

Personal Impact Maps

Chart the Course to a Shared Vision

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By Brad Hill, CCP, and Christine Tande, CCP, Hay Group

Creating a vision is easy. Creating a *shared* vision is what differentiates good leaders from great leaders. No matter how eloquent the vision, if employees cannot translate it into what it means to them personally, the impact is minimal. Connecting employees to organizational success requires an understanding of three things:

- The organization's vision
- What employees do in the organization for a living
- How the second bullet point results in a contribution to the first bullet point.

The ability to provide employees with a personal connection to the business can make an enormous difference in how they view their work and approach their daily activities, and it all depends on whether leadership has a vision or a *shared* vision.

To share it, management can take the organization's vision and divide it into factors, sub-factors and actions that employees can relate to, thus creating a "personal impact map." When complete, the map enables employees to identify how the activities they perform contribute to the organization's overall vision. Personally connecting employees to the

organization's vision will provide each with a deeper sense of purpose, and make their work more meaningful and perhaps create a more motivated, productive and loyal work force.

Developing a personal impact map is relatively straightforward. It takes about a day's time from the full executive team and two days' time from several cross-functional manager teams. The following process outlines key activities in creating a personal impact map, and a shared vision.

Getting Started

Developing a personal impact map is a five-step process, with each step requiring a three- to four-hour commitment. (See Figure 1 on page 40.) The full executive team typically undertakes the first two steps, and the next three steps are performed by select "strategic strength" teams (cross-functional management teams selected by leadership for each strategic strength). A trained (internal or external) facilitator can help create understanding and focus, move the discussions forward, help find conclusions and, most importantly, build consensus.

Step 1: Articulate the Organizational Vision

The first step in developing a personal impact map is to develop a vision statement. An organization's vision should be a compelling statement that reflects the outer reaches of leadership's aspirations and rallies employees to a specific cause. In developing the vision statement, consider:

- What do we want to achieve?
- How do we dream of success?
- How do we want the world to be different?

(Note: If the organization already has a vision statement, move to Step 2.)

The full executive team should develop the organizational vision during a

QUICK LOOK

- ⇒ The ability to provide employees with a personal connection to the business can make a difference in how they view their work and approach their daily activities.
- ⇒ Personally connecting employees to the organization's vision provides each with a sense of purpose, and makes work more meaningful.
- ⇒ By following a five-step process, employees will be on their way to making the organization a success.

structured session, about three hours in length. The outcome should be a brief yet inspiring statement (one or two sentences). Before the meeting, it is worthwhile for each member to independently put some thought into the statement. Examples of effective vision statements include:

- “To have a Coca-Cola within arm’s reach of everyone in the world.” — Coca-Cola
- “To empower people through great software at any time and any place, on any device.” — Microsoft
- “To enliven the senses, instill well-being and fulfill even the unexpected wishes and needs of our guests.” — Ritz Carlton
- “To open the skies up to ordinary people.” — Southwest Airlines

Step 2: Identify Strategic Strengths

Strategic strengths are the areas that the organization must capitalize on, or develop, to achieve its vision. If the resources and capabilities required to produce these strengths are not harnessed and deployed, then the vision will not come to fruition. As the vision will dictate the strategic strengths, this step cannot begin until leadership is confident and passionate about the vision.

Strategic strengths are best defined by the leadership team in a follow-up to the first meeting in Step 1. The second meeting should last no longer than three hours. In this session, leaders focus on the vision and brainstorm all possible areas of strength needed to achieve the vision. From the exhaustive list of possibilities, redundant strengths should be combined or eliminated, and

the list distilled to three to five strategic strengths. Strong consensus should be built around the final selections, and each should have the capacity to be effectively communicated and well understood by all employees.

Examples of strategic strengths include:

- Technical strength
- Operational strength
- Financial strength
- Human resource strength
- Customer relations strength.

Step 3: Define Critical Success Factors

Critical success factors (CSFs) define what must be “done right” to achieve the strategic strengths. CSFs are primarily introspective, assessing what and how an organization musters resources, overcomes barriers and leverages opportunities. Defining CSFs also may be the first step in developing a business strategy.

To select CSFs, the organization should assemble a cross-functional team for each of the strategic strengths identified in Step 2. These strength teams should include a mix of senior and middle management employees. The teams typically will convene four times: They will meet twice to discuss CSFs, once to identify performance drivers and once to outline action areas.

In their first meeting, the strength teams brainstorm and define CSFs. For example, the team might discuss the three or four factors to determine operational strength, such as cost performance, schedule performance, quality, etc.

In the second meeting, the strength teams will develop metrics for each

CSF. Of the several cascading levels defined, CSFs typically provide the best opportunity to tie in organization-wide performance metrics that can be linked to performance management or incentive plans. Example metrics associated with operational strength could be:

- Cost performance measured by margin on cost
- Schedule performance measured by customer contract milestones
- Quality measured by number of post-release externally delivered defects.

Figure 2 on page 41 offers a condensed example of an organization performance scorecard. For a full example, go to www.worldatwork.org/workspan.

Step 4: Identify Performance Drivers

Performance drivers are the key organizational areas and processes that must be improved to support the CSFs. To identify performance drivers, each strength team should meet to brainstorm and select three to four performance drivers for each CSF. Good drivers affirmatively respond to the following questions:

- Is improvement in this area possible?
- Will improvement make a noticeable business impact?
- Does the driver reinforce today’s business message?
- Is the behavior change that drives improvement desirable?

Sample performance drivers for a cash flow CSF could be balance sheet management and capital spending. Figure 3 on page 42 provides a condensed sample personal impact

FIGURE 1: FIVE STEPS TO DEVELOPING A PERSONAL IMPACT MAP



map. To see a complete personal impact map, go to www.worldatwork.org/workspan.

Step 5: Outline Action Areas

Action areas are the tangible, tactical areas under employee control that can enhance performance driver success. The proper definition of the action areas is essential to employees' understanding and embracing their roles in carrying out the vision.

Action areas may be articulated at the department, unit or individual level. In its final meeting, the strength team should draft sample action areas. This list will not be exhaustive and should be viewed as a starting point, to be supplemented by more informal employee/manager discussions. While the strength team defines organization-wide metrics at the CSF level, managers should consider defining metrics for themselves and their employees at the action-area level.

The key to developing a personal impact map is keeping the thought process linear. Other tools to educate employees, such as strategy maps and learning maps, tend to resemble broad-based relational maps of Disney World, highlighting where all the rides are. The goal here is to develop a step-by-step roadmap that takes the employee on a trip from their job to the organization's vision as quickly and directly as possible.

By-products of the Personal Impact Map

After the personal impact map is complete, a framework will be constructed to effectively tie together many existing messages and programs. Associating the vision with key organizational programs is a powerful way to make both more meaningful, thereby achieving buy-in and support. Following are areas that can be enhanced by the personal impact map.

Business Strategy

If elements of a business strategy already are in place, they should be referenced throughout the development of the map. The process of articulating a vision, identifying strategic strengths and defining CSFs may help refine the strategy and provide tools to formally explain what that strategy really means to each employee.

Organization Performance Scorecard

The critical success factors and their associated metrics will provide an effective scorecard of organizational health. Figure 2 offers a sample of how part of a scorecard might look, and how it can provide high-level communications about, say, monthly performance.

Employee Orientation

Many newly hired employees are rushed quickly to their new workstations, where they receive minimal training and are overwhelmed with the tactical requirements of the job. Rarely are new employees given a high-level explanation of their position's role and how it contributes to the business' success. Providing dignity and respect to every position, every day, is a lofty goal. The

personal impact map presents an opportunity to provide the new employee with a sense of purpose.

Performance Management

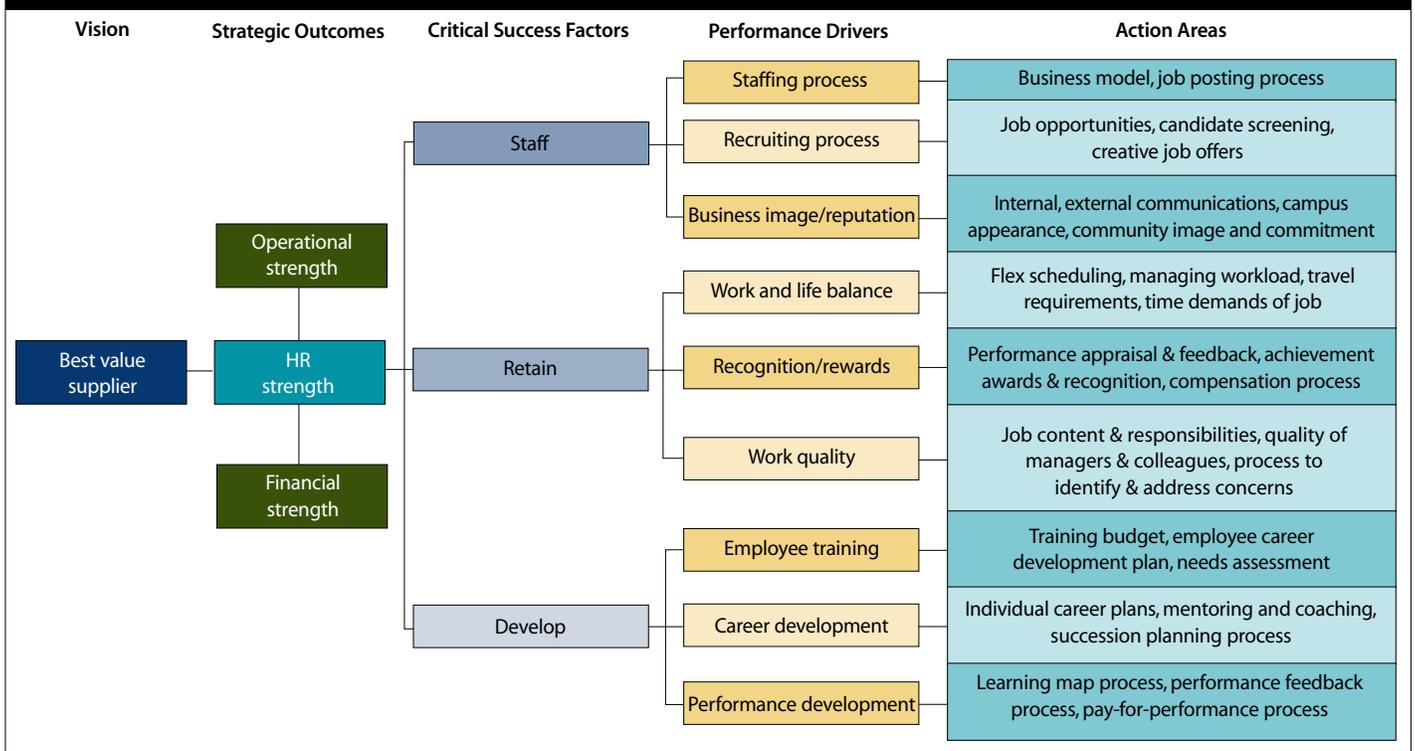
The key to effective performance management is to operationalize performance. Recently, a *Fortune* 500 defense contractor used the personal impact map as the cornerstone of its performance management program. Following are guidelines the company provided to managers to help them set goals with employees:

- Explain the vision, strengths and personal impact map process.
- Outline the critical success factors.
- Explore where the employee believes he or she can impact strategic strength by identifying the CSFs to which the employee can most contribute.
- Ensure that the selected CSFs match with others within the team/department.
- Use the performance drivers and action areas to demonstrate line of sight between actions/initiatives and CSFs.
- Discuss with the employee his/her suggestions for individual goals/objectives that will affect selected CSFs.

FIGURE 2: ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

HR Strength				
CSF	Measure	Goal	Score	Explanation of Score
Staff	Business staffing needs	Fill 90% of staffing needs within 45 days of approval to hire	C+	Although actual January performance suggests a 30-day elapsed cycle time for new starts, both the quantity and quality of résumés currently coming into the business indicates a major upcoming issue.
Retain	Retention rate	95% work force retention rate	A	The key retention rate indices for engineering as reported in the January President's Metrics was 98%, about 2 percentage points better than the CY2002 average. Software engineering retention was at 93%. Overall, the business exceeded the 95% goal.
Develop	Training and development plan for every employee	100% execution	B+	There was significant progress toward this goal of having a training and development plan for each employee. HR has developed a form that is being distributed to the functions. We remain on track to meet our March 31, 2004, deadline for execution.

FIGURE 3: SAMPLE PERSONAL IMPACT MAP



- Clarify meaning and intent to ensure that both parties understand how/why the selected objectives will help achieve a particular CSF.
- Discuss and agree to both an appropriate measure and target for each goal.
- Gain understanding and agreement on priorities.
- Brainstorm with the employee about the behavioral competencies that are required to meet the goals. Explore areas for behavioral development.

Incentive Plans

The cascading factors of the map provide a useful tool to identify incentive plan factors for departments and employees at all levels of the organization. The linear nature of the map helps to ensure that all factors play a role in overall success. Starting with the map may help managers avoid setting subjective or conflicting goals. Organizations such as Ace Hardware, Goodrich, Verizon and the United States Mint have aligned employees to the vision with personal impact maps and broad-based incentives.

New Programs/Initiatives

Every organization has, at one time or another, embarked on a new program or initiative that worked wonders at an executive’s former employer, or that sounded very promising at the latest trade conference. Yet, many of these programs fail and create discouraged, skeptical employees. The personal impact map can serve as a tool to assess whether a new program will fit with the overall direction of the organization and how it will help build needed strengths and complement existing programs.

vi . sion (vizh’ en): n. an idea perceived vividly in the imagination

For a vision to have impact, it must be perceived vividly in the imagination of all employees, not just those who create it. An inspirational vision has the potential to move the work force to higher levels of stability and productivity if employees understand what it means to them. Though an admirable end in itself, this deeper sense of purpose can

create a more motivated, productive and loyal work force that is more likely to put a higher level of discretionary effort into helping the organization succeed. 

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⇒ Type in this key word string on the search line: “Company vision” OR “Organizational vision” OR “Critical success factors.”