**Strategic Alignment – Contribute to organizational goals**

#### What to Know:

You aren’t able to share the goals of the organization if they haven’t actually been set or defined. It is essential that all members of the leadership team use organizational goals to set priorities (too many goals and everything becomes a priority) that help to align activity across the organization. At the business unit/department level, leaders should align their goals with the organization and help employees understand their role in success.

#### Mythbusters:

Some leaders hesitate to discuss organizational goals, vision or mission because it feels too lofty or warm-and-fuzzy. Find a way to communicate an inspiring vision that feels right given your culture and leadership style. Having a purpose and feeling part of something greater than yourself has shown to be incredibly motivating and fulfilling, so don’t deprive your employees of knowing how they fit into the big picture.

**Questions to Ask:**

* Do you have a clear understanding of the organization’s goals/strategy/vision? If not, what is unclear? What could be done to provide further clarity? What information do you need? Who do you need it from?
* Do you see alignment between your work and the goals of the organization? Why or why not? What could we do better to ensure work is aligned?
* How well do we do at staying focused on the work that most contributes to organizational goals? What side-tracks us? Is there work we are doing that does not contribute to those goals?
* Are we recognized for our contributions to meeting the goals of the organization? In what ways? How could this be improved?
* How could your supervisor help to ensure there is a clear connection between our work and the goals of the organization? What can the organization do?

**Best Practices:**

* Meet one-on-one with employees regularly to discuss workload and priorities and discuss how they connect to what the organization is trying to accomplish.
* Give employees permission to place projects that are not directly related to organizational goals on the back burner.
* Structure staff meetings so that discussions focus on key organizational goals and how the work of each person is (or is not) lined up with these goals.
* Identify processes/work that used to be valuable, but no longer contribute to organizational goals. Remove that work where possible.

#### What Managers Can Do:

Meet one-on-one with employees regularly to discuss priorities and discuss how they connect to what the organization is working to accomplish.

Give employees permission to place projects that are not directly related to organizational goals on the back burner.

Structure shift/staff meetings so that discussions focus on key organizational/department goals and how the work of each person is (or is not) lined up with these goals.

Identify processes/work that used to be valuable but no longer contribute to organizational goals. Remove that work where possible.

#### What Employees Can Do:

If you don’t understand how your work fits in with the big picture ask your supervisor.

Identify one or two important stakeholders who rely on the work you do (e.g., customers, leaders, frontline service providers). Ask these stakeholders what they think is going well and what could be improved. You’ll likely learn that your contributions are more impactful than you thought, and you may get some good feedback in the process.

Take a minute and remind yourself of the organization’s goals. Then identify 3-5 responsibilities that take up most of your time. If they don’t align with the organization’s priorities, brainstorm ways you can dedicate more energy to tasks that you see as connected with company goals while also minimizing tasks that don’t relate to these goals.

#### What Leadership Can Do:

As best as possible, try to limit the number of goals for the organization to a critical few. Too many priorities cause lack of alignment and conflict for resources.

Ensure that performance management, incentives, rewards, and recognition programs are aligned with organizational goals. Are you rewarding and motivating employees in the right ways (i.e., in ways that move you closer to achieving organizational goals)? Prompt your leadership teams to demonstrate that system-wide programs are motivating desired behaviors in your workforce.

Find ways to celebrate successes. Do your employees know how far you’ve come? On a regular basis, find ways to share success stories, give a shout-out to work well-done, and communicate progress towards goals using specific metrics.

**Watch:**

* [How to ensure employee performance goals align with organizational priorities](https://youtu.be/G_4aGCU7j_o)

**Read:**

* [*To Give Your Employees Meaning, Start With Mission*](https://hbr.org/2012/12/to-give-your-employees-meaning)
* [*4 Reasons Why Employees Aren’t Feeling Your Mission Statement*](https://www.business.com/articles/marcos-cordero-why-employees-are-not-feeling-mission-statements/)
* *The Why of Work: How Great Leaders Build Abundant Organizations That Win by David Ulrich, Wendy Ulrich, and Marshall Goldsmith*
* *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace by Bryan J. Dik, Zinta S. Byrne, Michael F. Steger*