

# update

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Enthum Newsletter

Issue No 9 - February 2010

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## dear friends & colleagues,

Welcome to **Update**, our regular newsletter. We value our connection with you and hope you find this edition interesting.

### Is Your Strategy Sustainable

*Focussing on the big picture - Hussein Dickie*

Business leaders often tell us they have really energising strategy meetings where everyone leaves feeling motivated, but some weeks later the momentum has fizzled. People go back to default behaviour, and nothing much changes.

This will be a familiar pattern for companies without clear guiding principals that define their purpose. What is missing is a big picture strategy that everyone can identify with.

Focussing on strategy means changing the way people work in an organisation. At the leadership level, it is about empowering teams and individuals to perform and to take ownership of their successes and failures. It is about understanding that every member of the team has a sphere of control and a sphere of influence, requiring leadership and accountability. For the owner managers, it is also about relinquishing control; confidently allowing others to perform their roles, and so creating the space to attend to the things that owner managers need to deal with.

A good strategy always starts with the big picture; the purpose, or **mission**, the **values** and the **vision**. It is vital to have wide participation in developing these big themes –they become the source of energy that gives action meaning and direction. Staff need to be part of the process if they are to see themselves in the outcome, and genuinely live the company's purpose on a daily basis.

The **mission** is the company's justification for its existence. Its **values** define how its people behave or go about fulfilling this mission. These two core and timeless conditions are the foundation on which a **vision** is built; a big audacious goal that is to be achieved at some defined point in time. Corporations spend much time and money to get those cornerstones right, they are key to the development of a companies strategy.

Two examples of familiar corporations demonstrate the value of expressing these big ideas. And it's no different for smaller companies. Without them, business owners alone hold the big picture and represent the values of the company.



Walt Disney's Mission Statement is: *To make people happy*

The values are:

- *No cynicism*
- *Nurturing and promulgation of 'wholesome American values'*
- *Creativity, dream, and imagination*
- *Fanatic attention to consistency and detail preservation and control of the Disney magic*

The values describe the behaviours that matter to them and are core to achieving the mission. Disney attracts people who share these values right from the start. This alignment is the prerequisite for a cohesive strategy.

A mission statement has to be real and authentic. Nike's Mission Statement is: *To experience the emotion of competition, winning and crushing competitors*. While not pretty, this statement is lived and real, consistent with Nike's corporate identity. Everything about Nike is competitive, from their colours to their advertising and their product strategy.

Next in the hierarchy of company statements is the **vision**. The vision must align with the mission, and be time bound. It is a big challenging goal, which stands a realistic chance of being achieved. For Nike in 1960, their long-term vision was: *To crush Adidas*. (They meanwhile gained world dominance in every segment except football, where Adidas still remains No. 1).

These big statements are not just platitudes, as often regarded when hung on the wall in the reception. There is much effort spent developing and shaping them. They are not superimposed, they are at the core of what a company stands for, and how the people feel and behave. This is how alignment of a workforce is developed and maintained.

Once the **mission**, the **values** and the **vision** has been established, the executive team can work on the strategy that will deliver the vision. There are many ways of doing this, but a holistic, participatory approach will deliver the most appropriate objectives. Dedicated teams or individuals can then take away the relevant objectives, and work on the action plans and metrics that will feed back into the strategy map.

Making strategy work is not a one-time event. It needs managers to constantly re-establish strategic focus until people's minds have developed new neural pathways, only then change can be lasting.

Clarifying the mission, vision and values gives direction to every organisation, no matter how small. We recently worked through this process with a charity, Living Well, Dying Well.

### ***Founder and Director, Hermione Elliott writes;***

*Living Well, Dying Well is a small charity with a big vision. To address the development and growth of the business in a more coherent way, we needed to get the vision out of my head into a form that could be easily grasped by others and importantly, provide a map so that we could more accurately chart our course.*

*Hussein took us on a very satisfying journey, to achieve both. There was something thrilling about the process of honing our language until we were able to encapsulate our Purpose - with a moment of satisfaction - 'Yes!' Then, equally moving, we dug deep to identify what is really important to us, so that we could sum up the values that hold us and keep us operating in our integrity.*

*Interestingly while on the surface this might appear to be an academic exercise, we found it profoundly important. It became clear that our purpose and values are at the heart of what we are and what we do, they sound a note; send a message that goes out and gets picked up in the world. It has given us a feeling of solidity on which to build and real confidence in ourselves as we communicate with others about the project.*

*Creating our strategy map was a revelation. I am not a natural strategic thinker - I would never have thought business planning could be such a treat. We have ended up with a clear*

*understanding of our objectives, and in the midst of the complexity of our business, a sense of the priorities and direction.*

*We have moved from trying to figure out when to act and what comes first - "is this a chicken, or an egg?" - to having our ducks all in a row!*

**The LWDW Mission:**

Supporting confidence and choice on the journey through life and death.

**The Values:**

- Plan Well –but trust in the not knowing
- Being accountable is at the heart of our practice
- Being present, authentic and grounded in the moment
- Respecting the uniqueness of each life journey
- Being attentive to the material and spiritual.

**Interesting finds we like to share:**

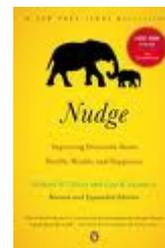
While not directly to strategy, this book provides great insights into effective decision making.

[Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness](#)

By Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein

ISBN 978-0143115267

A wonderful read, this book explains how we think and make choices; from what we eat, to how we invest, to how government policy shapes public choices. Considered an inalienable human right, choice is anything but simple. Having choice doesn't mean we automatically take the option we consider *best*. So how can we help ourselves make better choices? And how can we nudge others to choose positives such driving safely and wasting less? Nudge will change the way you think about the world, and yourself.



All best wishes,

**the Enthum Team**



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