

PROJECT VISION ALIGNMENT

CULTURE IN ACTION

A toolkit from  stoked

ONE OF OUR ROLES AS LEADERS IS TO MANAGE TENSION.

We are asked to:

- have a long-term focus, but optimize tomorrow
- cater to our customers, but may have business priorities that conflict with individual desires
- innovate, but let our bread and butter hum

Innovation projects are, arguably, the most ripe terrain for navigating tension. It is our role as leaders to guide the team through ambiguous work. At the start of these projects (one whose outcome is ill-defined and has to do with the complexity of human decision-making and behavior), **try using a project vision alignment tool to facilitate alignment with your team.** This tool is great for kicking off a project or reorienting the team to a clear vision for success mid-project if confusion creeps in.

Here's how:

Schedule a one-hour call with the project team. Let them know this time is to identify an ideal outcome for the work, a clear vision for success, and how to assess the current state.

Take 10 minutes to settle into the call. Ask everyone for one word highlighting how they're feeling coming in. Share your intentions for this time. State the project focus. The team will hone and clarify it. For example, *"Supercharge our team's soft skills. They need to better relate to our customers."*

Take 10 minutes to brainstorm *"Wouldn't it be great if (WIBGI)..."* questions related to the challenge; i.e., WIBGI feedback wasn't scary but something we leaned into, WIBGI team members asked for help early and often, and WIBGI everyone had a personalized development path they were excited about.

Take 10 minutes to cluster similar statements and give each cluster a name, i.e. *How we empower our people, Alignment around clear work targets*

Take 10 minutes to transform these category names into criteria questions that can guide your team's decision-making. For example, *Will it empower our people? Will it clarify our work targets?*

For the remaining 20 minutes, read out these criteria and determine moments in the project plan to revisit them to ensure the team is on the right track.

01

GET STARTED

Write down your organization or department vision statement.

Vision Statement

02

FLAIR

Consider your challenge. Cast out into the preferred, ideal future. Generate as many statements as you can, beginning with “Wouldn’t it be great if...” (WIBGI).

Pro tip: Great “WIBGI” questions are aspirational, bold, and positively framed.

03

FOCUS

Review the WIBGI statements, cluster similar ideas, and identify high-level themes. Get to the essence—what is this cluster really about?

04

REFRAME

Transform each high level theme into a question starting with Can It...Does it...Will it...?

Pro tip: Criteria questions can only be answered with a “yes” or “no”.

They assess ideas/solutions to help determine if you’re on the right path to meet your goals.

05

RECONSIDER

Are you pursuing the right path when you apply these criteria for selection and can answer “yes” to all?

TOOL TIPS

This tool is...

a guide to identify an ideal outcome, resulting in a clear vision for success and how to measure it.

This tool is best used as...

a way to kick off a team project OR to refocus a team that is misaligned in the midst of a project.

This tool is not recommended for..

short meetings or time pressured discussions. This tool requires some divergent and convergent thinking which need time and thoughtfulness.