



Strategic Leadership Solutions: Building Vision, Alignment and Execution

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The DiSC logo is a blue circle with the word "DiSC" in white, bold, sans-serif font inside it.

Leadership & Organizational Culture

- The culture in any company stems from the actions, attitudes, and behaviors of its leaders as well as the organization's overall missions, vision and values.
- The best strategic planning efforts work only if the company's leaders are committed to – and set an example of – the organization's mission, vision and values.
- Ensuring that your organization's leaders have the insight necessary to successfully build, navigate and reinforce the company's mission, vision and values are critical to strategic success for the business.

HR and the Work of Leaders

- As an HR professional, it's important for you to take on a strategic leadership role in your organization, but that's not where it ends for you...
 - Not only do you serve an important leadership role yourself, you likely play a key role in selecting and developing current and future leaders across the organization.
 - This is a responsibility that has a powerful a significant impact on the future success of your organization.

Strategic Leadership: Key Elements

- Leadership can be described/defined in many ways.. but “the work that leaders do—the work that really matters—is boiled down to three areas:”
 - **Vision** – crafting a vision of new possibilities
 - **Alignment** – building alignment so everyone is moving in the same direction
 - **Execution** – *championing* execution so the vision can become a reality
- Source: *The Work of Leaders* (Wiley, 2013)
<http://workofleaders.com/>

Methodology

- The **Work of Leaders** framework is a result of:
 - Four year development project
 - Analysis of three decades of leadership research
 - Input from 300 subject matter experts from over 150 organizations
- Result:
 - Identification of a specific set of leadership best practices
 - Best practices are context-specific, with preferred behaviors varying based on the situation

Strategic Leadership: Key Elements

- These three elements (**vision, alignment, execution**) are essential keys for strategic leadership effectiveness – both in yourself and in others.
 - Having a vision is the beginning, but that vision can't become a reality in the absence of alignment and execution.
 - These elements are critical to serving as an effective business leader.
 - To become an effective HR Business leader and to help define the mission, vision and values of your organization, it's important to develop "best practice" leadership skills focused on these three elements.

Why Vision Matters

- Vision is a shared process across all levels of leadership. It does not just come from the top down.
 - Vision creates an imagined future state for the organization
 - Expands assumptions about what can be done
 - Provides purposes for teams, organizations and individuals
 - Drives the development of specific goals in support of the vision
 - Unifies people



Why Alignment Matters

- Gaining and maintaining alignment is critical for all levels and requires effective communication upward, downward and laterally.
 - Sets the stage by proposing a plan for implementation
 - Provides a forum for questions and concerns
 - Brings people together behind the vision
 - Generates excitement for the vision
 - Leads to “buy-in”



Why Execution Matters

- Effective leaders “champion execution.” They must ensure that the strategies and people are in place for the vision to become a reality.
 - Propels the development of concrete strategies
 - Makes the vision actionable
 - Sets the stage to make things happen
 - Gives people a sense of achievement
 - Fulfills the promise of the vision



From Natural Tendencies to Best Practices

- There isn't one right way to lead – not everyone has the same leadership style or natural tendencies – or the same strengths and weaknesses.
- Regardless of individual differences, everyone can lead to best practices, and mastering this ability is the key to strategic leadership in any organization.
- When leaders learn how to lead to best practices, that's where the vision, alignment and execution necessary for strategic leadership success becomes possible.

Understanding Yourself and Others

- Learning how to move to best practices for strategic leadership starts with improving your understanding of yourself, including what your natural tendencies are as a leader as compared to best practices.
 - There are different best practices for each of the three elements.
 - It would be very unusual for anyone to have natural tendencies consistent with best practices in all of them.
 - Everyone can, however, *move toward best practices* – though this requires identification, recognition, commitment and energy.

One-to-Many Approach

- Looking at a person's leadership style isn't the same as just considering general personality differences or even how someone functions as a supervisor working with direct report - there is an association, but more is involved.
- The Work of Leaders (i.e., vision – alignment – execution) focuses on a "one-to-many" approach through tangible steps directed at leading a group or organization toward best practices.
- Considering leadership this way is important not just for executives and managers, but for anyone in (or being considered for) a leadership role, whether formal or informal.



Applying the Work of Leaders

- Reminder: Leadership is a 3-step process: (1) *vision*, (2) *alignment*, (3) *execution*
- **Focus:** Moving toward best practices in all three steps
 - There are 3 drivers for each step
 - For each driver, there are two “behavioral continua” (i.e., the best practice and its opposite)
 - Continua items listed on the right represent the “best practice” for the specific element with which they are associated.
 - Consider your natural tendencies as we discuss.

Tool for Validated Results

- Each person in attendance today who would like to complete a full Everything DiSC Work of Leaders assessment will receive a code to do so at **no cost**, so you'll have a concrete tool designed specifically to help improve your skills in the areas of vision, alignment and execution as related to leadership.
- You'll be able to complete the full Work of Leaders assessment online and receive (via email) a full report that identifies your natural tendencies and that maps out key actions you can take to move toward best practices across all dimensions.
- Your report will provide you with personalized information designed to help you develop preferred behaviors aligned with leadership best practices, based on your individual DiSC leadership style and other factors that impact your natural approach to the elements of vision, alignment and execution.

Vision: Drivers/Continua

1. Exploration – the extent to which you:

- Seek closure / Remain open
- Prioritize details / Prioritize the big picture

2. Boldness – the extent to which you:

- Exercise caution/ Are adventurous
- Hold back / Speak out

3. Testing Assumptions – the extent to which you:

- Decide independently / Seek counsel
- Push forward / Explore implications



Alignment: Drivers/Continua

1. Clarity – the extent to which you:

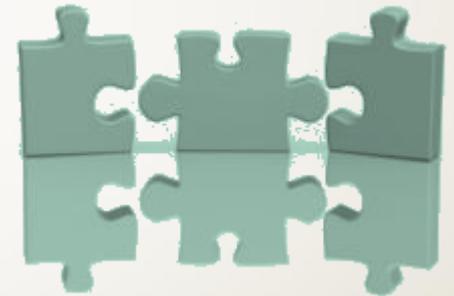
- Offer intuition / Explain rationale
- Impromptu messaging / Structured messaging

2. Dialogue – the extent to which you:

- Exchange perspectives / Present information
- Challenging / Receptive

3. Inspiration – the extent to which you are:

- Reserved / Expressive
- Matter-of-fact / Encouraging



Execution: Drivers/Continua

1. Momentum – the extent to which you are:

- Low key / Driven
- Reactive / Initiating

2. Structure – the extent to which you:

- Improvise / Plan
- Follow first impressions / Analyze in-depth

3. Feedback – the extent to which you:

- Maintain harmony / Address problems
- Offer less praise / offer more praise



Checking Perceptions

- Everyone has their own ideas about their natural leadership styles and tendencies, but self-perception isn't always accurate.
- As an HR professional, whether you are in a supervisory role or not, you are (or are perceived to be by your company's employees) a representative of your organization's leadership.
- Thinking through differences and comparing them to a standard can be helpful, but a better option is to utilize a validated tool created specifically to help individual leaders understand the three elements most fundamental to strategic leadership success.

Validated Results for Strategic Leadership

- Everything DiSC Work of Leaders is a validated assessment designed to help leaders identify strengths and areas of opportunity.
- The tool uses a framework designed to develop natural tendencies to best practices, resulting in tangible and positive strategic impact for individuals and the overall organization.
- This tool provides a practical, concrete way to tie leadership to your organization's mission, vision and values.
- It can be a key tool for taking leadership development to the bottom line.

Moving Toward Strategic Leadership Effectiveness

- Remember that strategic planning is all about:
 - Considering where you are now
 - Natural leadership tendencies
 - Deciding where you want to be
 - Best practices for the work of leaders
 - Vision, alignment and execution
 - Determining how you are going to get there
 - Start with valid assessment
 - Capitalize on your strengths
 - Implement a personalized plan
 - Moving toward best practices in those areas most challenging to you



Moving Toward Strategic Leadership Effectiveness

- Your Work of Leaders report will provide specific feedback on your natural strengths and challenge areas, with concrete tips you can apply to move toward best practices.
- Use it as a tool to develop your own strategic leadership effectiveness.
 - For your strengths, consider how they have helped you as a leader?
 - Determine what challenge area(s) will you work on first?
 - What outcomes do you hope to achieve by improving in this area?
 - What steps will you take to improve?
 - What timeframe will you set for yourself?
 - Who can you turn to as a mentor in this area?
 - How will your organization benefit if its leaders move toward best practices?
 - How can you apply your strategic leadership knowledge to advancing the mission, vision and values of your organization?

Becoming a Strategic Leader

- Becoming a strategic leader involves:
 - Identifying your “comfort zone” in leadership situations
 - Comparing your natural tendencies to best practices
 - Developing an understanding of what you may need to do to maximize your potential for achieving optimal strategic leadership effectiveness.
 - Make an action plan and follow it.

Change Starts with Self-Awareness!

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