lies at the heart of the organization and are rooted in the behavior you and your employees conduct every day towards each other and the customers.

**What is your culture?** Do you have a simple organisation, few locations, few countries and no distributed teams? Is your management group united? If not, this is where your values become important to implement.

The culture is often heavily influenced by the company values, but is primarily constructed by the behavior of management. Subcultures can also play a big part creating a company culture, these can be found within departments or professions as well as country specific cultural differences.



**What environment are you in?** What market do you operate in? Is it highly competitive? Who are your stakeholders and what is their impact? If you haven't considered this, then you probably should.

The environment requires an analysis in itself such as SWOT or PEST(LE)-analysis.

## 4. When the future isn't stable - how to adapt your strategy

Our world becomes more and more complex and thereby less predictable, this has a one-to-one impact on your business strategy. Agile strategizing can help your company increase flexibility, speed, and preparedness.

An agile development process helps you to:

1. Identify problems faster
2. React quickly to changes and external developments
3. Align teams successfully
4. Be more cost-efficient

As your strategy development can no longer be considered as a linear process and you have to define shorter cycles to make quicker decisions and to react faster. Similar to rapid prototyping, strategies need to be developed and tested early on to gain feedback and iterate.

While strategy execution requires more adaptability, the vision and mission should still serve as the foundation and stability of your strategy and company. They are highly relevant to reflect upon when considering to adjust the strategy as they should be aligned with your goals and initiatives.

**Change perspective.** To gain an agile strategy you need to forget some of the things you learned at business school and start thinking like a agile coach, but with helicopter perspective.

Whereas a agile coach would focus on a project, you should focus on the organisation and its surrounding.

**What is the agile method?** It is a framework normally used for agile project management that emphasizes teamwork, accountability and iterative progress toward a well-defined goal.

*Start with what can be **seen** or **known**.  
After that, track the **progress** and **tweak** as  
necessary.*



- 1. Expand your view:** It is common to develop a 3 - 5 year strategy and then make a project plan for 1 year. Scrap that, create a long term vision and mission. Start thinking 10 to 15 years into the future, then people joining will understand where the company is heading and create a sense of purpose. It will also allow you to dream big and to inspire.
- 2. Break it down:** Set goals for the next 18 - 24 months. This is the hardest part, here you should tell the story of **why** and for **whom**. Being crystal clear here, will enable you to revise if the circumstances change.
- 3. Sharing is caring:** Your employees will share if they care and they will care if you share. Remember they are your forefront, do you keep them in the dark, then they can't or won't alert you when things are changing. Make sure to be transparent, so your people can be a part of the solution.
- 4. Review and react:** All plans needs attention, make sure to a close eye on your strategy, correct where needed and kill your darlings if they belong in the past.



# Ready to shape a new future?

Designing a strategy is difficult, but also a great opportunity for you and your organisation to create long lasting impact for your employees and customers.

We hope our guide gave you some ideas how you can shape your company's future and a framework to optimize your strategic foundation, your change management and your leadership.

At Whyser we deliver digitized strategies, so you have a tool to execute your strategies within, without losing oversight and transparency.

We can help you set your strategy into motion and facilitate the documentation process, while powering-up the strategy.

Reach out if you are interested in hearing more and let us assist you in making your strategy a reality.



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