



The Strategic Planning Springboard

Leap Clear Of Three Big Obstacles

2018
edition

Brought to you by

RESULTS
C O M

Contents.

01	Introduction.....	04
02	Obstacle #1: Your Core Purpose	05
03	Obstacle #2: Strategic Positioning.....	07
04	Obstacle #3: Core Activities.....	10
05	Cross the finish line.....	12

(Among the) most essential elements of winning culture are...fairness, respect, trust, inclusiveness and teamwork. The leaders walk the talk, live the values, and communicate a clear vision and strategy for growth.

– John Spence, Letters to a CEO

01

Introduction

Your workforce changed dramatically in the last five years. People want to understand the business around them, they want to know how to contribute, and they want to be acknowledged when they do.

Your market has changed dramatically too. Any industry can be disrupted – and not just by new technology or a phone app. Strategic execution itself has become a significant differentiator. The more efficiently your team can produce, the more competitive you become. And the more your team can collaborate, the better you can adapt.

Thankfully, creating a workplace that satisfies your employees' desire to understand the business also engages them. If they know what's going on and why they're needed, they'll take ownership, and they will team up to meet the market with you.

That's strategic execution at its best, and, as Spence says, making it happen depends upon communicating a clear strategy for growth.

It's not easy. Articulating a strategy can be extremely challenging. We offer free One-Page Strategic Planning software that helps. The completed plan has sixteen sections, and you need them all. This springboard introduces only three of them:

- Core Purpose
- Strategic Positioning
- Core Activities

In our experience, executives often have trouble with these three. They all underpin a different attitude towards leadership. Together, they will help you understand what you need to do in order to align today's workforce to execute your strategy.

02

Obstacle #1: Your Core Purpose

Core Purpose communicates the difference you want to make in the lives of the people you touch.

A famous study by Gallup found that Millennials overwhelmingly want to contribute to an enterprise they believe in. Stanford University found the same of workers across the age spectrum.

But what does it mean to “believe in” an enterprise? What’s the workforce looking for?

Until recently, managers were taught that people work out of self interest, and that they will work for the highest remuneration. Most executives today were either taught this, or they became managers under mentors who had been taught this. Being a leader meant that you directed people’s behavior by apportioning rewards.

That’s still important, but it’s not enough,, and managers often have a hard time switching gears. Today, rewards have to exist in the context of a larger purpose. Earning a reward needs to mean that some greater good was also accomplished.

As our Head of Strategy, Stephen Lynch, explains in one of our training videos, “It’s not about making money. It’s about the difference you want to make in the world and the lives of the people you touch.”

Leadership today means looking past your P/L to see what your business means – or could mean – to your customers and to your community

How To Clear It.

This exercise is best done with co-founders and others with a long-term interest in your enterprise. Your Core Purpose is about what you specifically do for the people you touch. When they're satisfied, how have you changed their lives?

Beware of answers that apply to everyone. "Customer satisfaction," for example, is not a Core Purpose. It's table stakes for any organization.

Your company exists to impact the world in a particular way. That's your Core Purpose. What you do and How you do it will change over time. But Why you do it won't. Your Core Purpose is the why. No matter what your business is, there's a Core Purpose that your team will immediately appreciate.

To help you define it, try starting your Core Purpose with the word "To..." For an example let's look at one of the oldest environmental groups in the world, the Sierra Club in the United States. Their Core Purpose is, in part, "to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment."

They want to change the lives of the people they touch. It doesn't say a word about how they're going to do it. The "how" will change. But "why" they do it, to restore the environment, has been the same for over a hundred years.

Everyone in their organization sees their work in the context of that big picture. This has a powerful transformative effect. If you do it, your employees will see that their goals and tasks serve a greater purpose. Leaders who provide context like that build cohesive teams that leave competitors behind. As Lynch says, "When you nail your Core Purpose, it has real power."

03

Obstacle #2: Strategic Positioning

“Highly engaged and satisfied employees can generate as much as a 104%– 189% increase in profitability, whereas a poor organizational culture with disengaged employees can cost a company up to 22% of total revenues.”

— John Spence, Letters to a CEO

Today’s workforce is not only “digitally native,” but they may be the most businesssavvy ever. Millennials and their parents endured the worst financial crisis in nearly a century. Now that they’re on the mend, they need to know that their employer intends to succeed. They need to know what their employer stands for and how they are uniquely positioned in the marketplace.

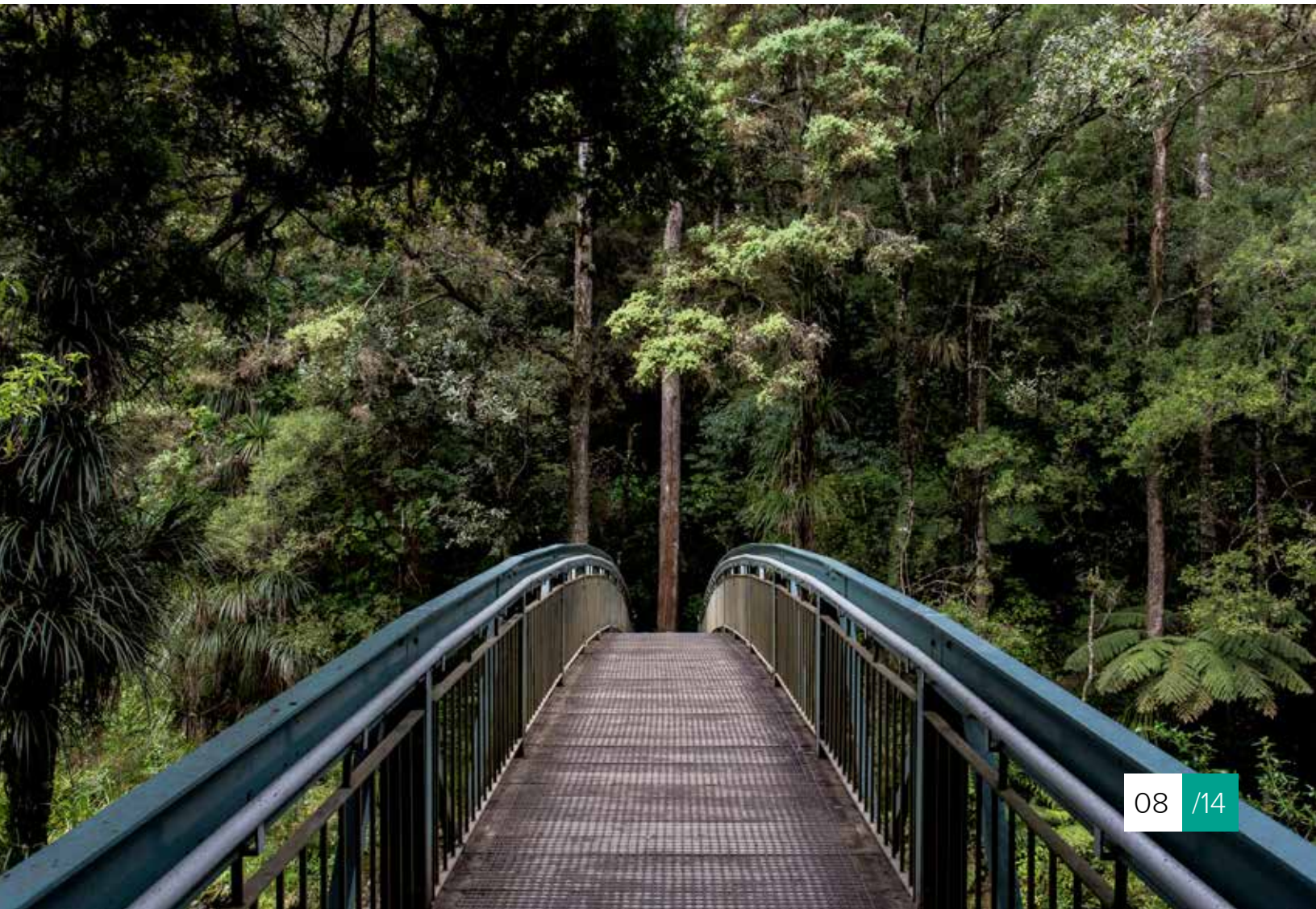
Your customers won’t even start down the path to buy your product unless they think you’re remarkably, distinctively, and meaningfully different. You don’t win the marketing battle with the best product or service. You win the marketing battle with Strategic Positioning.

A lot of leaders have a hard time defining their Strategic Positioning for one simple reason: it means taking some options off the table. That often strikes them as counter-intuitive. If any industry can be disrupted, and if the whole point of strategic planning is to become more adaptive, then how can taking options off the table help?

This is an instance where leadership needs to be laser focused so that their team can focus as well. Generalities work against you. “Best quality,” for example, is not Strategic Positioning. Your people are too business-savvy to

accept that. It's table stakes again, and it's not enough to win in today's market – or tomorrow's.

Your Strategic Positioning shows how you are meaningfully different from your competitors. It's your "X-factor." Brands that stand for one thing generally win. Unfocused brands generally unravel.



How To Clear It.

If everything is “strategic,” then nothing is.

— Stephen Lynch

What do you want people to think about when they hear your name? We make 95% of our decisions subconsciously, so the perception of value resides in the mind of the customer. They will believe what you believe, especially at first, but also as it’s reiterated over time. Defining what you believe, and inviting your team to adopt it, can have a tremendous impact on your growth.

Do this by identifying how you will become a market leader in some specific way. Find that aspect of your business that you want people to think about, and seek excellence there. Your best people want to be leaders, and they want to be excellent. It makes their work more satisfying.

It will also help define your position in your market. Ultimately, you don’t win market share with products and services. You win it with better positioning. Identify your strategic position by answering these two questions:

- In what area(s) could you be perceived as the leader of a category or niche in your industry?
- In what area(s) could you be perceived as being dramatically and meaningfully different from your competitors?

If you differentiate yourself as a leader by being meaningfully unique in some way, it can make an impression. Customers respond when your company can authentically and genuinely position itself as a leader. And when your staff thinks of itself as a leading team, they respond with advocacy.

04

Obstacle #2: Core Activities

The difference between successful people and VERY successful people is that VERY successful people say “no” to almost everything.

— Warren Buffet

Core Activities differentiate you. They're rooted in your Core Purpose and they're essential to your Strategic Positioning. They comprise the excellence that makes you a leader.

These are the must-do activities. You want to allocate resources to them. But it is not easy to know which products, services and activities are Core and which are not. It's especially hard for executives, because most have a very difficult time taking an objective eye to the work around them. You started your enterprise. You added new products and services. You built your team. Everything that's happening seems important or unavoidable. If any of it stopped, there would be dire consequences. However, the decision to stop activities, or discontinue products and services that have outlived their usefulness is one of the keys to strategic leadership.

It often seems like this where your plans crash into reality. You want your Core Purpose to cascade through your Strategic Priorities so you can focus everyone on Core Activities.

But how? What do you change in your current organization to make it more effective for the future?

How To Clear It.

Here's a technique for seeing things more objectively. Ask yourself this question when you're evaluating the products and services in your portfolio, and the work done in your enterprise:

- Is this activity / offering important for our long term success in our industry?

Taking the long view helps you identify the essentials and separate them from the "important" or "unavoidable" non-essentials that you want to phase out. It also helps you identify what we call "Contextual Activities," which are jobs that support your long term success, but that might not pass the next test.

You'll discover which activities are truly Core Activities by asking yourself,

- Does this activity / offering meaningfully differentiate us in the mind of the customer?

When the answer is "Yes," then that activity / offering has strategic value. It's a Core Activity. The excellence you bring to it makes you a leader. When your customer experiences it, it opens a relationship with them that should bring you long-term benefits and more customers.

You'll want to invest more resources to Core Activities, and you'll want to keep Contextual Activities in-house. Everything else, optimally, should be outsourced or shut down.

A transition like this can cause stress across your workforce, which is why it's so important that everyone understands how your business fits together, and how they fit in. There are solid methods for making sure that you have your team's buyin so they transition enthusiastically. That's out of scope here, but we're happy to show you how it's done when you're ready.

05

Cross the Finish Line.

A big part of strategy is making deliberate choices.

— Stephen Lynch

A strategic plan can come true. Now that you've taken a hard look at three of the most challenging parts of a complete strategic plan, you can see why a business that executes a defined strategy dominates its market.

You make the best use of your people. Your team knows why your business

exists, what makes it special, and how to lead. This awareness affects everything they do. When you bring strategic planning to life like this, everyone becomes a strategist.

That's engagement for today's workforce. But only 5% of businesses manage to run themselves like this. It's worth the effort to become one.

References

Letters to a CEO, John Spence, 2014, Diversion Books

Business Execution for RESULTS, Stephen Lynch, 2013, STEBIAN.com

Rockefeller Habits, Verne Harnish, 2002, Gazelles, Inc.

Drive, Daniel Pink, 2011, Riverhead Books

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/core-vs-non-activities-stephen-lynch>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-strategically-position-your-brand-stephen-lynch>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140619221214-2338231-engage-your-employees-with-a-compelling-reason-why>

<http://www.gallup.com/services/178514/state-american-workplace.aspx>

<http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/at/Documents/human-capital/hc-trends-2015.pdf>

About RESULTS.com

In a world where there's an app and a dashboard for every team in your organization, departments can become isolated and people can lose sight of the larger strategic picture.

RESULTS puts them in touch with each other and gives them a broader vision. It shows users how their teams work together and how they're strategically aligned. It pulls real-time data from other applications to create business intelligence views of performance on Metrics and Projects. It's the only platform with a Meetings interface. It makes collaboration easy because communications are organized around clearly defined objectives, with a texting thread attached to every Goal and Team.

RESULTS gives the C-suite unprecedented visibility into operations and personnel. It includes world-class consultative onboarding, Quarterly Strategic Reviews, and hands-on support from a dedicated Account Manager. Find out what it can do for you today.



[Start Your Strategic Plan](#)

[Request a Demo](#)



© Copyright RESULTS.com 2018

RESULTS
C O M