

# UNLEASH THE POWER OF WHY IN ORGANIZATIONS!

What is an important project or tactic you are currently working on? How are you motivating your team-mates, others involved in this project? Where does motivation rank overall in importance for you as a leader?

Connecting to motivation and “the why” is a critical leadership capability. Yet, too many leaders focus more on the “what” vs the “why” – why is that?

## WE ARE TOO FOCUSED ON THE “WHAT” VS THE “WHY”

A lot of businesses & leaders are too caught up in the “what & how” because of the speed of business today. Questions like these dominate - What are our key goals for the quarter? What are our 5 key tactics to get us there? How will we implement? What is your next step?

Sound familiar? There is nothing wrong with defining the what + how’s of course, but they will fall flat without clear “why’s” attached to them. The why of a project, or strategic direction of a business provides us all with motivation and fuel. As famous “why guy” Simon Sinek says in his book, Start with Why...

## WHAT IS THE VALUE OF “STARTING WITH WHY?”

*“Very few people or companies can clearly articulate WHY they do WHAT they do. By WHY I mean your purpose, cause or belief - WHY does your company exist? WHY do you get out of bed every morning? And WHY should anyone care?”*

There are extrinsic and intrinsic “why’s.” Extrinsic (external) motivators like money and recognition for a job well done are important, although fleeting and unsustainable as motivators of performance. Intrinsic (internal) motivators are far more important. But let’s take it to the next steps - one of the “secret sauces” we have learned in creating an engaged culture is to link intrinsic individual motivators with intrinsic collective motivators – to tap into the power of why on an organizational level. Let’s explore “the power of why” in the context of organizations as a whole as we believe it is one of the most under-leveraged ways to unleash motivation in business today.



## EXAMPLES OF PURPOSE STATEMENTS IN GREAT ORGANIZATIONS

At 1-degree, one of our core offerings is helping organizations shape “their organizational purpose.” We have found that by doing this “why work” collectively, it drives alignment & engagement & positive energy! What is our definition of a purpose statement? **A purpose statement must be a short, definitive & memorable statement that captures the difference your organization wants to make in the world.** Here are three purpose-driven leaders and their purpose statements (source – *Conscious Capitalism*, John Mackey, Raj Sisodia):



TO USE OUR IMAGINATIONS  
TO BRING HAPPINESS  
TO MILLIONS



TO ALLEVIATE  
PAIN & SUFFERING



TO GIVE PEOPLE  
THE FREEDOM TO FLY

Why are these great examples of purpose statements?

**FIRST, they are all SHORT.** These world class why/purpose statements are all 10 words or less! As we all know, short and succinct makes it easier to remember...

**SECOND, they all TAP INTO A BIGGER IDEA** – “using imaginations,” “alleviate pain and suffering” or “giving people the freedom to fly” – all these are bigger, more universal intentions of making a difference to our world. How would you feel as an employee if you worked at Disney and a manager said something like, “could you do a little more of x please as that will help us continue to bring happiness to millions of people...!” If shared in a positive and encouraging tone, I would shift my behaviour pretty quickly!

**THIRD, they all RELATE TO THEIR CORE BUSINESS,** but are not mission statements (a mission statement captures what business you are in, work you are doing)

The second reason may be the most important one of all as it enables us as leaders to shift the conversation from the “what” to the “why” and therefore taps into a deeper, more meaningful energy.

# 5 TIPS FOR CRAFTING PURPOSE STATEMENTS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION



HERE ARE 5 TIPS THAT WE HOPE CAN EITHER HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION CRAFT A COMPELLING PURPOSE STATEMENT, OR IMPROVE YOUR EXISTING ONE:

## 1 MAKE ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE STATEMENTS SHORT

By short, we mean 12 words or less. 10 or less is better, but we aren't all Walt Disney! We'll give you a couple words to play with. Too many statements are too long and clunky, so can't be remembered.

## 2 SHAPE PURPOSE STATEMENTS COLLECTIVELY

Too often purpose statements are "cooked up" by founding entrepreneurs and not communicated properly. As a founding entrepreneur of a successful business myself, I have fallen into this trap. In 2000, I founded a great company, Fusion Learning ([www.fusionlearninginc.com](http://www.fusionlearninginc.com)) which continues to operate successfully. The why/purpose statement I crafted in 2000 was, "be the defacto leading sales learning business in Canada within 10 years."

12 words or less – *check*.

It also related directly to our core business of business to business sales training – *check*.

What was I missing? It didn't tap into a "bigger idea" beyond ourselves. As a (young and inexperienced!) founding entrepreneur, I missed out on many opportunities to explore with the team WHY this was important to us and to craft a meaningful purpose statement collectively. We had ourselves a great mission statement, but it was not a purpose statement.

*by Tim Magwood on behalf of the 1-degree team*

## 3 AVOID "MOTHERHOOD & APPLE PIE" LANGUAGE

I come from a traditional (and at times too "hands on"!) family. Motherhood is the most important "job" in the world and I love pie of any kind. When crafting purpose statements, we want to avoid "motherhood & apple pie" or "same old, same old" language. Purpose statements should be:

- Authentic (use real words vs "corporate speak")
- Meaningful – the words have resonance with a large group of people
- "Sticky" – language that is sticky & memorable (ie. I find it easy to remember Southwest vision of "to give people the freedom to fly"

## 4 INTEGRATE PURPOSE STATEMENTS/INTENTIONS INTO STRATEGY

Strategy is about being clear & aligned about key choices, business advantage and direction. Purpose statements should inform and be integrated with strategy development.

## 5 WEAVE PURPOSE STATEMENT & ITS INTENTION INTO EVERYTHING YOU DO

Too often a purpose statement is a lovely static statement, that exists in the annual report, on the web site and on a poster in the office only. Defining and sharing the purpose statement is important, but not nearly enough. Most importantly, as leaders, we need to weave the intention and the meaning of the purpose into everything we do like strategic choices, key hires, and investment decisions. To start, ensure everyone knows the purpose statement by heart, can communicate what it means to them and can relate it to some of their own personal motivations.

## 1-DEGREE VISION

At 1-degree our vision is to help business be the most powerful force for good on our planet. We do that by: helping you to build a clear & differentiated strategy; ensuring your culture accelerates vs sabotages the plan; aligning systems for optimizing performance & efficiency; and shaping your leaders to understand their role in energizing execution.



If you are inspired to "unleash the power of why" within your workplace... email: [info@1-degree.ca](mailto:info@1-degree.ca)

[www.1-degree.ca](http://www.1-degree.ca)