

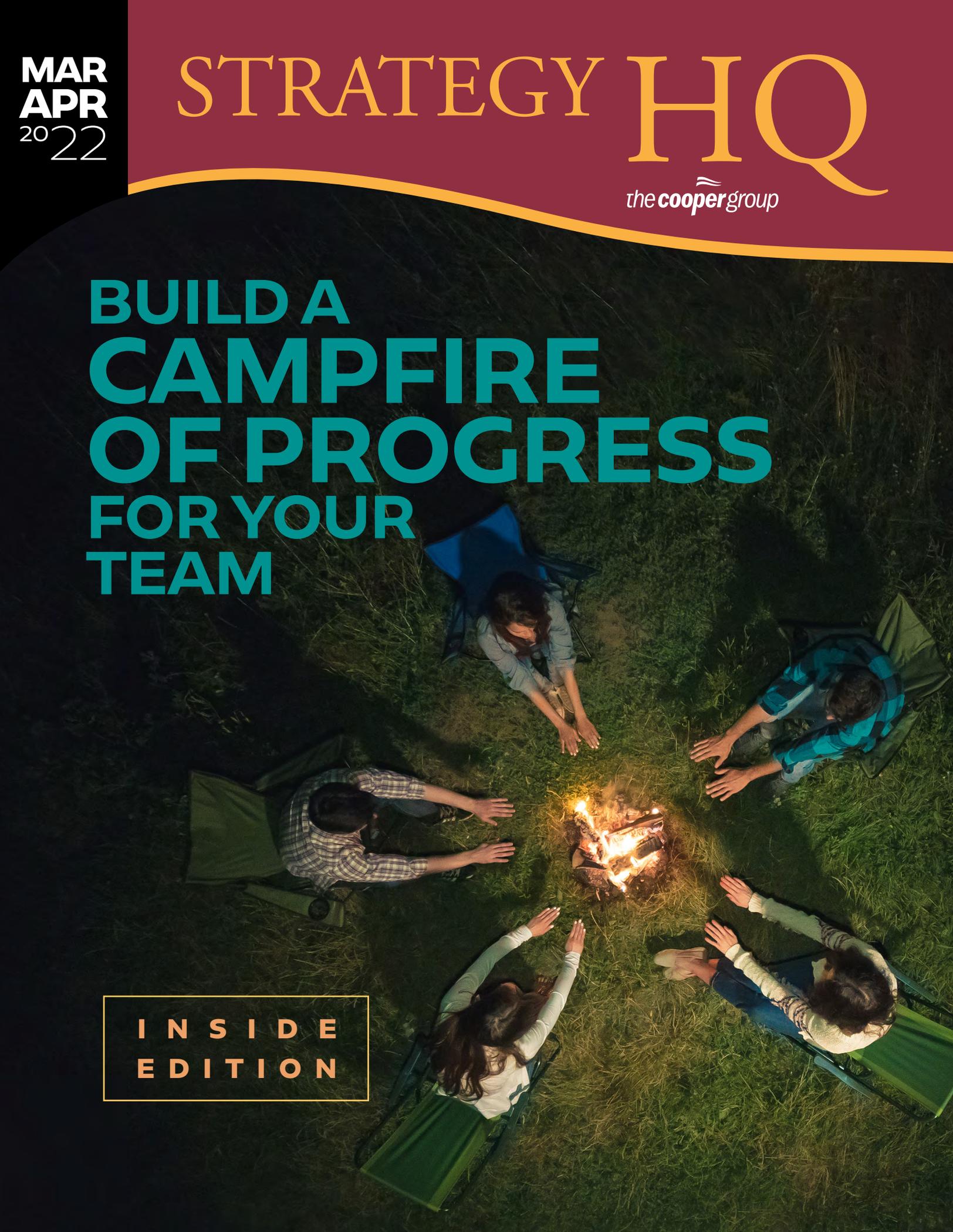
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# STRATEGY HQ

the cooper group

## BUILD A CAMPFIRE OF PROGRESS FOR YOUR TEAM

INSIDE  
EDITION





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**EQ > IQ**



by David Cooper

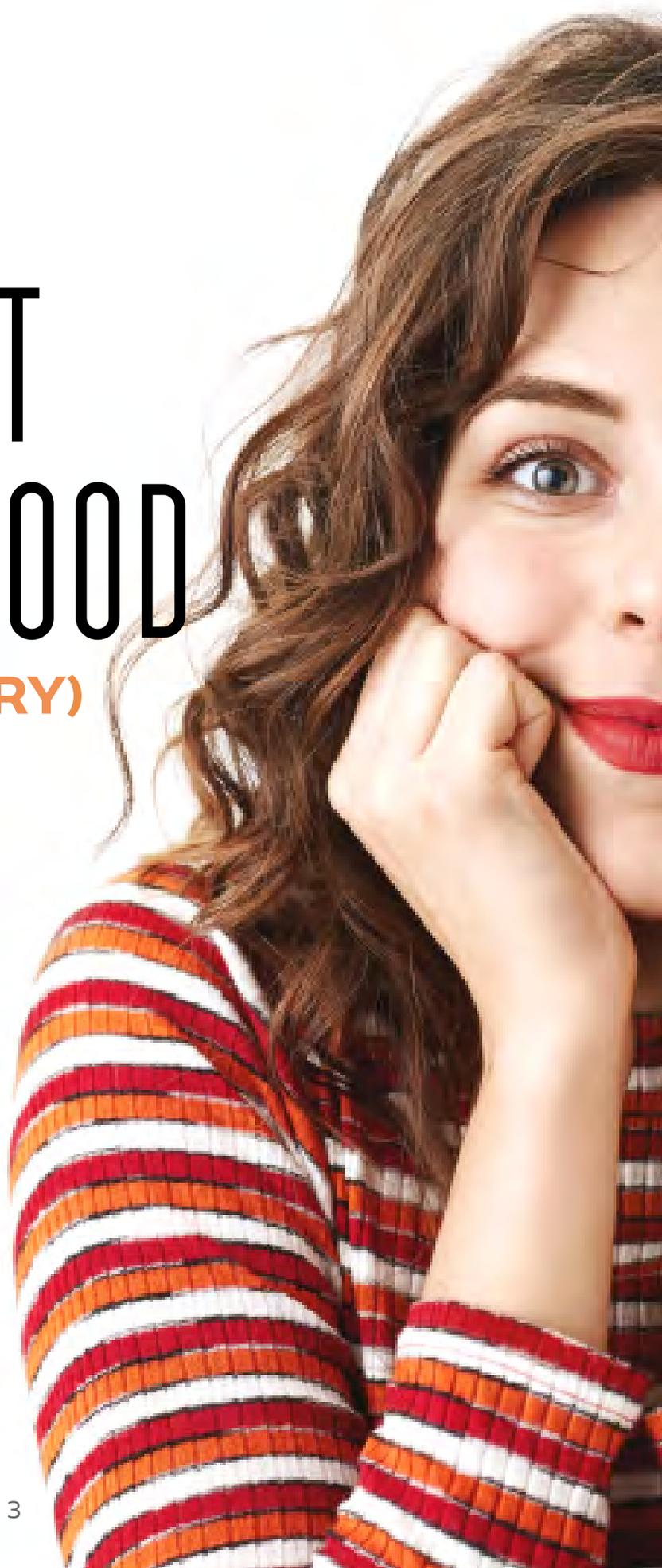
# EMOTION AT WORK IS GOOD (ANNND NECESSARY)

**Y**ou might be familiar with the best-selling fiction writer whose main characters are sometimes dogs – with human intellect. One of them is a Golden Retriever named Einstein. This author is also well known for his profound insights on life, which are not fiction at all, like this gem:

“Some people think only intellect counts: knowing how to solve problems, knowing how to get by, knowing how to identify an advantage and seize it. But the functions of intellect are insufficient without courage, love, friendship, compassion, and empathy.” -- Dean Koontz

From what I know of the real Einstein, he would have wholeheartedly agreed with Koontz. Regardless, the quote lays bare why our emotional characteristics are not only good but necessary tools in our work lives, especially for leaders in pursuit of excellence.

Let me put this into perspective.



# What really rules the day are interpersonal skills, and every leader should consider them key to success in our post-pandemic world.



## Corporate America must return to humanity

A new [MIT Sloan Management Review](#) revealed that today's record turnover in the workforce, in white and blue collar occupations alike, is driven by toxic work cultures. By whatever measure, this is an inconvenient truth. Fixing it calls for emotional intelligence (EI).

For some professionals (okay, many), the word 'emotional' carries a palpable stigma, as in something to avoid. After all, we are taught to be smart and keep our emotions in check in the workplace. And that's a good thing. Intellect and diplomacy are necessary to succeed in business and in life. But as Koontz says, they're not enough.

What really rules the day are interpersonal skills, and every leader should consider them key to success in our post-pandemic world. Again, look no further than the [staggering](#) and sustained quit rates over the past several months. People are leaving their jobs for many reasons, not the least of which is a bad boss or an unwelcoming environment that treats people as commodities.

Let's face it. From CEOs to middle managers, no one can afford to

lose their valuable people, or just as devastating, suffer poor performance and lost revenue from low morale and dissatisfaction among existing staff. Culture change and improvements are needed to create better environments in which leaders lead with courage, compassion and empathy – not just intellect. EI is often called the new smart.

## Get your emotional intelligence on

Interpersonal skills directly impact people performance and organizational success. Some leaders naturally possess the traits, from awareness of self and others to effective communication, active and genuine listening, empathy (a big one), a positive and inclusive attitude and other traits. Those who don't possess the skills can and should develop them.

Dynamic leaders, today and throughout history, prioritize emotional intelligence, more formally referred to as Emotional Quotient or EQ. The term has

become as mainstream as Intelligence Quotient (IQ). While IQ assesses human intelligence, or brainpower, EQ corresponds to our ability to identify and successfully manage our own thoughts and feelings, along with the equal ability to recognize and acknowledge the humanity of others.

The operative word there is acknowledge, to give credence to feelings, needs and realities, whether your own or those of others. This is an act that great leaders do out loud. Let others know you see them, and most important, that you hear them. It requires that you genuinely listen to them. To acknowledge does not mean to acquiesce, indulge or encourage emotional displays. It means respecting and honoring others with our words and actions, a golden rule of business.

## Are you interpersonal-averse? You can still do this.

For some people, the thought of developing emotional intelligence

and using interpersonal skills can cause an uncomfortable and even visceral reaction. Being buttoned-up is their comfort zone and they closely guard it. I know people who keep their emotional spigots turned to a permanent off position in all areas of life, not just business. Yet some of them are still exceptional leaders.

How can that be? Here's the answer. There is a big difference between showing emotion and letting others know you care. You can listen, express empathy and understanding, and once again, acknowledge others with objectivity. No harm, no foul to your comfort zone. In other words, EQ is not about self-exposure. Rather, when applying interpersonal skills, what you really reveal about yourself is that you are open-minded, fair and engaged – traits that even the most private people can comfortably pursue. And it sets a great example for others. It's all good.

### **EQ is changing the ways leaders lead**

For emotional intelligence to have a positive impact on the culture of a company, it must be embraced and practiced by all leaders, including executives, directors, division heads, and managers in all areas of the company who have direct reports.

Following are some of the most prevalent characteristics of high-EQ leaders:

- **Emotional intelligence begins at home:** High-EQ leaders stay self-aware. They are good at identifying their own emotions (putting a name on them), both positive and negative.

Because they are aware, they can successfully manage their thoughts and feelings and channel that energy into ways that help them solve problems, seize opportunities, and by example, help others do the same. Self-awareness is the first step in developing emotional intelligence.

- **Seeing is believing:** High-EQ leaders make themselves more available to their teams, departments and other areas of the company. Some practice 'management by walking around' to be present and visible. They schedule events that allow interactions among employees and teams, such as occasional lunches and special meetings. And in today's heavily remote workplace where in-person interaction is not possible, they increase the frequency of virtual meetings, phone calls and emails that are upbeat and informative.

or concerns, or for input and guidance. Most have open door policies.

- **Attentive:** They focus hard during one-on-one conversations and group discussions with employees and other leaders, giving each person who speaks their full, undivided attention. They also foster and encourage team members and other leaders to do the same. Respect and attention are high priorities – no matter who is speaking. Everybody matters.
- **Listeners:** They continually improve their listening skills and always think about what the other person is saying before they respond. If more information is needed, they positively and enthusiastically encourage the other person to clarify or expound. If a response

# EQ > IQ

**High-EQ leaders are also masters of their non-verbal communications, such as body language and facial expressions.**

- **Welcoming:** They make a point to be accessible and approachable and are highly conscious of their tone of voice when interacting with others, so that people are comfortable in coming to them with ideas

requires deeper thought, they promise to provide it soon and keep that promise.

- **Communicators:** They focus on being articulate, clearly communicating plans, expectations and deliverables,



and they welcome input on how things are to be accomplished or better ways to do them. High-EQ leaders are also masters of their non-verbal communications, such as body language and facial expressions. Their overall manner is non-threatening and encourages better engagement and performance from others.

- **Involved:** High-EQ leaders stay engaged with their people and concentrate on working with them to improve their contributions. They look at individual performance and recognize good work. They find ways to reward people for their initiative, ingenuity and accomplishments. These practices are long proven in escalating productivity, positive working environments and just as important, employee retention.

### **There is plenty of evidence that EQ is a must-have skill**

The importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace is not new. It tends to become more pronounced and necessary following big disruptions, such as the 2008 Great Recession and

today in the wake of the pandemic, times when employers are desperate to restore stability and find new ways to grow.

As long ago as 2011, research conducted by CareerBuilder found that:

- 34% of hiring managers were placing greater emphasis on emotional intelligence when hiring and promoting employees post-recession.
- 71% said they valued emotional intelligence in an employee more than IQ.

When asked why emotional intelligence is more important than high IQ, employers said (in order of importance):

- Employees with high EI are more likely to stay calm under pressure.
- Employees know how to resolve conflict effectively.
- Employees are empathetic to their team members and react accordingly.
- Employees lead by example.
- Employees tend to make more thoughtful business decisions.

In the same survey, HR and hiring managers said they assessed EI in candidates and employees by observing a variety of behaviors and qualities. The top responses were:

- They admit and learn from their mistakes.
- They can keep emotions in

check and have thoughtful discussions on tough issues.

- They listen as much or more than they talk.
- They take criticism well.
- They show grace under pressure.

These trends have grown. In 2019, Statista Research asked 2,250 respondents, including 750 executives, when they thought emotional intelligence would become a must-have skill to improve the quality of interpersonal coordination. Thirty-six percent of executives said it would become a necessary skill within one to three years. That time is now!

### **The pay-off creates a full circle of wins**

The benefits of becoming emotionally intelligent, as an individual and as a company, are wide-ranging. Through good interpersonal skills, conflicts are minimized. People gain a greater understanding of each other. Teams become happier and more productive. Customers come – and they stay. And companies achieve stronger results and revenues.

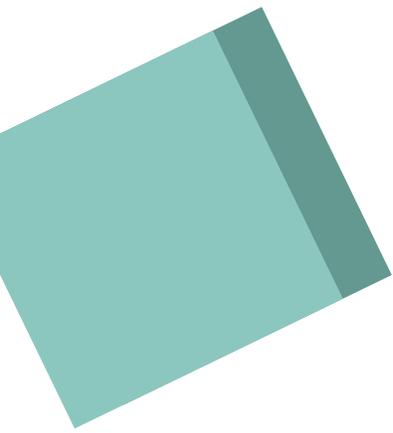
It takes time, thought and intention, but it's so worth it. For current trends, this Fast Company [article](#) offers ideas on how to build an emotionally intelligent workplace in today's fast-changing environment. Get your emotional intelligence on and watch the transformation begin. It works.

# THE MAMMOTH POWER OF MINI GOALS IN TEAM BUILDING

**G**ood strategy does not play out overnight. It happens in steps and small achievements along an extended path of execution. How can your team and company maintain steady forward motion as you implement business or brand strategy – or any project for that matter?

And most important, how do you keep team endurance alive and strong throughout the whole journey? Sameness breeds complacency. Performance fatigue is very real. The day-to-day grind can displace team members' focus on the end goal.





Regular shots of motivation are needed to keep people on the same page and sustain their enthusiasm. Here are six inspiring keys to successful execution:

1. Communicate your full vision to your people and teams.
2. Provide clear direction on incremental steps that lead to the end goal.
3. Make sure your people have the right tools and processes to excel in their assigned roles.
4. Inspire employee motivation to perform.
5. Habitually measure progress and share it.
6. Consistently acknowledge and reward individual and team achievements, large and small.

While all six keys are interrelated, the fifth and sixth go hand in hand. There is a built-in reward system when employees can see consistent proof of progress due to their efforts. It is an affirmation that we are making a difference, and it motivates us to do more (see the fourth key).

If you use all six keys to implement strategy, projects and programs, here's what will happen. Your team will remain single-minded in taking successive strategic steps, and the long leaps and ultimate goals will be achieved in the timeliest manner.

### **Launch pad: Your teams need to know the end game**

As a leader, you are paid to think big, take the long view and foretell how the business will get from 'here to there.' Keep your team informed! Strategy should never be held in confidence when you're getting ready to execute. Once you arrive at a sound strategy, put it on your team's table.

Share your business or brand vision and strategic plans with internal stakeholders. Without their understanding and buy-in, you are rudderless. Start by conducting regular, passionate and interactive communications with your teams. Give them the information they need to understand what is required of them to support where the company is headed. At the same time, share how everyone will work together to get there. Everybody has a stake in shared goals.

### **“When making plans, think big. When making progress, think small.”**

Those are the words of James Clear, author of [Atomic Habits](#), the New York Times bestseller and number one seller in Business Processes and Infrastructure on Amazon. As an expert on decision-making and continuous improvement, Clear says to forget about goals and focus on systems instead.

The difference? “Goals are about the results you want to achieve. Systems are about the processes that lead to those results,” says Clear. “Goals are good for setting a direction, but systems are best for making progress.”

### **Shared goals and competent systems – the essential equation**

Great leaders drive [positive outcomes](#) by galvanizing their people and strengthening the systems and tools their teams use each day to ensure top performance.

**Strategy should never be held in confidence when you're getting ready to execute. Once you arrive at a sound strategy, put it on your team's table.**



That is worth repeating. Effective leaders prioritize 'who' and 'what' makes things happen from day to day. Your success in implementing strategy is wholly dependent on the people who take those pivotal small steps, so spare no detail in arming them with information and tools, including software applications that streamline processes and procedures. Combined, these will equip team members to reverse engineer their daily decisions and tasks to favor the end goal.



## Giving away ownership is a great motivator and the most effective way to make big things happen.

### **Overdeliver on internal clarity and priorities**

The biggest challenge in implementing strategy, and where a lot of companies fail, is converting great ideas (your grand plan) into short-term plans. There are long- and short-term goalposts in any strategy, many of which are undertaken at the same time. Each requires sound objectives and tactics, and allocated resources and timing.

Here are three must-haves to cement direction, priorities and clarity:

1. **Decide who will be responsible:** It should be clear to you, which team members will play leading roles in implementing each area of your strategy. But you must do more than assign responsibilities. You also need to help them create and prioritize their own steps and those of their direct reports. Here's the best way to do that...
2. **Give away ownership:** Your team leaders know their people, systems and processes best. Engage them to help you translate your plan into priorities and tasks to be performed and let them in turn empower their people to take charge. Giving away ownership is a great motivator and the most effective way to make big things happen. Shared goals inspire individuals to take initiative, resolve challenges, improve processes and keep progress alive.
3. **Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.** Implementing a new strategy, big or small, will bring change to your organization.

Change often elicits discomfort and fear among employees. Anticipate this and keep the communication lines open. Meet with your management team, business unit leaders, middle managers and staff on a regular basis. Invite their comments and input. Welcome and understand concerns. Ask how the company can eliminate roadblocks to progress. When you make everyone a part of your strategy implementation process, they and your company will enjoy positive outcomes.

A word on measuring and sharing progress: Fusing human nature with metrics is powerful. There are people on your teams who thrive on numbers. Others not so much, and trying to coalesce the two can be like mixing oil and water. But the Campfire of Progress is seductive to all if you make it so. We all want to be on a winning team. Use progress metrics to inspire your people!

### **Greatness comes from a series of small intentional steps**

The mammoth power of mini goals cannot be overstated because grand plans cannot be realized without them. When you're ready to roll out your vision and strategy, be sure to revisit the six keys to successful execution at the top of this article.

If I could add one more key, it would be gratitude. Every leader should invest more time in thanking individual employees and whole teams for their efforts. A little goes a long way in bringing out the best in people, especially during these times of change.



*Calm in the storm.*

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