



GROUND RULES FOR CREATING A TEAM **WHY**

Different management books and consultants love to debate and advocate for the meaning and distinction between various words "Purpose," "Vision," and "Mission." Some people swear by these, but I have never found the distinctions to be helpful as they vary so widely depending on who is using them.

One axiom drives my thinking on this subject- simplicity is king. Establishing a clear Vision is an essential aspect of leadership, but it represents only about 1% of the solution, the real challenge is making that Vision live in the organization. In my experience, the simpler a Vision is, the more likely it is to live.

That's why I prefer the simplicity of WHY (popularized by Simon Sinek). In corporate settings I use WHY, Purpose, and Vision interchangeably. The bottom line is, the frontline person furthest away from the CEO has to be able to get it. And I don't mean 'recite' it. I mean they need to embody it. We'll get to that later.

One other suggestion is to make a clear separation between "business goals" or "objectives" from your WHY or purpose. We will discuss how to do goal setting in a later module.

DEVELOPING A GROUP WHY

First, developing a Group WHY is a different process with the same outcome as the Personal WHY. A group could be a department, a team within a department, or an entire company. If you are a business owner or founder, your company WHY should be heavily informed by your Personal WHY, but it will not be the same thing.

Your company WHY needs to have enough clarity and simplicity to inspire, but flexible enough for people on the team to find their way into it. Group WHY's can be articulated in a variety of ways, but for simplicity, we will use the same formula as the Personal WHY.

To [YOUR CONTRIBUTION] so that [YOUR INTENDED IMPACT].

As a reminder you can see how my personal WHY and my company WHY are related, but distinct. No one else has to share my personal WHY, but my entire team needs to feel connection to the company WHY.

My Personal WHY is:

*To be a catalyst in people's development
so that they may live their deepest purpose.*

The Lantern Consulting WHY:

*To awaken the highest potential in leaders so they
can cultivate organizations that are good for people and the world.*

WHY A GROUP WHY MATTERS:

Costco and Sam's Club are competitors. Costco has a clearly defined purpose to put people first. They have held firmly to their vision in ways that the Walmart owned Sam's Club has struggled to maintain. When the founder of Walmart, Sam Walton died the board that remained didn't have a clear sense of WHY beyond making money.

This fact had an impact on performance. If you bought stock in Walmart the day Sam Walton died, today you would have seen a return of 300%, this is not bad. But if you had invested in Costco on that same day, today you would an 800% return. That is the difference a WHY can make.

SAMPLE COMPANY WHY'S:

Here are a few examples from companies that have a strong and well-articulated WHY. You'll notice these don't all follow the formula, and they don't need to be effective or powerful.

Southwest Airlines:

To connect people to what's important in their lives through friendly, reliable, low-cost air travel.

Herman Miller: *Furniture manufacturer*

Inspiring designs to help people do great things.

Wolff Olins: *Global branding agency*

To help people make organizations desirable and good.

Aspen Heights Partners: *Real Estate Development Company*

We exist to cultivate human potential and add value to the world by creating and managing spaces where people live connect and learn.

THE GROUND RULES OF A GROUP WHY:

- 1) No matter what your industry in the market, role, or function in the organization, your WHY will somehow serve people. It is not the case that some industries do (i.e. non-profit, medical, etc.) and others don't (i.e. accounting, paper maker, etc.). Every function and every organization has a deeply human higher purpose. Your job is to discover it.
- 2) Your WHY isn't to make money, it will always involve a higher purpose.
- 3) Your group or company WHY has nothing to do with market research or customer needs and wants. Those things have a powerful place in your WHAT. But your WHY originates from you and your team.
- 4) Don't get too caught up in semantic debates, this is about evoking a general feeling that connects for most people.
- 5) Your WHY will need to be consistent with your product or service in some way.