

## Highly Productive Teams Need This to Thrive

Leaders must learn how to make the future in the midst of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. It is hard to even think about the future if you are overwhelmed by the present, but that is exactly the time when foresight can be most practical. Looking to distant possibilities can provide new insight for the present.

Some leaders will judge too soon and draw simplistic conclusions while others will decide too late and pay a price for their lack of courage or inaction. Some will be overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness while others will become cynical and question everything around them.

Leaders need not be overwhelmed by the volatile world around them. They must have the skills to take advantage of those opportunities, as well as the agility to sidestep the dangers.

Leadership is more preparation than planning. Planning relies on predictability. But preparation helps leaders stay clear amid uncertainty. Planning assumes continuity; preparation equips leaders to be flexible enough to seize opportunity.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - Chris Fussell, [\*One Mission: How Leaders Build a Team of Teams\*](#)

Too often, companies end up with teams stuck in their own silos, pursuing goals and metrics in isolation. Their traditional autocratic structures create stability, scalability, and predictability -- but in a world that demands constant adaptation, this traditional model fails.

In *Team of Teams*, retired four-star General Stanley McChrystal and former Navy SEAL Chris Fussell made the case for a new organizational model combining the agility, adaptability, and cohesion of a small team with the power and resources of a giant organization. Now, in *One Mission*, Fussell channels all his experiences, both military and corporate, into powerful strategies for unifying isolated and distrustful teams.

This practical guide will help leaders in any field implement the *Team of Teams* approach to tear down their silos, improve collaboration, and avoid turf wars. By committing to one higher mission, organizations develop an overall capability that far exceeds the sum of their parts.

From Silicon Valley software giant Intuit to a government agency on the plains of Oklahoma, organizations have used Fussell's methods to unite their people around a single compelling vision, resulting in superior performance. *One Mission* will help you follow their example to a more agile and resilient future.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION - Build a single, aligning narrative

Some of the most difficult part of taking action and moving forward takes place before you are required to take action. You may glimpse a solution to a problem, but don't hit the gas pedal yet – *is your team aligned?*

For the church, being out of alignment means severe limitations to missional effectiveness and efficiency.

*If we were to become a hybrid model that maintained top-down alignment while also empowering our individual teams to make coordinating autonomous decisions, each team would need a deep enough understanding of strategy to operationalize it without top-down direction. To do this, we would need to create a powerful narrative that not only would unite our teams on our organization's single mission but would also tell them how to achieve that mission.*

The idea of strategic alignment is not new; for years, bureaucratic organizations running on a traditional model have worked to make sure their teams are strategically aligned. However, in most cases, this alignment comes from the top; experiences has shown the traditional top-down approach to vertical alignment can actually mask horizontal misalignment and further fuel narrative divide among teams.

In typical organizations, as complexity increases, so do horizontal gaps and resultant mistrust among silos. The belief is that strategic leadership announces a goal and that it cascades down to the operational level and further down to a tactical level.

Unfortunately, an open-ended, vaguely unifying objective actually serves to reinforce disconnects among teams because it can mean different things to different subordinate silos, which worsens horizontal alignment.

With little transparency and few direct lines of communication between teams and leaders, each of us could use the organization's overarching objective to feed our myopic view of the fight.

In openly addressing the need to demonstrate more informal interconnectivity, defy tribal barriers, and eschew reserve in favor of transparency, our leadership began to model a new type of behavior consistent with its still-developing aligning narrative.

Every day, our aligning narrative and its associated behaviors became increasingly ingrained in our thinking, a product of the repetition of messages coming from our leadership and of observing the impact that this new approach begin to have on the battlefield.

Chris Fussell, [\*One Mission: How Leaders Build a Team of Teams\*](#)

## A NEXT STEP

How does your organization currently measure horizontal alignment among its teams and functional silos? Often leaders make the assumption that their team is organized and moving in the same direction so that everybody's efforts align toward the same purpose.

As we all know, that is seldom the case.

Using the phrases below, review your team's alignment. Write the phrases on a chart tablet:

- Communication is clear
- The team is working in alignment
- The “Win” has been defined
- Operating environment is understood before taking action
- Skill and performance standards exist

First have your team write down their individual rating on a scale of 1-10, where 1 represents total absence and 10 represents total agreement.

Then, discuss everyone’s rating, arriving at a consensus score for each of the five statements.

If there are statements with a composite score of 7 or below, develop action plans to move the score up in the next three months.

Your teams might claim to trust and have open lines of dialogue with one another – but can they demonstrate examples of how this trust is helping accomplish your organization’s strategy?

Based on the above exercises and questions, how would an aligning narrative be best emphasized and contextualized for your teams?

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