

HOW TO:

BUILD ENGAGE & **GROW** **YOUR TALENT** LIKE A STARTUP



There's a reason that startups seem to have it easy and it's not what you think...



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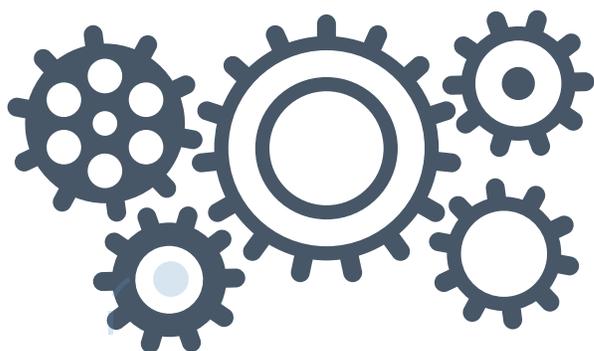
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INTRODUCTION



STARTUPS. They can sometimes feel like the unicorns of the talent management world. Faced with nothing but a blank slate, these golden children of recruiting seem to have it all – big budgets from VC funding, easy perks that attract the precise target market they need, even startup heavy locations like Silicon Valley seem to give a little extra advantage to those recruiting.

So how does a talent acquisition pro with a much larger mandate take the tools startups are using for recruiting, retention and attraction and use them within their organization? It stands to reason that larger companies may have a few advantages that startups do not. How can HR Professionals, Executives and Leaders learn how to build, engage and grow talent like a startup? (Psst! Facebook and Google are NOT startups any more!)

Let's start with the premise that nearly every team at a startup begins with a blank slate, an empty stage if you will. In fact, let's think of our team/department as a community theater production, with distinct stages and activities that have to happen before the next stage.



STARTUP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Transparency And Goals

Why Transparency Matters in Every Business

Why is goal alignment so hard to achieve? In a smaller company with few employees, it's not hard to get everyone on the same page. Things get a little more complicated when you add more employees and more levels to the mix. Hiring, growing and aligning your talent can also get complicated and it becomes easy for great people to feel lost in the shuffle.

There is certainly something to be said for operating like a lean startup with direct line of sight to every employee. You would always know what your people spent their days accomplishing and your employees would understand how their efforts contribute to the company mission.

Roughly 90 percent of your company's tactical work is done below executive management. If the employees at the bottom of the org chart don't clearly understand goals and aren't aligned with the company mission, it can result in a lot of wasted productivity.

Companies without proper goal alignment can face major issues while trying to stay on target towards broad organizational objectives. When goals do not cascade properly, it can be close to impossible to keep track of where your talent is allocated and what they are working on. This means nearly half of your company could be working on projects not aligned with overall goals.

The payoffs of improved goal alignment are huge when it comes to utilizing human capital, onboarding great hires, and achieving important organizational goals. Here are some other ways goal alignment helps your company operate leaner and smarter:

Corrects Issues In Real Time

Before you use start onboarding new employees, you first need to see everything happening in your company. Goal alignment allows for greater organizational transparency from the top of the org chart all the way to the bottom. When people are aligned and have visibility throughout the organization, new hires can

be onboarded directly into the organization with little fuss.

Your executives can see what everyone is focused on. This allows you to course correct problems in real time before a small error becomes a large problem, something that startups frequently do. You can stop teams from getting off track, keeping employees focused on the right tasks instead of wasting human capital on projects that don't affect your bottom line.

Helps Employees Understand Their Value

Goal alignment isn't useful only for your recruitment process. Long after you've hired great people, using a goal-based viewpoint will help employees see their value within the company. It can lead to a more active and engaged company culture, since employees can see exactly how their work affects the big picture.

This helps improve company culture and employee engagement. With about 70 percent of the workforce disengaged, companies are bleeding productivity and talent from employees who can't see where their efforts are going.

A recent study called "How Leaders Grow Today" conducted by ClearCompany and Dale Carnegie found 43 percent of employees were familiar with the company's strategic goals but could not actually list them. Misaligned employees and goal cascading are clearly both prevalent problems for many organizations hoping to improve company culture, get employees engaged, and keep productivity aligned with company objectives.

Allows You To See The Forest Through The Trees

If you're focusing on the little things, it soon becomes harder to see the larger picture. This is as true for the CEO as it is for someone on the lowest rung of the career ladder. To maintain a positive company culture likely to attract great candidates and make your recruitment and onboarding processes easier, you'll need goal alignment. Startups don't focus on the day-to-day tasks and instead understand how these tasks add value to larger organizational projects.

Keeping track of your goals can help your company stop focusing on minutiae and allow you to see the larger picture instead. This helps keep employees motivated and improves company culture, attracts great talent to your recruitment process, helps you avoid mistakes, and keeps your people working on the right tasks to keep growing your company.

STARTUP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Transparency And Goals

Why Does Talent Alignment Matter Anyway?

Strategic alignment impacts every aspect of your company, from hiring and retaining the best people to keeping your workforce engaged on the job. Here are five ways talent alignment can improve efficiency:

Improves Hiring And Onboarding

Maintaining strategic alignment with your company's goals can improve hiring and onboarding. Because you understand the current resources and needs of your organization, you have a better idea why they're hiring, and what the new hire is expected to accomplish.

When requisitions are made for specific and strategic reasons, the onboarding process itself becomes faster and easier. Team members know exactly what new employees need to contribute, and it becomes easier to cascade company goals, define and communicate job responsibilities and get new hires up and running.

Increases Productivity

Strategic alignment with goals can and should easily lead to higher levels of productivity. No employee should be confused about how their work contributes to the organization. With a talent alignment platform, it is easy for executives to see what everyone is working on and working toward.

By allowing executives to see all the way down the organizational chart, every employee becomes accountable for their work. There's more accountability when executives can see what employees have (and haven't) been working on.

Improves Resource Allocation

Goal alignment can help executives understand the ways in which they're using their human capital to achieve company objectives. If a certain plan or strategy isn't working, executives can switch game plans



and better allocate resources in order to meet goals.

This can help you adjust your strategy in real-time and prevent your workforce from veering off-track. You can address problems before they arise and improve employee engagement by putting your best people where they'll have an optimal impact on the company. Many smaller companies and startups have the ability to see this easily because they are constantly focused on hitting product roadmap goals.

Improves Employee Engagement

According to a recent survey from Gallup, about 70 percent of employees are currently disengaged in the workplace. This lack of employee engagement can easily lead to truantism and expensive employee turnover.

When employees understand the value of their work to the organization, it can lead to increased engagement and renewed motivation. This, alignment within the organization, and not the standard ping-pong tables or relaxed work environment, is what really makes top talent stay at a startup. Daily tasks are no longer divorced from larger organizational goals, and your best and brightest can see the importance of their contributions and how they add value.

Eases Corporate Communication

Your company's corporate communication might not be as effective as you hope.

According to a recent study from Dale Carnegie and Clear Company, less than six percent of companies communicate goals daily. In fact, most corporate communication happens quarterly, meaning there can be many months between check-ins of any sort. Not true in the startup environment. Usually racing to reach a roadmap goal, or working to extend runway funding, corporate communication happens in real-time, not every six months.

Because talent alignment helps everyone from executives to entry-level employees visualize goals on a daily basis and live with these goals from day-to-day, corporate communication is not only easier, it is also more impactful.



70% of employees
are disengaged



STARTUP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Transparency And Goals

How to See Everything Happening in Your Company

As startups grow in size, employees might find their goals growing more hazy. It's trying to see the forest instead of the trees, and many workers will get swept up in the minutiae of everyday projects and lose sight of overall organizational goals. The result is poor goal alignment and lost productivity.

If larger goals aren't connected to daily workflow, it's hard to keep your startup's most important objectives in sight. This leads to lack of alignment, especially as cascading goals veer off course down the organizational chart.

Even at the top, it's hard to keep your goals in mind and understand how the work of the company contributes to achieving those goals. If this is true for upper management, imagine what it's like for your workforce several levels below. Goals out of sight are quickly out of mind.

So how do you cut through the organizational telephone game and see what your people are actually doing? First you need to understand the hurdles to organizational transparency, and then you need to focus in on communicating and aligning goals.

Five Levels To Find Out

In my experience, I began to use a method called "five levels to find out" in order to see what was happening within my organization. In the five levels to find out method, I would isolate employees five levels below myself and ask them about their experience. Did they understand the company goals? How was their work fitting into organizational objectives?

I unsurprisingly found many of the employees farthest from view were confused about how their efforts fit into the big picture. I traced these employees all the way up the org chart to my direct reports and then sat down for some detailed conversations about driving alignment.

While five levels to find out is a great method for seeing what's happening at your organization and connecting with employees far below your rung on the corporate ladder, it's also a tough method to implement on a broader scale. It's extremely time consuming and only gives you insight into a narrow swath of your company.



Keep Your Goals Aligned

One of the best ways to achieve transparency is to focus on goal alignment. If everyone is working toward the same goals, you can be sure you understand what's happening in your organization. Keeping sight of goals allows companies of all sizes to operate more effectively like lean small businesses with direct line of sight to employees.

For example, using a goal-based talent alignment platform can allow companies to quickly and efficiently check the status of their goals and keep larger organizational initiatives in view. Or maybe your organization just needs to be better at communicating goals to your whole staff and keeping them at the forefront of daily workflow. This means you need to communicate strategic goals more than once a quarter, and keep updated on the contributions of everyone in your organizational chart.

Engage Your Workforce

Goal alignment isn't just useful for nosy CEOs who want to know what their workforce is up to. It's also important for employees who want to know how their efforts contribute to larger organizational objectives.

Goal alignment helps your people put their work in context, thereby keeping employees engaged and reducing employee turnover. Focusing on goals tightens the communication gaps between the high levels in your organization and the individual contributor.

Keeping goals in view helps you get the transparency and insight into your company you need. This way you can throw away that little business card, get your people engaged and contributing meaningfully, and get back to work.



STARTUP BUILDING BLOCKS:

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Goals are the New Tweets: How to use Social Goals for Your Company

When it comes to finding the best people for your organization, you need to be on the cutting edge of technology. So, it's no wonder employers and recruiters are often early adopters of new technology solutions.

Currently, 94 percent of recruiters are utilizing social media in order to find the best people. Six in 10 companies are using video interviews to connect with tech-savvy candidates on the move. And cloud computing has found its way into everything from document sharing to applicant tracking systems.

While Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn can be great sources to find talented candidates, your organization needs to look beyond the social realm if you want to retain your top talent. Maintaining proper goal alignment in your company means seeing your organization from the top of the org chart to the bottom.

With a great talent alignment platform, you can see what all your employees are busy working on, address problems, and reward your star talent. Keeping your organization aligned with company goals, and visualizing this alignment, is the best way to hire smarter, retain great people, and ensure your organizational objectives are being met.



Let's take a look at why goal alignment is soon to be the newest trend for finding and keeping the best people:

Recruit Smarter

Knowing you need to hire and knowing why you need to hire are two separate things. Goal alignment means you understand your organization from top to bottom, which can allow you to be more intelligent and strategic in your hiring efforts. Aligning your talent with goals means you know what your employees are working on, you can see their progress, and you understand at a glance how the workflow of your best people fits into wider organizational goals.

Because you can see the workflow of your whole organization, you can truly understand why your requisitions matter. This means you're not just taking it on faith that you need to hire more people — you know exactly what role they'll play in your company.

Communicate Better

You must provide clear communication and allow employees to visualize how and why their work matters. Few companies and leaders, however, have the time to sit down with the workforce daily and outline company goals. This is why focusing on goal alignment is so important, so workers can quickly and easily see how their individual contributions add up to the whole. It helps onboard new hires faster by quickly helping them understand where they fit into the organizational hierarchy and how their efforts will contribute toward important company goals.

94% of recruiters are
using social media for
recruitment

Fix Mistakes Faster

Because you can see your whole organization with crystal clarity, you can also see when your workforce is getting off track. Being able to fix issues in real-time, before a small mistake snowballs into a huge problem, is one of the biggest advantages of goal alignment.

It's easy for goals to go awry and for even the best employees to lose sight of important goals. By focusing on aligning your talent with your strategy from the top of the org chart to the bottom, you can ensure none of your employees ever lose sight of what is important.

Discover Your All-Star Employees

Employee turnover is expensive, time-consuming, and very annoying. Losing a great worker can set you back between 20 and 213 percent of the employee's annual salary, depending on their position on the corporate ladder. While paying this hefty price tag is inconvenient to say the least, losing people – and therefore the considerable effort and resources you put into finding them – is worse. Startups know this and make sure to reward and keep their best people happy and productive.

Thanks to goal alignment, you can keep an eye on the work of your employees and reward people appropriately. Employees who understand how their contributions fit into the organization will be more engaged and motivated to turn in good work. And by discovering and rewarding your all-star workers, you'll cut down on office politics, reward the right people, and motivate your whole workforce to do better.

Using social media or other tech tools to find the right people for your organization might be all the rage, but if your people aren't aligned with corporate goals, you'll end up losing them to disengagement and turnover. Focusing on goal alignment means understanding your workforce, communicating more clearly, and keeping your all-star employees engaged with company goals.

STARTUP BUILDING BLOCKS:

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How to Steer Your Team Members Back on Track

It can happen to anyone... all is going well with your company, when something just seems a bit off, nothing major at first, but something just isn't quite right. In the accelerated startup world, it becomes a snowball effect, but in larger organizations it can take a bit longer for problems to bubble to the surface.

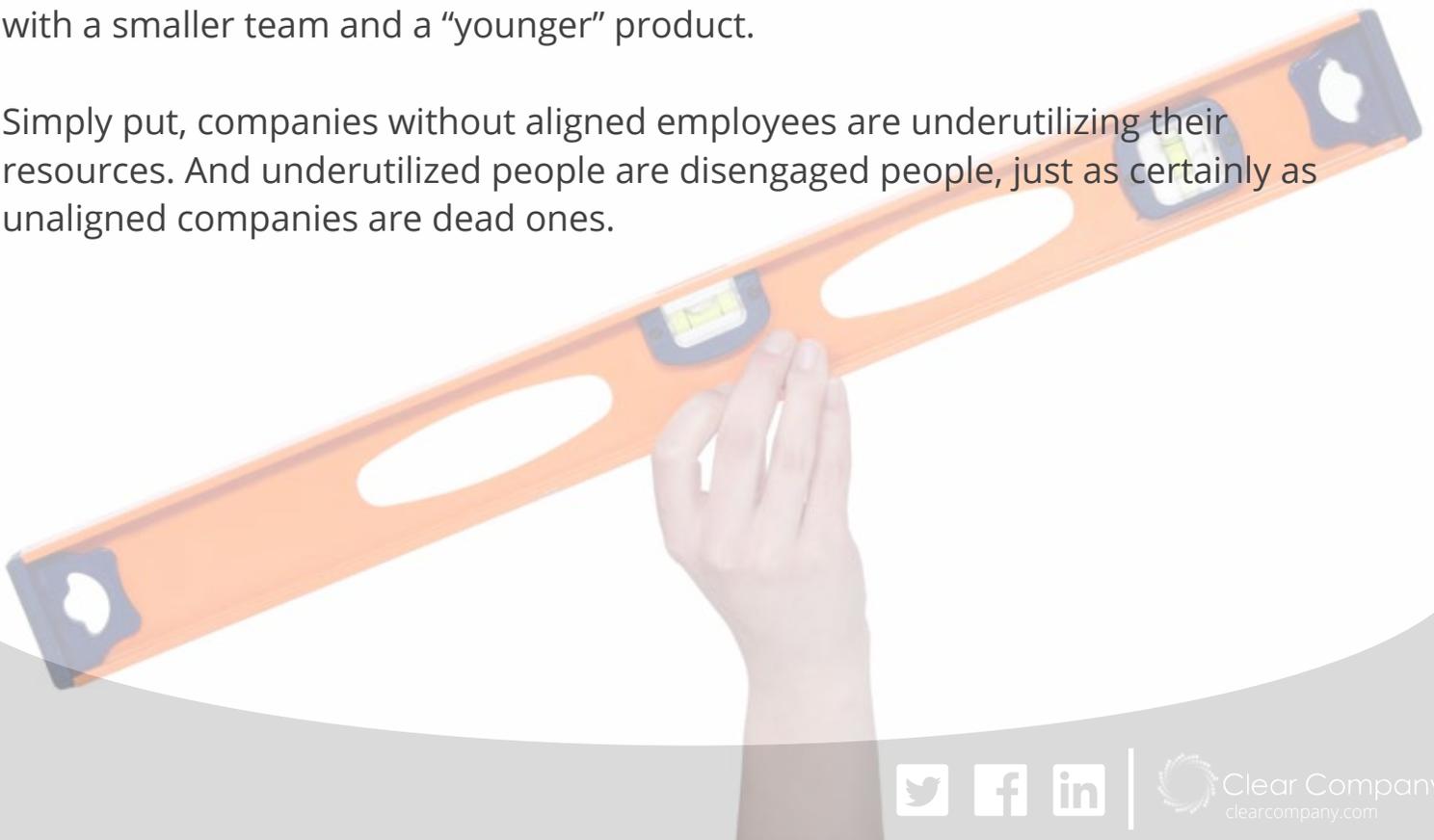
Alignment can make it clearer, sooner which makes it crucial to organizations. Here's why:

The Importance Of Alignment

What every manager must understand is their primary purpose in a business structure is to cascade a company strategy. They are to take what in most cases is a big theme and break it down into smaller bits their people can grasp onto and run with.

Companies literally depend on this kind of alignment to succeed, and employees depend on it for their own engagement and personal success. This is why startups seem to get the talent game so right, it's simply easier to do this with a smaller team and a "younger" product.

Simply put, companies without aligned employees are underutilizing their resources. And underutilized people are disengaged people, just as certainly as unaligned companies are dead ones.





Miscommunication costs \$37 billion per year.

Think about this for a minute: 43 percent of employees can't articulate their company goals. They're walking without a destination, so it's no wonder so many of your people are becoming lost.

Getting your business back on track isn't impossible, but you'll have to first look into your organization a little deeper. Here's how:

Break up the game of telephone

Have you ever played the game telephone? As your message travels from person to person, the meaning can sometimes change dramatically. It may be an exciting game for parties, but it's much less fun when it's happening in your organization.

Still, far too many companies have communication structures mirroring this game, with employees losing the meaning behind their efforts as tasks cascade down the organizational chart.

The cost of this can be exorbitantly high. According to research, mistakes due to miscommunication cost approximately \$37 billion a year. It's all too easy for goals to get misaligned when directives are veering off course as they make their way down or up the food chain.

The key is to link your teams' everyday efforts to overall goals, and to make it easy for managers and employees to visualize how work flows up to larger company strategies. By aligning all the middlemen you can ensure your team gets the right message every time.

Make goals a daily part of life

As an employee at a medium or large-scale company, the levels of upper management can look particularly serpentine. Maybe at one point the employee understood how their contributions impacted company goals, but it's too easy to get caught up in the day-to-day minutiae of piling work.

Instead of focusing on how a particular project will contribute to your company's goals, employees are most likely just focused on hitting deadlines and punching the clock. Talent alignment platforms can help here, by allowing employees to easily visualize how their specific project dovetails with company-wide strategies.

You don't have to schedule weekly meetings or quarterly gatherings in order to restate goals if employees have a clear view through the company hierarchy. Most importantly, this can ensure your people don't get caught up in small tasks and miss the larger picture.

Connect your employees together

Getting your company back on track means getting everyone together on the same page. As a leader, you probably think everyone in your company is pulling in the same direction, but this often couldn't be farther from the truth.

Transparency into the productivity of your workers allows you to recognize and reward the right people. This cuts down on toxic office politics, since your workforce will see hard work rewarded.

After all, a Gallup study found strengths-based employee feedback resulted in a 12.5 percent increase in productivity. So understanding how your employees work best and encouraging managers to play to strengths can mean happier and more productive workers. Startups often do this sort of shuffling naturally, plugging people in where they can do the most good the fastest. This happens mostly through constant communication and managerial oversight.

It's time to get your company back on track, and now you know it's not impossible. Using proper talent alignment and focusing on goals means your employees receive the right message, every time.

STARTUP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Transparency And Goals

Ignoring This Issue Could Ruin Your Company

As a leader, you probably have two big questions: How are my people executing on my strategy, and are my new resources onboarding into this strategy? The answer to both of these questions lies within your organization's goal alignment.

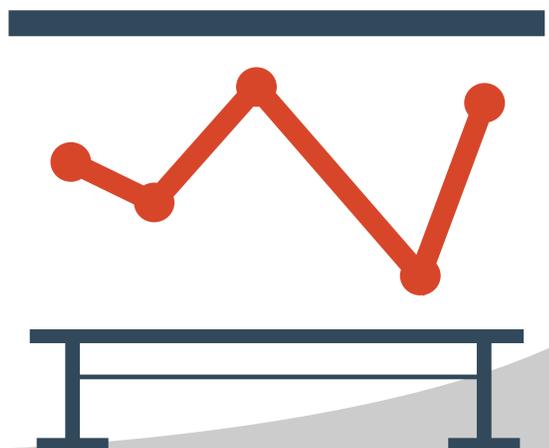
Companies of any size that focus on staying aligned with goals can operate much like a lean startup, with everyone on the same page. However, we all know how hard it can be to keep communication in a large organization flowing in both directions. It often feels like growth and transparency have an inverse relationship.

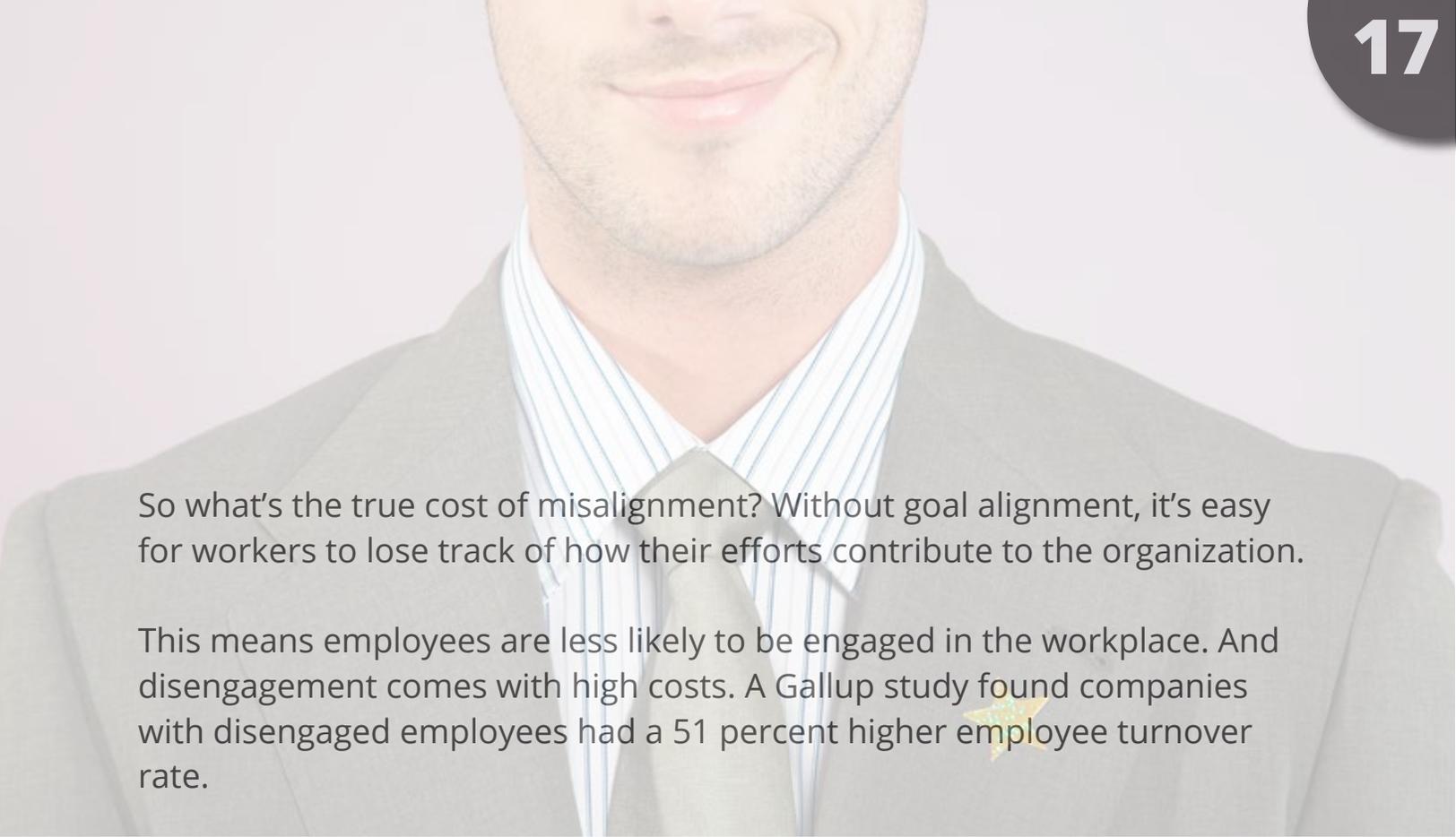
Your employees need to be aware of how their projects fit into the overall organizational framework and how their specific contributions impact your company strategy. If upper management is having a problem tracking goals, imagine what the company strategy looks like from the lowest rung on the ladder.

It's no easy feat to take high-level organizational goals and translate them into everyday tasks while not losing sight of the company mission. With that in mind, it's not hard to understand why a wide-ranging Gallup survey recently found only 30 percent of workers are engaged in the workplace. As goals cascade, they can easily go sideways or even against strategy, and soon you're not just losing engagement, you're wasting your investment in human capital – a currency like any other, but one that we too willingly disregard when it is not being fully used.

The True Cost Of Goal Misalignment

This can set your company back big time, as the talented workers you hired to move company goals forward end up wasting their contributions on tasks unrelated to your strategy.





So what's the true cost of misalignment? Without goal alignment, it's easy for workers to lose track of how their efforts contribute to the organization.

This means employees are less likely to be engaged in the workplace. And disengagement comes with high costs. A Gallup study found companies with disengaged employees had a 51 percent higher employee turnover rate.

It also affects absenteeism, considering engaged employees in the UK take 2.69 sick days on average while disengaged employees are missing an average of 6.19 sick days per year.

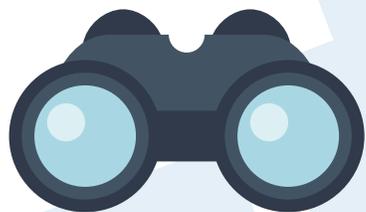
All of this can obviously make a huge impact on your bottom line. If employees don't remember or understand organizational goals, your best people might be contributing work that doesn't align with your strategy.

Engagement aside, misalignment alone can translate into hundreds of millions of dollars in waste for larger companies that ultimately prevent them from operating efficiently. (To estimate how much human capital is going unutilized in your company, multiple the average salary by 43 percent. This is the additional capital you could be allocating to your important goals if you could produce full alignment.)

In a Forbes study on alignment, 47 percent of those surveyed named cost containment as the highest operational priority. Yet these leaders are worrying about the wrong thing, since it's really a game of cost alignment instead of containment. If your workforce isn't aligned with company goals, the true cost to your company can be perilously high.

Answering Those Two Questions With Goal Alignment

How are my people executing on my strategy?



Using a talent alignment platform can allow leaders to take a wider view of the company and understand what everyone is working on. Now you won't have to guess what the 90 percent of employees are working on below your eyeline — you'll be able to view a snapshot of the work happening from the top of the org chart to the bottom.

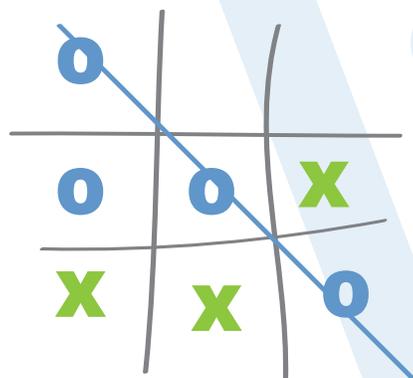


For employees, being able to see how goals clearly connect to their everyday tasks helps keep them on track and motivated. They can see they're not just a cog in a machine, but a vital and necessary element moving the company toward achieving goals and growing.



Are my new resources onboarding into this strategy?

Hiring is never an easy process and onboarding new people can feel like a minefield. If you can see how your human capital is allocated before your team drafts the job description, however, you can hire smarter.



If you can see the organization as a whole, you can easily tell which segments of your company need assistance to accomplish tasks. You won't have to ask yourself why you're hiring and what these new employees will be contributing, because you'll know before the onboarding process begins how a new hire will fit into the company puzzle.

As a leader, you can't afford to get stuck on the details and miss the bigger picture. Aligning your human capital with company goals helps cut costs, accomplish objectives and increase engagement.



HOW-TO:

Define and Set Goals

How to Define and Set Goals to Align Talent and Drive Business

D Setting up goals that effectively drive a business strategy is an underdeveloped skill in most organizations. Goals are usually too lofty or too low-level, too broad or too individualistic, too prescriptive or too democratic.

So how do we create goals at all organizational levels that are aligned with strategy and improve employee engagement?

R While management experts debate whether goals should be “stretch” goals that approach unrealistic metrics, or attainable, quick wins that build organizational confidence, (It seems we could maintain both under different time horizons.), little has been said about how to establish goals since George Doran established the SMART acronym in the November 1981 issue of Management Review.

E While the SMART approach is helpful for individual achievement, it doesn't fully capture the nuances of transparent end-to-end goal-based talent management within a corporate context.

A Perhaps an additional acronym is needed to guide the setting and cascading of goals through an organization hierarchy. Consider the acronym DREAM:

M **Demonstrable:** The first filter for goals at any level is to determine whether or not the results can be shown. This can be as simple as ensuring tracking and reporting capabilities. It can also be as creative as developing an internal or third party assessment of outcomes. Demonstrable opens the territory a bit more to contemplate non-measurable goals by traditional

standards such as winning an award or commercializing a product.

Resourced: The second consideration is whether or not sufficient time, capacity and money can be allocated to its achievement. Within the corporate context, resourcing becomes a critical factor. Goals should always be set in this context – with other goals and organizational realities. A lack of cash, people or focus should be honestly assessed to make an appropriate declaration of goal feasibility.

Embraced: The third requirement for goals is that they are supported intellectually and emotionally by all stakeholders. Goals should be exciting for owner/executives and compelling for leaders and doers. They should be supported by management and engaging to individual contributors who are motivated by the transparency of working toward an important goal.

Aligned: The fourth key to effective corporate goal setting is to ensure alignment – vertically and horizontally within an organization as well as to strategy. Goals should always be set in context – with other team members and corporate vision. Alignment also forces priority which is essential to goal management. Ask yourself which goals are the most important to your manager and ultimately to your organization and work to ensure that you follow the same priority. This sets goals into the bigger context of how your work contributes to the bigger picture and helps ensure the resourcing that you established earlier is ultimately provided. Aligned goals drive the vision of your organization forward. Without alignment, you'll never really know if your goals are producing the desired corporate outcome.

Memorable: The final emphasis of any goal-setting process should be to ensure that goals are easy to understand and remember. Everyone loses sight of goals amidst the mundane and chaotic circumstances of life. Goals that are too complex, wordy or boring will be lost in the whirlwind. Instead, goals should be branded. Using word alliterations, metaphors and simplicity can help to ensure goals remain top of mind. Memorable also means limited in number. There is a reason why there are seven virtues and seven dwarfs. Most of us can only remember seven things. To make goals especially memorable, work to attain fewer than five goals and never more than seven.

HOW-TO:

Define and Set Goals

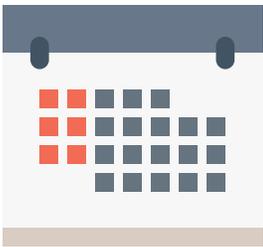
Employee Driven Goal Checklist

Objective: stay in step with the company vision and ensure that our day-to-day work contributes to overall strategy.



Transparent Reflection and Plans

Start with each Department Head sharing their vision and goals for the year. Allow employees from every level to ask questions.



Aligning with Management

Brainstorm individually.

Tie personal goals to brainstorming.

Share future plans with groups.

Have each team meet with a manager to discuss upcoming goals.

Review individual goals in detail.

Explain how goals/work will drive progress.

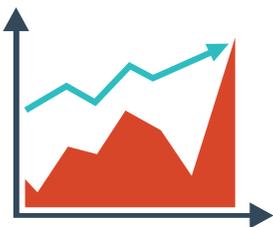


Understanding Measurement

Discuss measurement and how progress will be tracked.

Define metrics for each goal.

Explain accountability measures for in the coming months and what steps employees need to take to succeed.



Visualizing Progress

Add goals to tracking or management software.

Align goals to management objectives.

Measure and repeat.

ATTRACT LIKE A STARTUP:

Job Descriptions & Req Approval

Better Job Descriptions and Faster Approval with Goals

Why is it so important to improve your recruitment and selection process? According to the Society of Human Resource Management, the average time to hire for a small business is 29 days, and for a larger organization, this number can rise to as many as 43 days. The best and brightest in your field likely won't be willing to wait a month or longer for a position at your company, especially not if your competitor can scoop them up faster.

Enter goal-based job descriptions. By focusing on your goals before ever picking up the phone, you can streamline the process and improve the candidates applying to your positions. Let's take a look at two major steps for improving your process and cutting out recruitment and selection inefficiencies:

Step 1: Get Goal-Oriented During Requisition Approval

The road to better personnel selection starts way before you start drafting your job descriptions.

So what's the answer to improving your selection process? Keeping an eye on your organizational goals and ensuring the new hire will be able to contribute to your company in a meaningful way.

After all, not many organizations can afford the costly specter of employee turnover. This is because employee turnover can cost you as much as \$50,000 and break down your corporate communication. In a recent survey, more than 27 percent of leaders pegged employee turnover and role change as an impediment to cascading corporate communication.

Keeping an eye on your organization's goals makes it easier to know what positions you need to keep your team moving. Making req approval goal-based helps the process move faster by setting timelines before talking to candidates. You'll know exactly what role the future hire will play in the organization and how

this new position will contribute towards tangible goals.

This step will decrease the chance of costly employee turnover by ensuring your candidates have a well-defined role and purpose from their first day on the job.

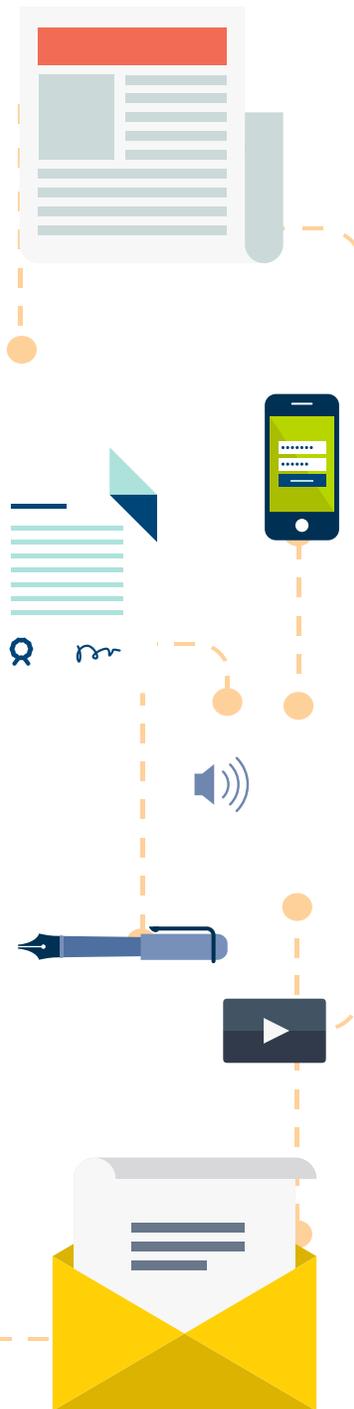
Step 2: Pen Great Goal-Based Job Descriptions

Utilizing goal-based job descriptions can really help you cut out the fat from the recruitment and selection process. Current job descriptions don't tell candidates enough information about the job or how their contributions work towards organizational goals. Most of these descriptions are vague or far too salesy.

They're trying to sell the candidate on your company without telling the candidate exactly how their contributions will fit into the overall company mission statement. This greatly hampers your selection process, as the wrong fitting candidates apply for jobs while better candidates look for job descriptions with more substance.

To improve the candidates coming through your recruitment process, you need to engage with the best people as early as the job description. You can engage the best candidates by showing them how their future position will align with company goals and guidelines.

In fact, a recent survey showed 58 percent of workers would be willing to take a 15 percent pay cut in order to work for an organization with their same values. Put your organizational mission statement on display so future employees can easily see if they'll be the right fit, not only for the job but for the goals your company is working towards.



You should look to make job descriptions goal-based, specific, and actionable. For instance, one of your job descriptions might say your candidate needs to have five years of programming experience. But this doesn't tell the candidate exactly what they'll be doing or what specific kind of experience is necessary to perform the job. It doesn't tell them what functions they'll be performing or how those functions fit like puzzle pieces into the overall organization.

Instead, a goal-based job description would list the type of programs a candidate should be proficient in, as well as how these programs will be used in the role. It would also briefly sketch how the job in general fits into the company's mission statement, and how individual contributions will help

the company move forward.

Personnel selection is about more than finding a candidate who can just do the job. Good personnel selection is about finding someone who will really add value to the organization and help you achieve your goals, both large and small.

Attracting the right candidates in the recruitment and selection process isn't always easy. The best way to find the best people is to ensure your recruitment and selection process aligns with your overall company goals and strategies, so you add someone to the team ready to move your company forward.

58% of workers would be willing to take a 15% pay cut to work for an organization with aligned values.



ATTRACT LIKE A STARTUP:

Job Descriptions & Req Approval

Hire Smarter by Powering your Recruiting Software with Goals

The ramifications of hiring the wrong person can be perilously expensive for a company of any size. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates the cost of a bad hire can set your company back as much as 30 percent of the worker's yearly earnings. Additionally, it turns out 75 percent of demand for new workers is just to account for employee turnover.

Using company goals as early as your requisition process is the best way to find talented candidates who will add real value. If recruiters, hiring managers and employees all clearly understand what the new hire will be expected to achieve, the chances of letting a bad hire slip through the cracks are greatly reduced.

Here are three steps to follow to find the best talent with goal-based applicant tracking:

Step 1: Start With Goals

Everything in the hiring process should have an emphasis on your company goals. Before you use your recruiting software to wade through applications or promote your open positions, you need to truly understand your company's strategic objectives.

By using goals to create keywords that can be used by your recruiting software to filter candidates, you can start to curate talent pools based on what candidates will be expected to accomplish. Approaching the process from a goal-based perspective ensures new hires are aligned with your company's large-scale plans before they ever set foot in the office.



Step 2: Write Better Job Descriptions

Once you understand how the new hire should contribute in their role, it's time to write specific, targeted job descriptions that you can leverage within your software.

Good job descriptions can help candidates better self-select what jobs they apply for because you've provided highly specific information. This is another place where startups excel, in writing compelling, and specific job descriptions. These create a more efficient onboarding process once you've made a great hire, since the employee already has a good idea of their place in the company hierarchy and the workflow towards goals.

Since these descriptions also contain keywords you'll use to organize and evaluate candidates in your recruiting software, think critically before writing. Let the candidate know exactly what skills they'll need and how their position will impact company workflow and progress.

Step 3: Focus On The Best People

You invested in recruiting software for a reason, and you should be using it as effectively as possible to help you find and identify the right people. Trust your recruiting software to do all the heavy lifting like resume grading, maintaining a talent pipeline, and communication, so you can focus your efforts on connecting with the best people. When you know what goals they'll need to accomplish on the job, you can have a clearer idea of what kind of candidates will be able to add real value.

Once you connect personally with the best candidates, you should use the interview process to ensure they truly understand the role and how their unique talents can contribute. This way you end up with new hires excited to hit the ground running and immediately understanding why their new role matters.

Leveraging your software to assist you in finding the perfect candidates who will help drive company strategy and progress will improve your applicant tracking, shorten time spent onboarding, and ensure you hire the right person every time.

ATTRACT LIKE A STARTUP:

Job Descriptions & Req Approval

Why Goal-Based Job Descriptions Are the Next Big Thing

Are your people working towards the wrong goals?

According to a recent survey, goal cascading and employee turnover are the two largest concerns business leaders find themselves facing. These two challenges go together like peas in a pod, since employees who don't understand how their contributions fit into the overall company goals are likely the same disengaged workers with one foot out the door.

A goal-based approach to hiring, if followed closely, can be the key to bringing in great talent quickly. It can also help you get these new hires onboarded and effective immediately, all while producing less work for managers, recruiters, executives, and the new employee.

How is this possible?

Well, a goal is the single thread that connects the entire process of hiring the right person. Unlike current methods, a goal-based job description can be written once and leveraged through the entire employee lifecycle.

Challenge 1: Hiring Justification

Justifying the need to hire more talent isn't always easy, especially if this hiring is taking place several layers down the organizational chart.

From the perspective of the manager in charge of the new position, it's entirely clear why a certain department needs more people to operate effectively. But clarity diminishes when you move up the org chart.

The farther away from the position, the harder it is to understand





what a new hire will contribute to the overall company. From the CEO's perspective, all they see is "We're hiring lots of people," but not exactly what they're being hired for and justifications that are not goal based often miss the mark.

This can make it hard for those in charge to understand the importance of creating new roles or filling open positions. Without proper goal-alignment, it can become all too easy to lose sight of how each role contributes to the company's overall mission statement.

Keeping goals in sight

The goal-based solution: As the job justification moves up the chain of command, writing a goal-based job description keeps important goals in sight.

This allows executives to easily understand what the employee will be working on. It's easier to justify hiring decisions or understand why a certain role is needed if the job description uses specific and actionable language.

But more importantly, it helps to group justifications into categories based on the strategic goals they will impact. This allows executives to quickly divide the stack. With a smaller group of roles to approve, managers can be more effective at ensuring that the right people are coming in the door and less time swimming through a mountain of approvals that too often leads to a hiring freeze.

Challenge 2: Writing a killer job description

Let's be honest — most job descriptions are vanilla.

The job description is the best advertisement you have for your open position, and yet many of these descriptions are frustratingly vague. Most are filled with empty buzzwords like "superstar" or "ninja" and ask for obvious qualities like organizational skills.



Too many job descriptions skimp on specific skills and deal in generalities instead, telling candidates precious little about the role they're applying to fill. This isn't likely to attract the kind of employees you need in your organization.

The best and brightest candidates are looking for a role in which they can make a real, concrete difference. They want to know exactly how their contributions will fit into overall company goals. They want to be inspired and engaged, and no amount of trendy industry buzzwords can compensate for quantifiable, goal-based language.

Better understanding their unique contributions

The goal-based solution: Goal-based job descriptions give employees a more solid understanding of the role, their place in the company, and how what they will be doing every day adds value. Writing a goal-based job description is more than just getting specific on what skills are needed to excel in the position.

A goal-based job description helps contextualize the position within the framework of the larger company infrastructure. Potential employees can easily understand how their unique contributions would add to company goals, achieve milestones, and add value to the organization as a whole.

It's about more than merely listing skills, qualifications, and experience. Instead, a goal-based job description helps talented candidates understand their future place in the company and how, like an essential puzzle piece, their additions will make your company complete.

A goal-based description also allows for faster onboarding, since employees come in the door understanding what is expected. From day one these new hires understand their role and can hit the ground running, cutting down on the time-consuming onboarding and training process.

Keeping company goals at the forefront of your recruiting process is the best way to get employees to contribute to your mission statement. The goal-based job description gets everyone on the same page and attracts the candidates you need to achieve your company objectives.

GROWTH BUILDING BLOCKS:

Employee Referrals & Job Ads

How to Supercharge Employee Referrals with Goal-Based Jobs

Is your company's next great hire hiding in plain sight? A 2013 study shows an employee referral program is actually the No. 1 source of outside hires, beating out job boards, social media, and even a company's own career sites.

While 69% of companies have an employee referral program as part of their recruitment strategy, too many companies put this program in place and then move on. This explains why 87% of HR managers admitted they needed to overhaul their employee referral program.

If the employee referral isn't aligned with organizational goals, your employees will either ignore the program altogether or end up referring the wrong people.

While 60 percent of employees are willing to refer talent, only 23 percent actually do so. Allowing your people to see the importance of the employee referral and how the position you're trying to fill fits into the company's overall goals will result in better hires.

Equipping Employees With Better Goal-Based Language

Few of your employees will understand the exact needs of the position you're recruiting. By using goal-based language, you help your current employees understand what is needed for the position, what projects the new hire will

tackle, and how this position fits into the overall company.

Cuts Through The Corporate Hierarchy

Goal-based job descriptions can help your employees refer great people and advertise your positions by cutting through the normal organizational chart. By being clear and transparent about how a new hire will fit into workflow towards established goals, you'll be giving your employees a better understanding of what these people will actually be doing day-to-day.

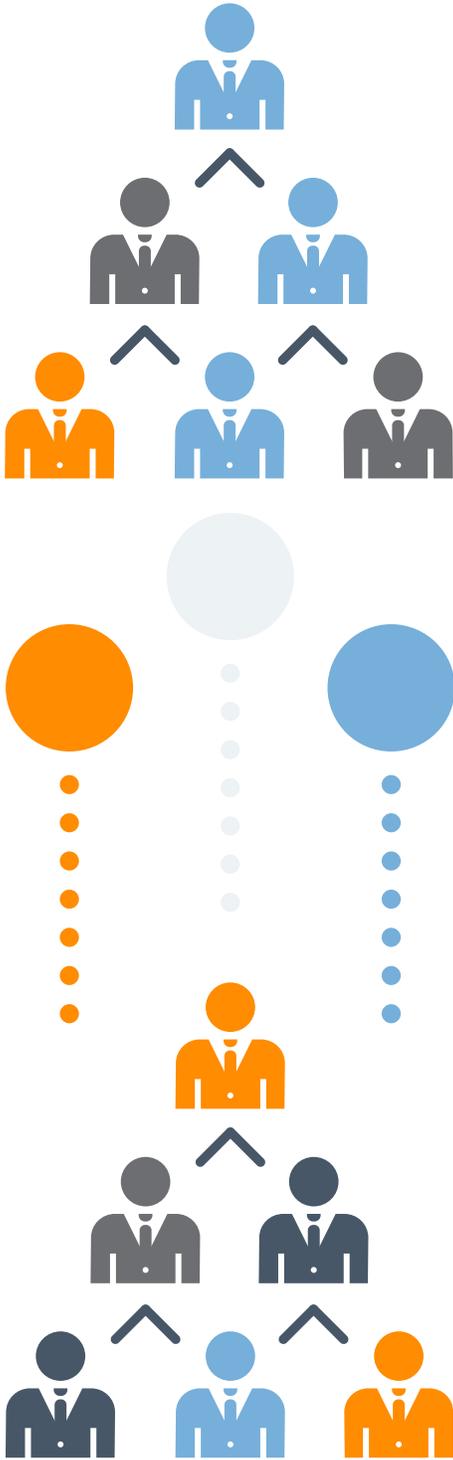
One bad boss or incompetent manager won't throw the whole chain of command off course, because every employee understands how their contributions add to the company whole. This will help your current workers communicate more than just a fancy title when talking to people who might be great fits for your company.

A great employee referral program is one of the best ways to improve your recruitment process. This is why you should align job descriptions with goals, allowing your employees to better advertise your open positions and refer the top talent you need every time.

GROWTH BUILDING BLOCKS:

Employee Referrals & Job Ads

Employee Referral Program Tips: Aligning Your Team For Success



You might be closer to your next great hire than you think. Recent studies have shown the employee referral is the No. 1 source of external hires.

Employee referrals make up just over a quarter of your external hires -- far more than your company's career site (21.2 percent) -- yet too many companies are neglecting their referral programs.

Consider this: a candidate who comes through your employee referral program is three to four times more likely to be hired, probably because your current employees understand your company goals as well as the strengths of their contact. For companies looking to cut down on the cumbersome time-to-hire, employee referrals are also typically hired much faster than other applicants.

So, how does proper talent alignment help you hire great people faster? Here are four ways proper alignment is the key to mobilizing your employee referral program:

Talent Alignment Improves Corporate Communication

One of the reasons employees don't often refer their talented friends is because the company isn't communicating the importance of the employee referral program. In fact, studies show 60 percent of employees expressed willingness to participate in an employee referral program. However, only 23 percent actually do so because their company doesn't actively promote the program.

You need your best people referring their best people so your company can accomplish important tasks. Focusing on proper alignment can help you improve corporate communication, leading employees to understand the importance of great referrals.

Thanks to greater organizational transparency, you can incentivize your employee referral program using the perks your team really craves. Instead of just guessing what kind of perks your employees want, focusing on transparency means you'll know for sure your incentives are actually motivating the referrals you need.

Employees Understand Goals

Talent alignment means employees can see and understand the goals they're working toward. This helps your best people conceptualize their own role in the organization, and it also means they can better understand the place a new hire would occupy in the organizational hierarchy.

Instead of just a static job description, ongoing talent alignment allows employees to see how everyone contributes to the large scale picture. This can help your current crop of employees make smarter and more helpful employee referrals.

Write a Better Job Description With Goal Alignment

Writing a great job description can be the difference between a getting a top-notch new hire and the wrong person for the job. Thanks to proper alignment, executives don't just see new positions in terms of general requisitions to be filled. Instead, they know exactly which milestones the employee will be working toward and which skills they'll need to contribute to the organization.

Improving Employee Retention

Since referred employees understand company goals and their own role in the organization from day one, it's not hard to see why referred employees stay longer. Generally speaking, 45 percent of referred employees are still with the organization after two years, when compared to only 21 percent of employees coming through job boards.



GROWTH BUILDING BLOCKS:

Employee Referrals & Job Ads

Employer Branding Candidates Will Love!

While operating transparently certainly benefits internal company processes and productivity, it also goes a long way in creating an appealing employer brand that candidates will love. Your employer brand is your organization's reputation as an employer, and ensuring you have a strong one can be the difference between a flock of talented candidates and an empty inbox.

After all, a recent study by CareerBuilder found two in three employees would accept a lower salary in order to work for a company with a top-notch brand, the strongest and most appealing of which operate transparently.

Transparency helps your whole team understand how their contributions ladder up to company goals, and your organization should make it a vital part of employer branding from the start. By clearly showing that transparency is important to you, you empower candidates to apply knowing your company puts a premium on communication and accountability.

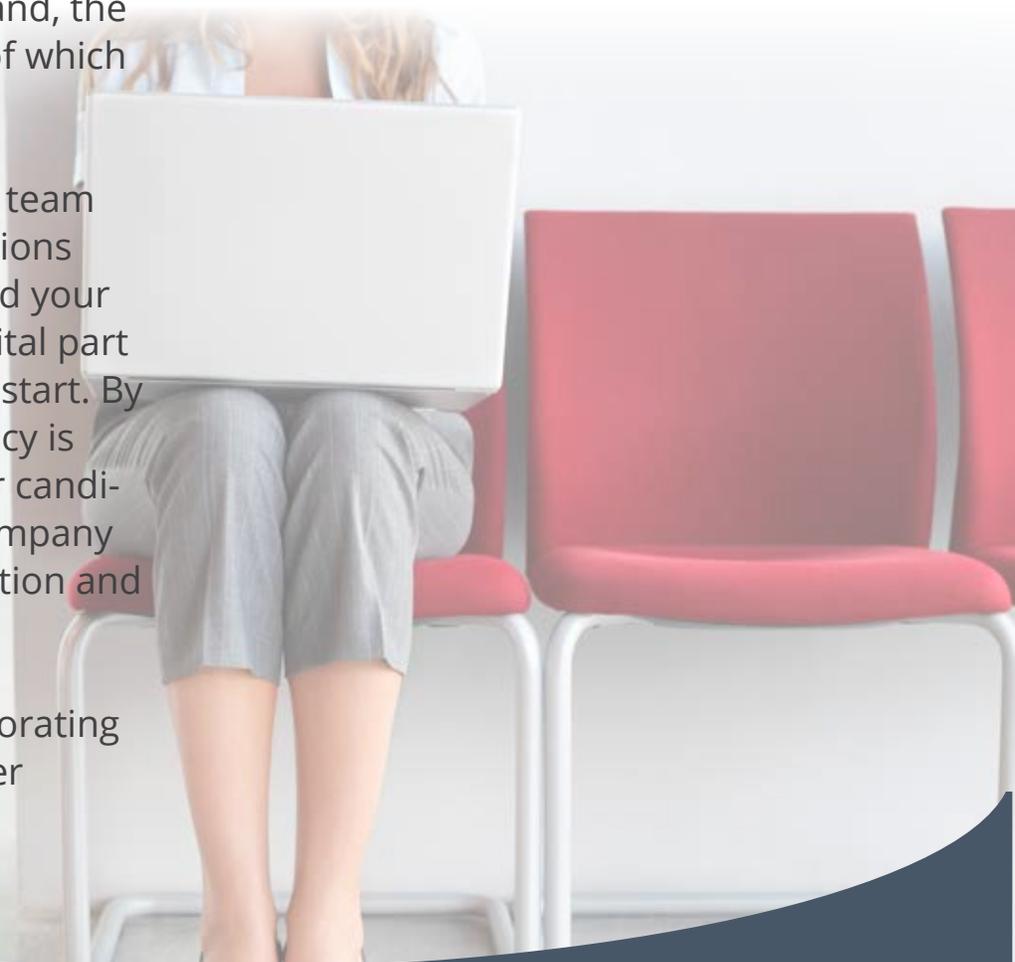
Here are just a few ways incorporating transparency into your employer

branding can help you attract and retain the people you need:

Transparent Brands Attract Top Talent By Showing Off Company Culture

When it comes to attracting top talent, nothing reels in the candidates like a clear and honest look at your organization. Job seekers don't just want to know what they'll be doing at your company; they want to know what day-to-day life is like.

For instance, almost half of all job seekers check out potential employers on



Glassdoor to find out more about what the company is really like. Take a page out of their book and lift the veil a bit to allow your potential candidates to see that you put a premium on transparency within the workplace.

You may already be recruiting using social media channels; make sure you are also using them to show off your company culture. That way, candidates can have a more casual look into what their 9-5 would be like. But don't let transparency end where onboarding begins; make sure that your new hires are aligned and understand company goals.

Transparent Brands Communicate Openly

Only 30 percent of all company brands communicate with consumers. You may need to communicate more clearly, both within your company and with those interested in working for you. To focus your employer branding efforts on bringing in more talented candidates, you need to foster a more transparent culture. This means goals need to remain fixed in view for your team and discussed daily.

Transparent Brands Encourage Employee Referrals

Here's something you might not have considered: being more transparent can actually help foster employee referrals. Your organization is losing out on great potential employees if you're not clearly communicating the importance of referrals. A recent study showed that while only 23 percent of employers said their workers took part in referral programs, 60 percent of employees would actually be willing to refer great people.

When your workers understand exactly what goals need to be accomplished, they can refer better people. If employees can "see" goals and track workflow, they will have a better grasp on the roles their contacts would be filling within the organization, making it easier for them to refer top-notch people with the right skills.



HOW TO:

Screen, Select and Candidate Experience

Recruiting & Screening are Broken. (yes, yours too...)

It's time to think critically about how you isolate, screen, and select the employees who will add value to your company. Can you really say there are no inefficiencies in the process?

Your company isn't the only organization struggling with how to improve the recruitment and selection of the right people. In fact, 46 percent of small business new hires fail within the first 18 months, and 89 percent of the time this is due to poor company culture fit. But the numbers don't get much better for larger organizations.

Big businesses might have more formal recruitment and selection structures in place, but this is no balm for the cost-sucking power of a bad hire. In the United States, 66 percent of employers have admitted to encountering a bad hire in the last calendar year. These mis-hires can be expensive, with some studies pegging the cost of a bad hire at more than \$50,000. And high-profile bad hires, like the Yahoo! CEO caught with a fib on his resume, can reflect poorly on the organization, costing more than just money.

So what's the solution? The best way to improve all aspects of your recruitment



and selection process is to consider your organizational goals before picking up the phone to speak to candidates. Keeping your hiring goal-based will improve your recruitment process, helping you hire the best employees faster than your competition.

Why Does Goal-Based Screening Matter?

Goal-based recruitment and selection matters because employees need to understand their contributions to your organization and employers need workers who can see the big picture. Keeping your recruitment process goal-based means hiring more strategically and paying attention to what positions are actually needed so you aren't onboarding the wrong people.

As we've shown, a bad hire can be very costly. By using a goal-based recruitment process, you're hiring employees who

understand their role in the company goal structure. From day one, they will have the knowledge to help the organization succeed in its strategic vision.

Why is a goal-centric recruitment process necessary? First, by focusing on goals before onboarding a new employee, you're more likely to find someone who can actually perform the work functions required by the position.

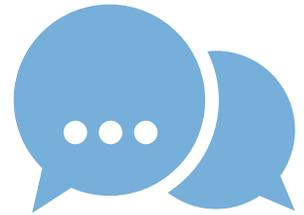
More importantly, however, adding a goal-centric viewpoint to your recruitment process can help you avoid the employee engagement crisis. According a recent survey by Gallup on the subject of employee engagement, only 30 percent of American workers are actively engaged in their jobs.

How to Ask Better Questions

So many of the questions asked in interviews are not only general but hopelessly by-the-book. "Tell me about yourself." or "Why should we hire you?" are both questions candidates already know to expect. Anyone who has an Internet connection or has been on an interview before knows how to prepare answers to these questions.

Instead, you need to make your questions goal-based and specific to the needs of the company and job. Ask how familiar a candidate is with the company goals and mission statement. Get specific with your questions to ensure the candidate has the right skills, including asking about experience with relevant technology.

Employing goal-based interview questions will allow you to see which candidates really know what they're talking about and who will actually fit into the company, so you're not onboarding the wrong talent.



How to Stop Wasting Time

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, the typical time-to-hire is between 29 to 43 days for businesses both large and small. This is a massive wait time before you're onboarding the talent you need. Aligning your recruitment and selection process with organizational goals gives you the ability to cut down on time waste.

After all, if your questions are goal-specific and tell you more about a candidate's practical experience, you're less likely to waste time connecting with candidates who are all wrong for the job. Keeping everything, from the job description to the interview questions, goal-specific means you'll be able to focus on the right candidates with laser-sharp focus.

By using a goal-based recruitment and selection process, you'll be rewarded with employees who are motivated, engaged, and ready to tackle the goals they need to achieve to add value to your company. Fast.



INTERNAL BUILDING BLOCKS:

Onboarding

Optimize Employee Onboarding by using Goal Alignment and the 4C's: Compliance, Clarification, Culture, Connection

Once you've made a great new hire, it's time to get your new employee up and running in the organization. No matter how skilled or tenured, every employee can benefit from the onboarding process in order to better understand their place in the company.

Every year, 25 percent of all Americans experience some form of career transition, according to work done by the Society of Human Resource Management. This means effective onboarding is essential to ensure new employees in new roles are brought up to speed and can begin contributing to your organization.

The upside for companies with effective onboarding methods can be huge, not just in employee morale but also for a company's bottom line. According to research from the Aberdeen Group, organizations with standardized onboarding procedures experience 54 percent greater new hire productivity.

Best of all, these same organizations experience 50 percent greater new hire retention. With the high cost of employee turnover, no one wants to go back to the hiring phase again after finding a great new worker. An onboarding process that allows new hires to immediately understand their contributions is the best way to give your new hires a strong foundation they can build on for years to come.

A Goal-Centric View Of: Compliance

The first box you check on your new hire checklist should involve getting your new employee up to speed with compliance matters. For instance, you'll want to go over company-wide policies and any legal issues a new hire should be aware of.

Your compliance process is an essential step of onboarding, and needs to be aligned with your overall goals. This means ensuring your new hires have all the tools they need at their disposal to understand policies. Don't just slide a guidebook at the new hire and call it a day. Have a meeting in which you discuss

relevant policies and how these compliance matters will impact their daily work lives. Spending this time upfront will ensure they have the necessary foundation to hit the ground running as a high achiever.

A Goal-Centric View Of: Clarification

Clarification is essential, especially when it comes to goal alignment. Knowing how their efforts fit into the overall company objectives allows your new hires to understand exactly where they fit in the big picture. Your new employee needs to understand the role they'll be playing within the organization and what you'll expect them to contribute.

By using a goal alignment system, you can keep your new hires on track to success from their first day on the job. Being able to see how goals cascade throughout the entire organization allows for easier and more intuitive clarification, and eases the onboarding process for talented new employees.

A Goal-Centric View Of: Culture

You've probably spent quite a bit of time developing an attractive and enjoyable company culture. This culture might have actually attracted your new hire to the organization in the first place, and you probably considered cultural fit before filling your open positions. However, to maintain a positive company culture you need to ensure employees stay engaged and your organization avoids office politics as usual.

By focusing on goals and using a system that allows you to see what everyone is working on in your organization, you cut down on the amount of politicking in the workplace. Engaged employees are content employees, and when everyone understands their role and work is easily tracked back to the source, you curtail the toxic office politicking, which can impact even the best company culture.

A Goal-Centric View Of: Connection

A company is more than just a group of people performing certain functions. Successful organizations are teams that collaborate to accomplish common goals. To do this effectively, new hires must form connections to existing employees, from supervising managers to the coworkers they'll be working alongside day-by-day.

Getting goal-centric during onboarding means your new hire understands how they fit into the organization and how the responsibilities of other employees connect to their own. This makes it easier for new hires to connect with other employees and makes future collaboration more seamless.

INTERNAL BUILDING BLOCKS:

Onboarding

Your Onboarding Process Is Broken — Here's How To Fix It



The first few weeks of any employee's tenure is an important time. The new hire wants and needs to get up to speed quickly, and the organization wants to be sure their candidate of choice is the right fit. But, the onboarding process is far from easy, and misalignment can happen before an employee shows up for day one.

The onboarding process should be a major concern for an organization of any size. Considering 25 percent of all Americans experience some form of career transition every year, the odds are new people will be joining your company and will need to get up to speed quickly.

For those willing to put in the time and effort to improve their onboarding process, the benefits will be substantial. According to research from the Aberdeen Group, 54 percent greater new hire productivity awaits companies with a standard onboarding procedure. In addition, these organizations also enjoy 50 percent greater new hire retention.

So how do you improve your onboarding process to ensure employee success?

Align Your Talent With Goals and Strategy
Aligning new hires and tenured employees alike is the fast track to success, and can easily help your people see how their tasks contribute to greater company goals. New hires must understand how their daily work fits into the big picture in order to be

productive and engaged.

A new hire might not understand why a given task has been assigned as part of their workload. Without proper alignment, this task just doesn't seem to make sense and could even seem like a waste of your new hire's time.

Without a system that allows them to visualize this, your new hire doesn't have similar clarity. This can cause even the best workers to sleepwalk through certain projects or disengage entirely.

Proper talent alignment allows workers to track their contributions and progress all the way up the org chart and understand how it fits neatly into larger company goals. This helps your new hires quickly understand not only their daily tasks, but also how they fit into the company workflow.

Increase Communication

Communication isn't a static process. While proper communication begins with onboarding, management must make sure it continues as a part of employees' daily life. Currently, you're probably asking your organization to play a game of "telephone." Updates are made through multiple levels of the hierarchy, and often lose meaning as they are passed through your organization's chain of command. You can't expect your team to stay aligned this way and it becomes all too easy for them to become lost in the dark.

Less than six percent of companies

A bad hire can set a company back \$50,000 or more.

reported daily communication of goals. Instead, most companies are communicating and reinforcing their goals on a quarterly basis. In today's competitive, innovation-driven business landscape, this is far too long.

By using a system that clearly demonstrates alignment and progress (or lack thereof), you can reinforce objectives on a daily basis. This is extremely helpful for onboarding new hires who need to get up to speed with company goals quickly in order to contribute.

Ensure a Cultural Fit

Company culture fit is a huge part of ensuring new hire retention. Employee turnover can be perilously expensive and a bad hire can set a company back \$50,000 or more. After all the time and effort you put into your recruiting process, you certainly don't want your new hire to immediately start dreaming of flying the coop.

Yet 60 percent of workers see their workplaces as poorly managed, not exactly the kind of thinking exhibited by employees committed for the long haul. Reducing office politics will lead to a more positive company culture and more engaged employees. With proper talent alignment, business leaders can easily see which employees are contributing. This means you can show your people hard work pays by rewarding your best people.

Developing a company mentorship program is also a great way to get your new hires enmeshed in the company culture. Considering 60 percent of Millennials feel their managers have experience to offer, mentorship programs can give new hires the guidance they crave. These programs can also help new employees form lasting connections to their coworkers and the company culture.

Just like every house needs a good foundation, onboarding employees means giving your best new hires a strong base from which to grow within the company.



Collaboration

Much of Your Staff's Effort is Being Wasted. Fix it with Talent Alignment to see Huge Productivity Gains.

Despite all the technology we have to keep us connected, the modern workplace is full of roadblocks that stop employees from working together.

One of the biggest obstacles preventing seamless and efficient collaboration across an organization can be a lack of talent alignment. The "How Leaders Grow Today" survey by Clear Company and Dale Carnegie found communication breakdowns were the biggest challenge in cascading corporate goals. Without clearly communicating objectives, it becomes harder to understand what everyone is working on and working towards, making collaboration across teams or departments extremely difficult.

If your workers don't understand how their unique contributions fit into overall company goals, they can't see how their work intersects with other employees and departments. And - without seeing how their piece fits into the company puzzle - team collaboration towards organizational goals becomes more difficult, even for your best employees. Many organizations, startups and large companies alike, are finding that collaboration is becoming even more important with contingent workers and work-flex arrangements.

What's your company's collaboration solution? The key lies in aligning your people with strategic company goals and enabling them to visualize their work and the work happening around them. Here are some ways proper talent alignment can improve team collaboration, cut down on wasted time, and achieve company objectives:

Improving Employee Engagement

A recent Gallup survey showed 70 percent of workers are disengaged in their roles. It may seem obvious that you can't afford to ignore employee engagement if you want your company to stay on track. Engaged workers are more likely to be willing and able to roll up their sleeves and work on team collaboration.

What's the collaboration solution? Focusing on goals, keeping employees aligned

with organizational objectives, and allowing them to see their contributions helps your best people understand the value of their hard work. They easily understand their unique value, staying focused on goals can help improve employee engagement and motivation. This can lead to better collaboration between employees and departments that now understand how their part fits into the whole.

Addressing Problems

Without proper alignment, it's all too easy for a molehill to turn into a mountain. If you can't see how work cascades and how individual contributions add up to company goals, small problems quickly become big issues. This can make team collaboration much harder, especially when workers try to shift the blame.

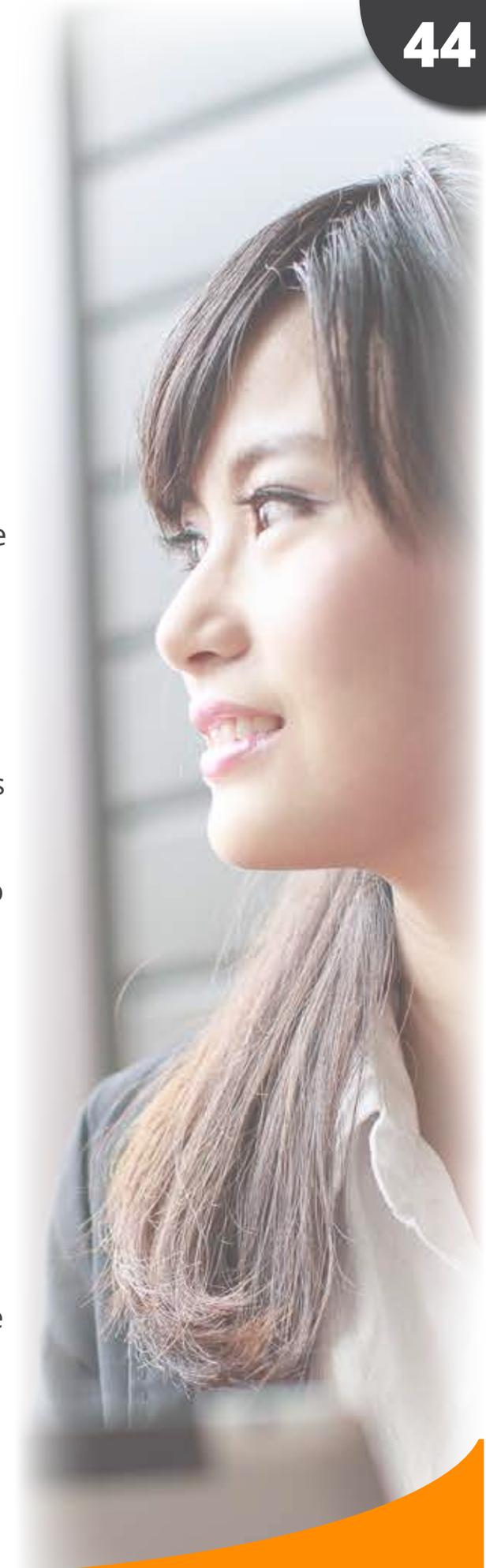
What's the collaboration solution? Tracking goals on an individual, team, department, and organizational level allows you to see and understand where work is going, making it easier to keep a team motivated and address specific concerns along the workflow.

Visualizing every step from the top of the org chart to the bottom allows you to address a problem as soon as it arises. Goal alignment can keep small issues from snowballing into a communication avalanche.

Reducing Office Politics

Office politics can wreak havoc with workplace collaboration. Office politicking rarely makes the workplace a more fun or productive place for employees to spend their 9-to-5. A sour company culture can soon affect employee engagement, leading to less productive workers, more employee turnover, and the wrong people ending up with more responsibility.

What's the collaboration solution? Keeping everything goal-aligned and frequently tracking and



discussing results can reduce the impact of office politics on performance. Since you can see everything happening in your company, everyone gets credit for their own work, cutting down on hurt feelings and posturing, and allowing for collaboration without the politics.

Less Time Wasted

This scenario will probably sound familiar: You have a huge project to complete, yet there is still a minefield of meetings to get through before your employees can roll up their sleeves and get started. Project collaboration is important, yet many of the ways companies try to encourage open communication can end up irritating employees and work as a roadblocks to team collaboration and employee productivity.

What's the collaboration solution? By keeping things goal-based you can manage projects, have meetings for the right reasons, and make sure your employees are aligned. This means less time wasted on the unproductive meetings. Keeping your workplace aligned with goals means making collaboration count.

Getting your employees on the same page is far from easy, and efficient, modern collaboration is needed if you want to achieve your company goals. Keeping goal alignment in mind while communicating across the organizational chart helps improve employee engagement, cut down on office politics, and gets everyone working toward common goals.

THE COLLABORATION SOLUTION

Tracking goals on an individual, team, department, and organizational level allows you to see and understand where work is going, making it easier to keep a team motivated and address specific concerns along the workflow.

LEADERSHIP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Feedback & Management

Be a Better Manager with Talent Alignment

From intern to executive, no employee enjoys being micromanaged. Instead of focusing on the big picture of employee management and trusting workers to take care of the small stuff, a micromanager dictates every small step along the way and can quickly drive talent away.

Micromanaging may not be detrimental in the short-term, but it's an employee management technique likely to hurt your company in the long-term. A study by the Journal of Experimental Psychology found people who believe they're being watched perform at a much lower level. This corroborates an earlier study from 2003, when employees singled out micromanaging as the single biggest productivity barrier they faced at work.

This style of management is unlikely to improve your company culture or your workers' motivation to succeed. By micromanaging your employees, you're not only demonstrating a lack of trust, but also impeding their work and progress.

Employee management issues can snowball into an avalanche of disengaged workers, negative company culture and unfinished goals. So what's the best way to ensure open communication, employee engagement, consistent feedback and autonomous employees?

Aligning talent - and visualizing that alignment - within your organization helps you see everything taking place at your company, with no hovering required. Seeing how, if at all, your workforce is on track with overarching company goals ensures the right people are working on the right projects and cuts down on the micromanaging that's sapping the motivation out of your teams.

See Your Workforce Without Hovering

Aligning your workforce with company goals is the best way to improve your employee management. A talent alignment platform like Clear Company allows managers and business leaders to easily see what's happening throughout the entire organization.

You can see exactly what projects your employees are spending their time on, how these projects fit into larger organizational goals, and whether your workers are meeting or missing deadlines. The reason so many leaders fall down the micromanager rabbit hole is because they understand how essential it is to keep productivity aligned with overall company goals. This leads to constant hovering and wasting the employee's time by asking for redundant check-ins and meetings.

By allowing managers to see what everyone in the organization is working on and how it connects to company objectives, goal alignment takes the "micro" out of managing. Great workers want to feel trusted, and constant "checking in" can do irreparable damage to this, as well as do a real number on your organization's employee engagement and morale. Visualizing how employee projects channel up to company goals and strategy can keep a more thorough eye on what people are working on at the company than any manager.

Address Problems in Real-Time

Good managers realize how costly a small problem can become if allowed to snowball. Using talent alignment, you can easily and quickly address problems as soon as they arise. Hovering over the shoulders of your best people is only likely to cut down their productivity and ruin your company's employee engagement.

With a clear view of your organization, you can get a better picture of how your people are working toward goals. This means, when someone gets off track or a department falls out of line, you can quickly address the



problem before it escalates into a larger issue. It allows you to react in real-time and address problems before they escalate. Aligning your workers with goals keeps problems manageable and productivity high.

Increase Employee Engagement By Rewarding Your MVPs

Proper talent alignment means understanding your employees' unique contributions toward goals without shadowing them. Since you can take a more stand-back approach and offer employees more autonomy, you can fully see your best and brightest employees.

Looking at which workers are ahead of deadlines (and which are behind), you can clearly visualize your high-achievers. Employees who work just as hard when you're not standing over their shoulder are the people you should be acknowledging, rewarding, and promoting. This will lead to better employee engagement, higher morale and a more positive company culture.

Micromanagement is an easy trap to fall into. By efficiently aligning your talent, and visualizing how their work contributes to your strategy, you can still keep track of everything happening in your organization, address problems and reward the right people. All with no micromanager needed!



LEADERSHIP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Feedback & Management

5 Ways You Can Improve Your Employee Feedback

Here are five (5) ways to improve your organization's employee feedback, so workers stay motivated, productive, and aligned with goals:

1. Stop putting it off: Make feedback continuous

You may think your corporate communication is good enough, and I'm sorry to say you're probably wrong. How Leaders Grow Today, a recent study done in partnership with ClearCompan and Dale Carnegie, found less than 6 percent of companies communicate goals on a daily basis.

When I ran a team of more than 1,000 people, I communicated our strategy from a stage or in a video distributed across many countries. In it, I would layout our strategy for success.

When I visited the rank-and-file, I'd hear, "I loved your strategy. It was very inspiring, but I have no idea what it means to my day-to-day work."

I learned the gap between a high-level strategy and each level of an organization must be bridged by middle management. They must not only break goals into smaller parts, but also provide regular feedback as to how those goals are performing. They must look up for alignment and down for proper cascading and management of work toward company goals.

If your company focuses on proper talent alignment, you can continually ensure workers are tackling the right projects without waiting months to check in. If employees keep track of their progress and how it applies to larger goals, annual or quarterly feedback sessions are no longer necessary. This greater transparency means the feedback loop can occur on a daily basis, keeping communication moving continuously.

2. Tie feedback to day-to-day tasks

Nobody likes a review process that comes at the end of a long year of work, but that approach, however outdated and damaging to culture and productivity, still exists in many companies. A study by WorldatWork found 66 percent of employees feel they don't communicate enough with upper management.



Your company may make communication a priority, but it's possible the feedback you're providing isn't helpful — in other words, it's not specific or actionable. Without corporate transparency, it's all too easy to lose track of what your people are working on and working toward.

The best way to give the great feedback your employees crave is to start from a goal-based perspective. Make sure their goals are properly mapped out and revisited twice a month. Your feedback can then be focused on check-ins around productivity toward those goals.

With this approach, you will very quickly be able to discern between the people who don't want to put in the time to improve and those who just need your support. Trust your instincts here — they are often right. You can then move to supporting your people who want to improve and forcing a little bit of healthy turnover on those who are not motivated.

If you find your entire team is lacking motivation, however, you may have a different problem entirely, and that is line of sight.

Line of sight comes from enabling all of your employees to understand how their daily efforts feed into the overall goals and strategies of your company. Take two workers in a quarry, for example. They both use the same tools and have the same role. One says he is carving out a stone; the other says he is building a cathedral. Which one do you think is more motivated to improve?

Starting from a goal-based perspective means employees understand the overarching company goals driving their workflow. This way, your workers never question why their work matters or how their efforts contribute to your company's success.

Easy visualization can also help you “see” day-to-day workflow, so you always understand employees' contributions. If feedback is to be continuous, it also needs to be something employees can implement in their daily work lives.

3. Provide avenues for improvement

In the WorldatWork study, 65 percent of employees said the feedback given when managers critiqued their performance wasn't specific enough to help correct the issue. Instead of just giving static feedback, it's important for managers to offer workers a way to improve their performance and make bigger

contributions toward company goals.

If a worker is falling down on the job, give some concrete and actionable tips that align with overall company objectives on how to improve. These objectives can then be tracked and evaluated.

Remember, improvement isn't just for those behind the curve; even your superstar employees can up their game with improved feedback.

4. Focus on strengths

A Gallup study found managers and employees were more engaged after receiving feedback that focused on how to isolate and play to strengths in the workplace. Employees who received strengths-based feedback were 12.5 percent more productive afterward, showing a few compliments can actually help your bottom line.

By increasing transparency about their performance, improving accountability, and setting measurable goals, you can track not only where employees may be falling short, but also where they're going above and beyond.

5. Make feedback a two-way street

Good employee feedback will help workers do their job better and engage with the company culture. Great feedback flows in both directions, allowing workers to give feedback to managers and top company executives about the likelihood that their goals are correct and/or reasonable.

I can't tell you the number of times I have seen teams agree in a meeting to go all-in on a strategy and then walk away having already decided it won't work. Management sets goals, but they all need a dose of reality from their people as to whether or not those goals are attainable.

If workers are aware of how their work contributes to goals, they'll be able to present more informed feedback to leaders and surface obstacles in the way of success. This in turn can help leaders improve processes and company culture, and more importantly, result in a greater likelihood of a successful business outcome.

Getting your workforce's goals aligned isn't easy, but improving employee feedback can get your teams focused on the right things while improving business outcomes and engagement.

LEADERSHIP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Feedback & Management

Performance Reviews: You're Doing It Wrong.

Let's be honest: no one likes performance reviews. They are incredibly time-consuming, based on stale information and employees rarely find them helpful. The traditional performance review is burdensome for everyone involved, which is why it's time to take a deep breath and find a better way.

A recent survey of more than 2,000 workers showed a whopping 98 percent think annual performance reviews are unnecessary. About a quarter of that group were HR professionals. Yikes. If even your HR department has a negative outlook on performance reviews, perhaps it's time to switch things up.

Clearer Corporate Communication With Talent Alignment

Why is the employee review so hated? It's because it is institutionalizing a process that should be going on daily. The traditional approach is to discuss performance reviews every few months or once a year. But this isn't helpful to employees who want more immediate feedback from managers and supervisors. While the whole idea behind

performance reviews is to improve corporate communication, they might actually be getting in the way.

Clear communication with employees is an important part of keeping teams motivated and on track. Yet communication becomes harder as organizations grow.

Most communication and reinforcement of corporate goals occurs quarterly and less than six percent of organizations communicate goals on a daily basis. Even more concerning, more than half of respondents saw communication breakdowns as the number one problem with cascading organizational goals.

So how do you communicate goals, track progress, and reward your best workers without driving them crazy? Move to a real-time talent alignment system in favor of tired quarterly or annual performance reviews. With talent alignment, your employees can track their performance and you can correct mistakes before they turn

into major problems.

Always Keep An Eye On Performance

By creating a clear picture of workflow, you can keep your employees on track and communicate effectively to avoid breakdowns of your message and goals. Allowing managers and executives a clear view of their company renders performance reviews obsolete.

As a leader, you can address problems in your workforce as soon as they arise, instead of letting them fester. Keeping employees aligned with company goals means ensuring organizational objectives cascade from the top of the org chart to the bottom. Using a talent alignment platform like ClearCompany, you can see how everything in your company connects. Employees can update you on their progress on a daily basis. When employees see how their day-to-day tasks translate into larger company goals, they become more engaged with company progress.

Improve Employee Recognition

A big part of the performance review involves employee recognition and rewarding your best people. These rewards can be anything from compensation bonuses and salary increases to additional benefits and perks.

Traditionally, these rewards only come sporadically. Employees have to await each new performance review for recognition and these reviews could be separated by many months. This often translates into great people in your organization spending a lot of time feeling undervalued.

If you have a clearer view of workflow, you can see your best and brightest workers, just like nimble startups do. You don't have to wait for an employee review to acknowledge and reward your top talent. You can now reward these all-star workers anytime because talent alignment allows for real-time employee recognition. The result? Employees with higher motivation year-round.

Talent alignment means doing away with the traditional performance reviews your HR department and your employees hate. Instead, you can react to your workforce immediately, strengthening corporate communication, improving employee recognition, and ultimately resulting in a more engaged and productive workforce.

Feedback & Management

Performance Management Fixes: 4 Things You're Missing

The best companies put a premium on transparency. At truly transparent organizations, employees see how their work aligns with overall business strategy, while executives visualize how their human capital is contributing to objectives. This is important across the entire strategic talent cycle, and nowhere more than performance reviews.

As a business leader, you understand the strategic value of transparency. Without a clear line of sight into the workflow of your employees, and a performance management system that tracks it, goals easily become misaligned.

Here are four ways increasing organizational visibility and talent alignment can improve your performance management method:

Visualize Performance

It's likely your current performance management method makes visualizing the work within your company difficult. You can see what's happening with your direct hires, but what about everyone else?

Using a talent alignment platform like ClearCompany gives you visual tools in order to concretely “see” and understand performance and progress on a day-to-day basis. One look at an individual employee’s work profile will show you how they are contributing to your goals and strategy, allowing you to correct wayward workers and reward your best employees.

Tie Individual Contributions To Goals

Good performance management helps business leaders understand how their human capital contributes to larger-scale company goals. However, great performance management also helps workers understand their place in the company.

Tying individual work and contributions to goals helps every employee align the work they do on a day-to-day basis with the overall business strategy. This ensures motivation stays high and contributions always add real value.

Additionally, by being able to quickly visualize the workflow of the whole company, executives can see the key performance indicators of team members and reward employees working the hardest and bringing the most value.

Observe Real-Time Progress

Thanks to talent alignment platforms, leaders can now fully visualize the work happening in their company as it happens. Performance management happens seamlessly, keeping workflow aligned with business strategy and helping you avoid miscommunication, delays, and missed deadlines.

Real-time progress reports and visualization help leaders see where human capital is being allocated and how to better deploy your team. Transparency is increased, not only in your corporate structure, but also in your company's concrete day-to-day reality.

Prevent Goal Decomposition

When objectives go awry, your team is left rudderless, your performance metrics suffer, and your organization bleeds both monetary and human capital. Organizational transparency is needed to keep goals from decomposing, leading to wasted work and disengaged employees. By breaking down lofty organizational goals into their component parts, you can see how employees tie into objectives and where work is going awry. You can see how your team contributes directly towards company goals, evaluate key performance indicators to isolate your

best people, and keep an eye on performance metrics so work always aligns with the greater goals.

Increase organizational transparency, and you'll be able to better focus on long-term objectives, keep talent aligned, ensure employees stay engaged, and help your bottom line.



LEADERSHIP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Nurturing, Training & Growing

4 Ways To Change Employee Development Forever

In a recent global survey of executives, Dale Carnegie Training found that the top three “people” priorities today are:

1. Leadership Development
2. Leadership Continuity/Succession Planning
3. Employee Engagement

The degree to which we can progress in these priorities depends on our ability to construct a system for cascading objectives and tracking progress.

If you're like many in today's work environment, you may rarely see the people who work for you. More and more of us team up virtually and work on separate projects, so we need a system for getting timely and clear answers to questions, like:

Can you get it done?
Will you do it well?
Are you all in?
Do you support my goals?

When the system is built on trust and transparency, the answers help you work together to map the person's strengths to development experiences and their potential to future roles. If the system is viewed as mutually beneficial and ensures regular touch points, it will drive and clarify:

1. Performance.

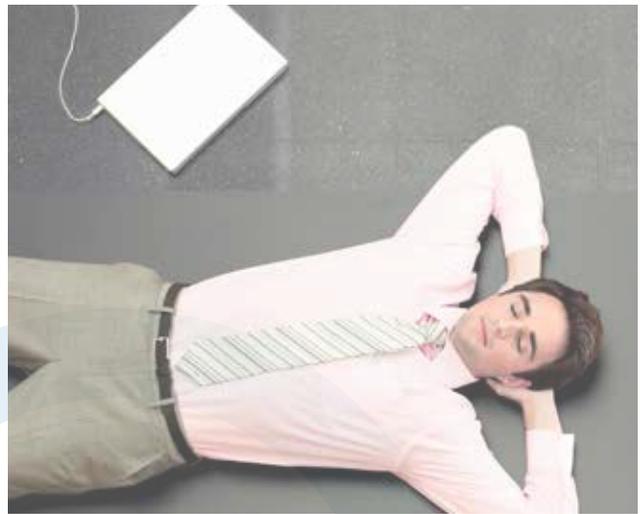
Each team member should know their results compared to expectations. In "The 3 Signs of a Miserable Job," Patrick Lencioni says that we engage in our work when we can measure it. Showing individual results helps bring to the surface areas for improvement and the readiness to take on roles with greater responsibility. In other words, "Can you get it done?"

2. Behavior.

Most leaders don't subscribe to a Machiavellian approach to performance. We know that the means are often more important than the ends. We need to sustain performance, our health and our relationships. Understanding actions, skills and the perceptions of others will help us to coach and extrapolate potential for other challenges. In other words, "Will you do it well?"

3. Engagement.

Emotional connection to the organization and to the team drives commitment, quality and culture. Systems for tracking objectives and progress reveal engagement because



they require engagement. Team members who hide from tracking objectives are either scared or apathetic. Either reveals development opportunities and succession potential. In other words, "Are you all in?"

4. Alignment.

Organizations need empowered and independent thinkers...within the framework of the organization's goals. Structure brings freedom and innovation. Just like mastering an instrument allows us to improvise, commitment to organizational goals allows us to be entrepreneurial. In crew, each rower does his part by following the cadence of those ahead and modeling for those behind in the boat. In other words, "Do you support my goals?"

We can develop leaders, plan for succession and engage our team when we have a solid system for managing objectives.

What's your system?

GROWTH BUILDING BLOCKS:

Engaging & Retaining Employees

Improve Engagement with Goal-Based Talent Alignment

Here's a fact you probably wish wasn't true: your employees aren't as motivated as you think or even hope they are. It's statistically likely a large proportion of your workforce is mentally checked out.

Don't think your company is the exception. Right now, your best employees might be daydreaming about leaving your office for greener pastures. In fact, a study on candidate behavior from CareerBuilder found the very idea of a passive candidate just might be a myth on par with Bigfoot. The study found 77 percent of full-time employees are either open to new opportunities or actively looking for a new job.

So what exactly is the problem here? Perhaps it's a lack of communication between upper management and the people on the ground who keep your company moving. Another study, this one a partnership between ClearCompany and Dale Carnegie, found only 5 percent of companies communicate goals on a daily basis. For most, these goal check-ins happen monthly or quarterly, giving employees a lot of time to lose sight of important objectives and feel adrift.

Proactively keeping goals top-of-mind throughout the organization is the best way to get your workforce motivated, improve employee engagement, and reduce employee turnover. But before we get into how reinforcing goals can improve employee retention, we must first understand why it's imperative to reduce turnover.

The True Cost of Employee Turnover

It's no secret employee turnover can be extremely costly for organizations of all sizes and for employees at all levels. How costly? For employees making less than \$50,000 a year, the cost of employee turnover is about 20 percent of the employee's salary. Certainly this isn't a cost most companies are looking to incur.

Unsurprisingly, things get even more expensive the farther up in the organizational chart you go. For employees in senior executive positions, turnover can cost as much as 213 percent of their current salary. But those are just the costs of employee turnover in dollars, which doesn't take into account how turnover can waste human capital, momentum toward goals, and hurt employee retention.



Talent Alignment For Better Employee Engagement

One of the reasons your employees are dreaming of greener pastures is likely that they've become unmotivated and disengaged. Despite efforts to communicate them, many workers don't understand how their contributions fit into overall company goals and organizational objectives.

With a system that visualizes and tracks goal alignment, you can increase employee engagement by helping your people see how their efforts and work fit into the company as a whole. Goal alignment helps everyone from entry-level to C-Suite understand their place in the organization. Instead of feeling like a cog in the proverbial machine, they

can see exactly how their work brings value.

Reducing Employee Turnover With Goal-Based Recognition

Goal-based approaches to leadership can also help in ensuring you recognize the right people for a job well done. Every employee wants to feel like their contributions to the company are being recognized. By focusing on how individual employee and team goals contribute to an overall company strategy, you will see who is adding strategically to these goals, and be able to recognize the right people.

This also helps to cut down on stressful and needless office politics. Keeping goals in view means people are staffed appropriately, and end up with credit for their hard work. After all the hard work your team has put into recruiting and hiring the best people, you can't afford to watch them walk out the door. Employee turnover isn't just costly -- it's also bad for employee engagement, morale, and productivity. Keeping your organization aligned with goals means more informed and motivated workers, which equals greater employee retention.



LEADERSHIP BUILDING BLOCKS:

Allocate Resources & Make Decisions Faster

In-Context Analytics: What They Are and Why You Need Them

Each branch, store, department and worker in an organization is going to have different deliverables, goals, strengths and weaknesses. Why then do leaders insist on measuring successes and failures in the same manner across the board? The simple and honest answer is that it's easy. Setting and tracking individual goals to keep them aligned with the entire organization's objectives isn't even an option without the right technology and leadership.

Even in a start-up, with a team of less than 10, keeping tabs on each detail of every worker's progress (or lack of) doesn't exactly fit into anyone's schedule. As companies grow larger, the task of gathering individual performance analytics, organizing them and acting upon that data quickly becomes a monster of a task. Additionally, it doesn't only become harder to analyze and track a workforce; it becomes even more vital to driving success, staying competitive and keeping workers engaged in the company strategy.

In-Context Analytics

Let me set an example with a frustrated friend of mine in management. He manages a retail store in a rural part of the state. Despite the differing demographics and established buying patterns in this area, his company uses the same metrics to assess all stores. This means that raises, bonuses and promotions all depend on each store hitting their numbers. Without fail, each week his store is stronger than most in a certain metric and "failing" miserably in another.

I'm sure you can already see the problem here. This store's key performance indicators (KPIs) aren't the same (or at least they shouldn't be) as any of the other stores. Despite this glaring metrics issue, each week these "short comings" are addressed, wasting the resources of management on analytics that are out of context.

Performance measurement specialist Stacey Barr defines some common issues with misaligned performance measures and KPIs:

Measures are not being used because no one sees them as relevant

There are clear links between your measures and your strategy

You have no idea how to measure your goals, especially those intangible, qualitative goals

Why Are Organizations Still Doing it This Way?

That example was pretty macro, but the same logic follows on the individual, or micro levels of an organization. No one is going to have the same KPIs. Most organizations haven't ventured into in-context analytics for a few reasons:

1. This sounds like a daunting and impossible task.
2. They believe their disjointed, single department measures are cutting it.
3. They don't know how to implement change.
4. They don't know the technology exists to make the change happen.

Leo Gettler lends some good advice in a Smart Company piece, "The Art of Setting KPIs":

"The mantra behind key performance indicators (KPIs) is imprinted on the brain of every executive in the world: 'If you can't measure it, you can't manage it'.

The trouble is many companies don't know what to measure. The result: bad management, mixed messages, confusion and employees focusing on the wrong thing."

It's Possible

Defining and tracking in-context analytics is in fact possible, and doing so won't ruin your life. This is what it looks like when the right talent alignment technology allows management to get targeted and



relevant with their vision.

Goal Breakdown: Managers and executives can see how each goal is broken down into actionable components, who is responsible for each action and how the worker has prioritized the action.

Risks and Dependencies: Leaders can understand the projects and workers that key goals are depending on, identify risks and allocate resources in a far more efficient and effective manner.

Real-Time Progress Monitoring: Each moving part, on all levels of an organization will have their unique goals that work together. Leaders are given a bird's eye view of this machine in order to organize and monitor progress in real-time.

Visual Tools: Leaders can see everything with big-data visualization. They can see how the organization is, and will connect with your strategy via visual tools.

A truly aligned workforce needs tools that will not only ensure that goals are met, but that the proper goals are being set. KPIs have to be defined and tracked on the individual level, and in real-time in order to most efficiently meet goals.

Organizations need empowered and independent thinkers...within the framework of the organization's goals. Structure brings freedom and innovation. Just like mastering an instrument allows us to improvise, commitment to organizational goals allows us to be entrepreneurial, reallocating resources, budget and shifting goals whenever and wherever they are needed.

We can develop leaders, plan for succession and engage our team when we have a solid system for managing objectives.

Do you need help defining your strategy, communicating your vision and seeing it through?

We can help with all of that. Take a demo today and see how in-context analytics can make your vision a reality.

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