

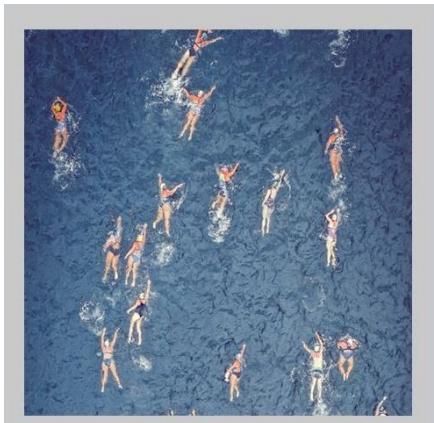
Do you ever secretly wonder why you really need a strategy? The business gurus all say you should have one. But come on, you know what you want to accomplish, just jump in and get it done! Why go through the effort to gather the team, hash through it all, get something written down, then keep revisiting it in meeting after meeting all year?

You may get a measure of success by just throwing the team in the lake and saying, "swim that way!". They're likely to move in the general direction you pointed. But it takes more if you want the level of success that comes from everyone rowing together at the same time toward the same objectives.

Here are three C's that you'll get from a well-crafted and well-executed strategic process...

Clarity

If you think that having it clear in your own head is all it takes for success, you better be ready to achieve it all on your own. As soon as you add another person, your profound words articulating your objectives get muddied. Add another person and triple the depth of the mud. We all bring different perspectives, different values, and even different meanings to the words we hear. It's takes two-way conversations to create a truly *shared vision* of where we want to go.



Commitment

You probably know this from your own experience. When a boss told you what to do, they probably got your *compliance*. But your attitude and effort were much different when they explained why, asked for your input, and let you participate in deciding how to move forward. You wanted to see any plan that included your ideas succeed. You moved beyond *compliance* and gave them the energy that only comes with *commitment*.



Collaboration

Strong *commitment* with *clarity* around a shared objective sets the stage for powerful *collaboration*. When we're all after the same thing and have a shared understanding of what it takes to get there, we know that our own success is dependent on others' success. It makes it easy for a good leader to shift the culture from finger-pointing toward those who are struggling to a readiness to jump in and help wherever needed to move us forward together.

The Caveat

You've probably heard it said that "culture eats strategy for breakfast". It's true. Culture can be the anchor weighing down a great strategy or the propeller that pushes it ahead. Perhaps the greatest value of a well-crafted process for creating and executing strategy is the opportunity it creates to shape your organization's culture. When your culture is built with clarity, commitment, and collaboration woven into its DNA, the synergy between culture and strategy is intense. If the 3 C's are missing, your strategic process can help create them.