

The LEAD Forward September Brief

Changing Direction

The end of Q3 is approaching and for many companies this means: It's strategy-season. Big questions are being discussed in C-Suites everywhere: How to react to the changes in business and the world? What consequences to draw from what is and has been going on around us? How do we do more with less? What do we really need to achieve next year in order to survive and thrive?

Not easy. Not necessarily breezy.

A lot of hard work, creative thinking and data analysis go into creating a strategy. We know. We see you. Most often the product of this hard work is outstandingly smart, creative and people centric. And luckily, a good strategy can go a long way in making the need for change in direction really palpable and motivating for your employees. If communicated engagingly, that is.

As with so many things in life, the devil is in the detail. In the case of strategy, just a few seemingly small wrong decisions can make or break how your strategy permeates your company and how many of your employees it motivates. After all: no matter how good a strategy is, it will be worth little if it is not lived by the organization. Not to mention the disappointment you might feel when your excitement isn't as contagious as you'd hoped.

What can go wrong when a change in strategy is not communicated appropriately for YOUR employees?

- Employees see it as “just another thing” they have to do to please the C-Suite
- A nose-to-the-grindstone mentality arises, as the new strategy might seem to come from a scarcity mindset
- Instead of creating team cohesion, teams and individuals can get isolated lowering productivity significantly
- Through misunderstandings employees develop avoidant or defiant behaviors
- Underappreciated employees only do the bare minimum and become sluggish





New Narratives

Probably, what you have produced as a strategy, the conviction behind it and what you believe it will do for you as a company holds some extremely powerful stuff. Like stories, images and feelings everyone can get on board with. Why not do exactly that? Reproduce that excitement you and your C-Suite felt creating it for your teams. Tell the story. Make it about you and your people. Be bold. Don't shy away from invoking (big) feelings. It's what ties us together as humans. What we can feel, we can see. What we can see, we can do. Together.

These practices have helped bring strategy alive for our clients:

- Survey pain points beforehand to make sure the story addresses it
- Craft powerful change stories together with the C-Suite and other key stakeholders early on in the process
- Create a sub-story for each department or business unit and iterate based on feedback from a sounding board
- Teach leaders to convey these stories in micro workshops
- Host a company-wide Hackathon or Design Sprint where cross-functional/regional members can team up to hack or design strategic initiatives together
- Create an Ambassador Program with people from across the organization and empower them to help come up with ways to activate the new strategy in all parts of the organization

How far along are you with your strategy? What challenges do you foresee for your next iteration? How might you ensure your next strategic move as a company will be embraced by your people? We at LEAD Forward will be happy to explore possibilities and ideas with you.

Reach out to Annie Faulkner for a free 15-minute get-to-know-call under

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