

How To Navigate The Landscape In Our Changing World

Leadership has never been so important in any organisation, than it is today in our unpredictable, complex and changing world.

Direction and Influence are two important elements of the leadership discipline. Navigation is the third part of the behavioural trilogy and in the past it may have been overlooked in importance by many organisations.

Not Any More

Steering an organisation on its unique journey is one of the biggest personal challenges facing all leaders. Although the end goal, the destination, may stay the same, the conditions experienced on the journey will be different within six months, and different again within a year.

Why? Because internal and external issues and events will constantly change the landscape in which the organisation operates in.

Navigating the landscape has become the new core requirement of the 21st century leader. To support this need, meet the challenges ahead and deliver success, a more flexible, adaptable leadership approach is needed to keep everyone connected with the organisation on track - a performance framework which adapts to changing conditions on the journey.

Navigating the landscape is a specialist skill for any leader to master. An understanding of the human performance challenges likely to be faced on the journey is needed to achieve navigational excellence.

Performance challenges can be grouped into six clearly defined areas of focus - Research, Strategy, Engagement, Motivation, Development and Ownership.

Each area is unique and requires a different navigational focus.

Research

Research focuses on the size of the opportunity for everyone connected with the organisation. Navigational focus addresses four significant challenges:

- Retention of people currently employed
- Attraction and recruitment of new talent

- Support of suppliers, partners and other stakeholders
- Clarity regarding the future direction of the organisation.

The role of the leader is to help create an inspirational journey experience and an organisation that others want to be part of. This is achieved by identifying the reasons why individuals should sign up to the journey. The response to the question 'What's in it for me?' offers the leader insight on what is needed to enlist the support of others.

Popular reasons for leaders embarking on the journey include survival, new markets, growth potential and status. Reasons for others signing up include a sense of adventure, personal growth, fulfilment and pride.

Navigating the landscape requires the production of a simple, ambitious, and compelling 'vision' offering a further inspirational insight into the future of the organisation and what lies ahead on the journey.

The more powerful the vision, the easier it is to attract, recruit and retain people on the journey.

Strategy

Strategy focuses on the production of the route map needed to chart the right course on the journey. Navigational focus addresses four important challenges:

- General understanding of the strategic plan
- Alignment of the plan to each employee's job role
- Agreement of each employee's performance expectation
- Day-to-day management of their performance.

The role of the leader is to demonstrate how the vision will be realised by aligning the overall plan to each role in the organisation. Confidence in the leader and credibility in the plan are both important to navigational success.

Navigating the landscape requires the use of a simple route map - a blueprint for success - confirming the vision (the destination), the areas of focus important on the journey (critical success factors), the behaviours needed (culture and values), and the personal performance

contribution (targets or objectives) applicable to the journey.

The blueprint also offers a narrative about the future direction of the organisation, which enables individuals to understand, trust and support the leadership team.

The production of the route map is the single most important piece of work carried out by leaders on any journey.

Engagement

Engagement focuses on obtaining the buy-in and commitment to the strategic plan and the route map on the journey. Navigational focus addresses four key challenges:

- Level of leadership visibility and capability
- Quality of the workplace experience
- Effectiveness of the communication grapevine
- Need for momentum on the journey.

Levels of people engagement and business performance are inextricably linked. The role of the leader is not to generate more followers, but to create more leaders - we call them Cultural Architects.

Cultural Architects are advocates of the vision, the route map and the journey and are proud to be connected with the organisation. Operating as informal 'leaders without authority' they are able to guide, inspire and focus others on what is needed to support the organisation.

Navigating the landscape requires the identification, recruitment and powerful influence of the Cultural Architects and they can be found within the organisation or externally from suppliers, partners and other stakeholders.

Cultural Architects help to improve communication, trust, performance momentum and commitment from others on the journey.

Motivation

Motivation focuses on the creation of the performance climate needed throughout the organisation to enable others to perform to their potential. Navigational focus addresses four crucial challenges:

- Defining what high-performance looks like

- Identification of performance barriers in the workplace
- Understanding personal drive
- Role of the leader as a motivator of others.

On the journey, it is possible to reach a performance plateau where progress may temporarily slow down. Levels of motivation can fluctuate, resulting in costly performance variations and frustration for everyone concerned. Understanding how to overcome the peaks and troughs in performance is important to delivering organisational success.

The role of the leader is to identify what motivates and demotivates individuals and to take the appropriate action to help them perform.

Navigating the landscape requires a working environment conducive to the needs of high-performing individuals. Regular 'temperature checks' and the organisation's communication grapevine will offer the leader valuable feedback and early signs of potential performance issues in the workplace.

Development

Development focuses on the protection of the systems, processes and people important to a sustainable organisation. Navigational focus addresses four main challenges:

- Loss of talent within the organisation
- Potential complacency in the workplace
- Ability to cope with change
- Barriers to operational efficiency.

Success on any journey typically leads to more success. However, this can also place additional stress on operations. Systems and processes are put to the test; so, too, are people as their workload changes or increases.

The role of the leader is to focus everyone connected with the organisation on the need to continually improve operational efficiency.

Navigating the landscape requires a commitment to innovation, change and 'new ways of working'. Without this, performance complacency may creep in. A fine balance is needed though, between maintaining the existing levels of good performance with the need to set new and higher standards for the future.

Understanding the unique contribution of others, unlocking the power of information, and the creative use of experience and expertise, is vital to delivering efficiency on the journey.

Ownership

Ownership focuses on the maximisation of people potential throughout every area of the organisation. Navigational focus addresses four vital challenges:

- Levels of trust between colleagues and others
- Pride in the journey and the organisation
- Ability to handle unforeseen problems, issues and events
- Delivery of agreed goals and objectives.

Ownership is regarded by leaders as the ultimate cultural prize on the journey where agility, pride, trust and performance are demonstrated.

The role of the leader is to build a confident and high-performing workforce with personal accountability as a cultural norm.

The ability to handle last-minute problems, operational challenges and unforeseen circumstances, are measures of ownership effectiveness. Creative problem-solving and positive decision-making forms part of the ownership experience.

Navigating the landscape requires the need for collective focus. Personal accountability improves confidence, drives changes in behaviour, and culminates in the delivery of high levels of personal performance.

Ownership also contributes to the effective execution of the strategy, and ultimately success on the journey, and arrival at the desired end destination.

It is impossible to create an agile, successful and sustainable organisation without ownership.

Benefits

Navigating the journey through the six areas brings many benefits including:

- The attraction and recruitment of talent
- The alignment of strategy to operational performance
- The engagement of others via the development of leadership capability
- The creation of a strong workplace performance climate
- The powerful use of knowledge, expertise and talent via learning
- The demonstration of behaviours important to maximising the organisation's potential.

Leaders are also able to manage their personal time and resources more effectively.

Great Leaders

All leaders dream of building a successful, growing and sustainable organisation. Likewise, their teams wish to be part of the same workplace experience.

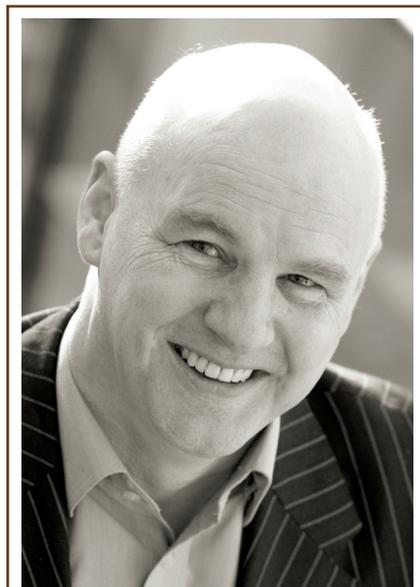
Using a leadership framework that adapts to changing conditions on the journey, enables everyone connected with the organisation to feel empowered, work with a greater sense of purpose, and share the responsibility for the overall performance of the company.

Great journeys have a clear intent, unique challenges, and a real sense of adventure.

Remember, everyone wants to be part of something special and great journeys, live long in the memory of those who participate in them.

Great leaders create great journeys and the ability to navigate an ever-changing landscape is a true testimony of a great leader.

Best wishes on your journey, wherever it may take you.



John Stein is the founder of the winning (formula)®, a champion of growth and the author of Building the Pyramid.

He is widely recognised as a leading authority on the human performance issues facing organisations on their unique journey, and has dedicated his career to working with leaders and their teams to build agile, successful and sustainable organisations.

John is an award winning practitioner, conference speaker and facilitator.

He is able to engage with individuals at all levels in any organisation, and uses a unique blend of research data, humour, pragmatism and commonsense to inspire others to maximise their potential.

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