



Discover *how* your organisation will succeed

— Simon Sinek's golden circle model shows how important it is for any organisation to be clear about its *why*, *how* and *what*. We explain the most abstract element, the *how*.

In [Simon Sinek's TED Talk](#) and book *Start With Why*, he explains the three elements of his golden circle model, *why*, *how* and *what*. *Why* an organisation exists, *how* it will succeed in fulfilling its purpose and *what* activities it undertakes. In his book [The Advantage](#), Patrick Lencioni also identifies the importance of organisations being clear on *how* they will succeed. In our experience, this concept of *how* is the most difficult one to explain to our teams.

How can be thought of as an organisation's strategies for success, which it uses to differentiate itself from its competitors or peers, and against which all decisions can be tested for alignment with an organisation's *why*.

The *how* is neither an organisation's core purpose (i.e. its *why*) or a list of tasks and processes that it must complete (i.e. its *what*). Instead, *how* bridges between the two and is an organisation's plan of attack for delivering on its mission (or *why*) and, over the course of time, its vision.

The concept of *how* is best articulated through examples. For the first one, think of two airlines: one a full-service airline and the other a budget airline. They might conceivably share the same *why* (e.g. something like 'to unite family, friends and colleagues across the country') and a similar *what* (e.g. operating aircraft, customer service, marketing, ticketing, maintenance, scheduling etc.), but *how* they succeed will be very different.

FULL-SERVICE AIRLINE

BUDGET AIRLINE

Why we exist: To unite family, friends and colleagues across the country

How we will succeed:

- Offer a superior product across economy, premium economy, business and first class, so that we can cater to the varied needs of our customers
- Maintain a network of limousines, landside lounges and facilities that maximise our premium customers' door to door journey experience
- Connect cities through primary airports at peak hour, to provide customers with the most convenient connection options available

How we will succeed:

- Keep costs and margins low in everything we do, so we can deliver the lowest ticket prices in the market
- Focus first on our employees and ensure they're happy: when we look after them, they look after our customers
- Connect cities through secondary airports, where fees and congestion are lower: allowing us to quickly turn our planes around at the lowest cost



Examples

The following is a list of examples of *how* strategies that we have collected from authors and teams or developed ourselves. By familiarising yourself with the list, you will start to see the pattern and understand the ways in which the *how* can be distinguished from both the *why* and the *what*.

- Apple (from Simon Sinek's book, *Start With Why*): Make products that are beautifully designed and easy to use
- Sporting goods store (from Patrick Lencioni's book, *The Advantage*): Keep prices low by being frugal whenever we can; create a positive, flexible environment for employees; build local loyalty and become a community destination
- Fresh produce company: Stock the biggest range of high-quality, organic products in the region
- Consulting company: Attract and retain the best people by paying them top of market salaries
- Human resources department: Treat our colleagues as customers and always start with their wants and needs
- Business systems team: Create systems of work that feel like shortcuts
- Local football team: Be the fittest team in the competition and maintain a high tempo that tires other teams out

Tips

- 'How will we succeed?' is one of a series of critical questions that high performing teams must be clear on. We cover this in more detail in our article, [the six questions that every high performing organisation needs to answer](#)
- Our free [Team Alignment Canvas](#) is a simple tool for organisations and teams to create strategic clarity. Based on Patrick Lencioni's six questions, including 'How will we succeed?', the canvas provides a one-page summary that can be easily shared with all members of an organisation or team

About Strategy Field Guide

Strategy Field Guide offers practical wisdom, methods and tools to help anyone create extraordinary clarity and alignment across their organisation

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