

# What is going on at work?



The strategy-led liquid organization

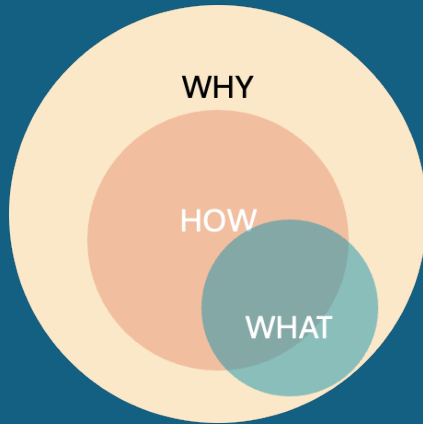


Morten Elvang

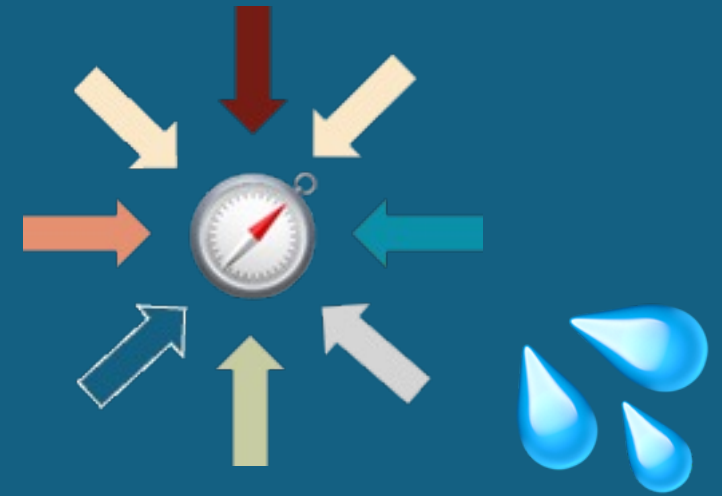
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LPPDE Virtual Summit 2024  
November 14<sup>th</sup>

# Start with “HOW” to absorb and prosper from the unexpected



*Align on aspiration;  
Reconcile on action;  
Keep healthy balance*



## **The lean connection?**

- ➔ Minimize wasted opportunity
- ➔ Manage at a speed you can afford to lose

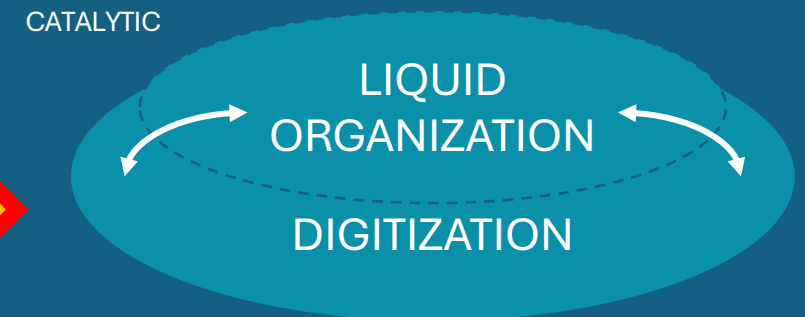
# What is waiting you

- What ... is going on at work  
Room to improve (and innovate)
- So What ... The role of strategy is changing  
Examples of company strategy
- Then What ... How can we stay on strategy  
What is strategy?  
Experience the strategy-led liquid organization

**The battle of the “Future of work” has started.  
PREDICTION: Liquid organizations will win!**



*A catch-22 is a no-win situation where you're trapped by contradictory rules or conditions that prevent a solution.*



# What is going on at work?

**More companies die from  
indigestion than starvation**  
- Bill Hewlett



# What are we trying to achieve?

With  
some  
recent  
additions

## CLASSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Lack of clarity
- Lack of transparency/StratEx gap
- Overload/Work-about-work
- Confusion, no clear idea for how to proceed

## NEW SYMPTOMS

- Change on change
- How to lead up and be heard
- Increasing stakeholder demands (ESG/DEI)
- Need for digitization of work (GenAI/data)

**→ What advice can we offer – and what is the role of strategy in that?**



**>98% TAME**

**<2% UNTAMEABLE**

**VALUE IS IN THE LATTER!**

**WON OR DESTROYED**

**Have you  
met  
Wilma?**



# Room to improve strategy (and innovate products)

- 10% understands
- 15% useful
  
- 50% productive
- 2-3x overload

Weak steer →



← Solid steer



# The role of strategy is changing

# The dominating context for strategy is changing

... less like this

... more like this



Define position  
& show direction

Absorb surprise  
& bring steer

**And with that, the role of strategy is changing too!**

# What do surprises look like

## Bubbles

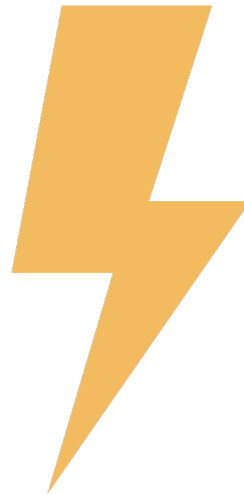
You are in too deep on something unfavorable



Knowable, too easy to ignore

## Sudden shifts

External events – often bad;  
internal tension release



Unknowable, hard to ignore

## New opportunities

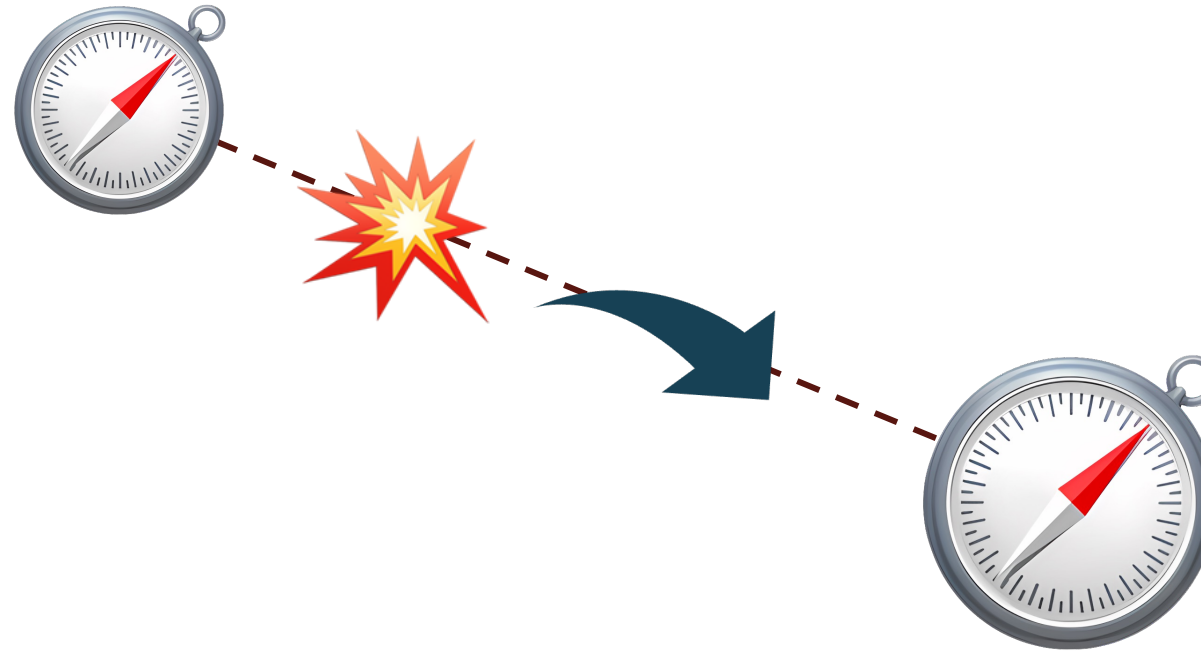
Stroke of serendipity – new information, insight, or a hunch



Unknowable, easy to ignore  
Knowable, once ignored

# Need to realign caused by surprises

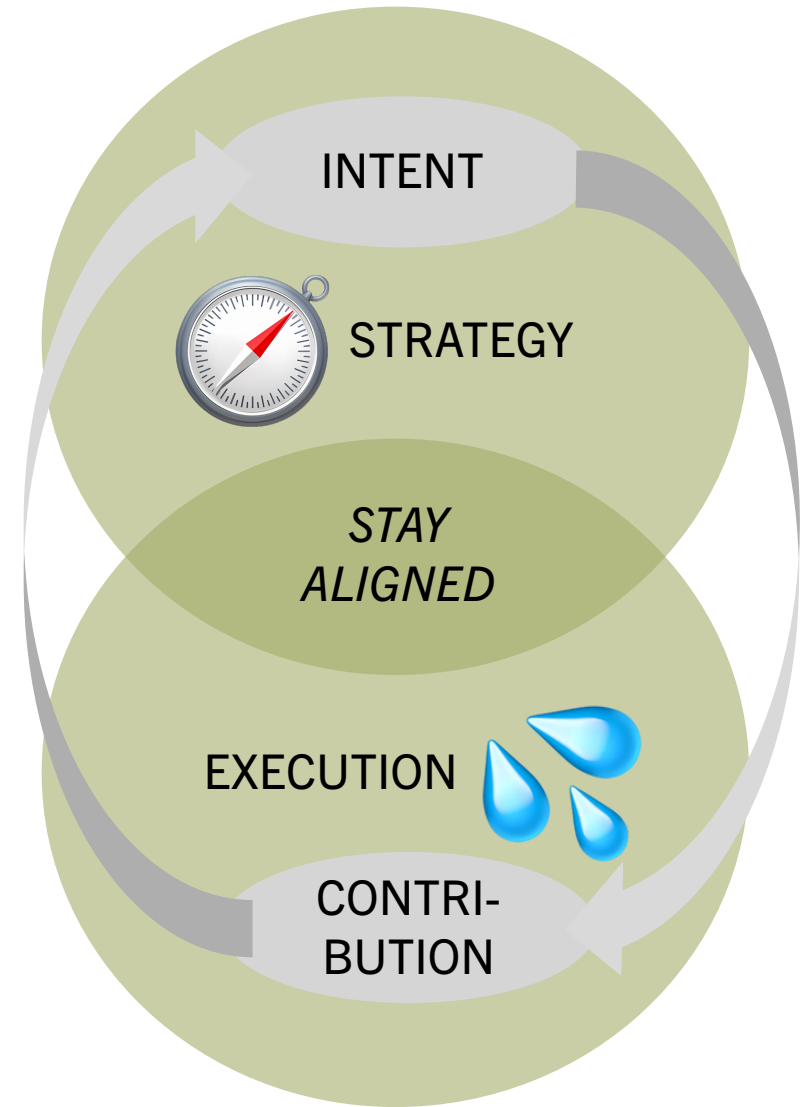
**ALIGN**



**...TO REALIGN**

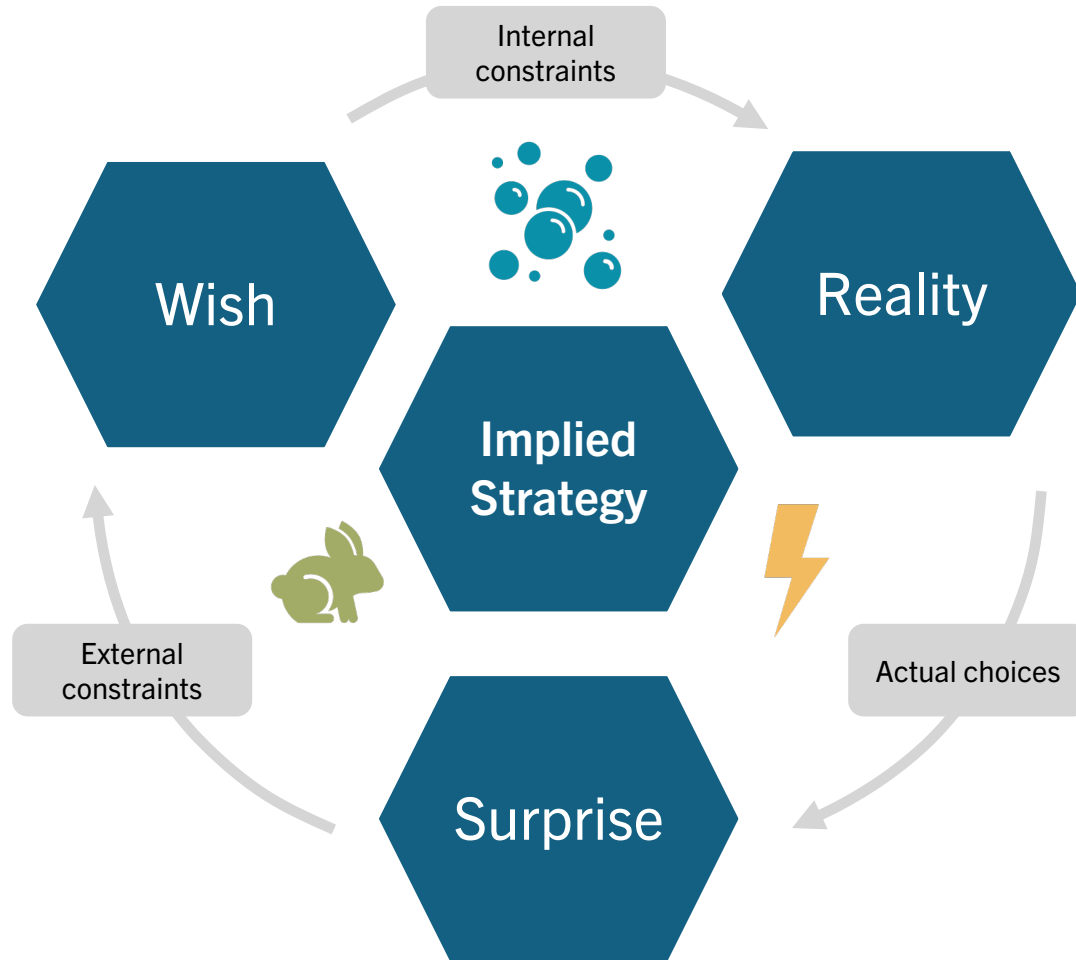
# The new job of strategy

- Practice alignment every day
  - Be aligned to re-align  
*(the alignment paradox)*
  - Mobilize power to change your choices
- ... **to avoid losing opportunity**





# Strategy is a “Wild Problem” \*



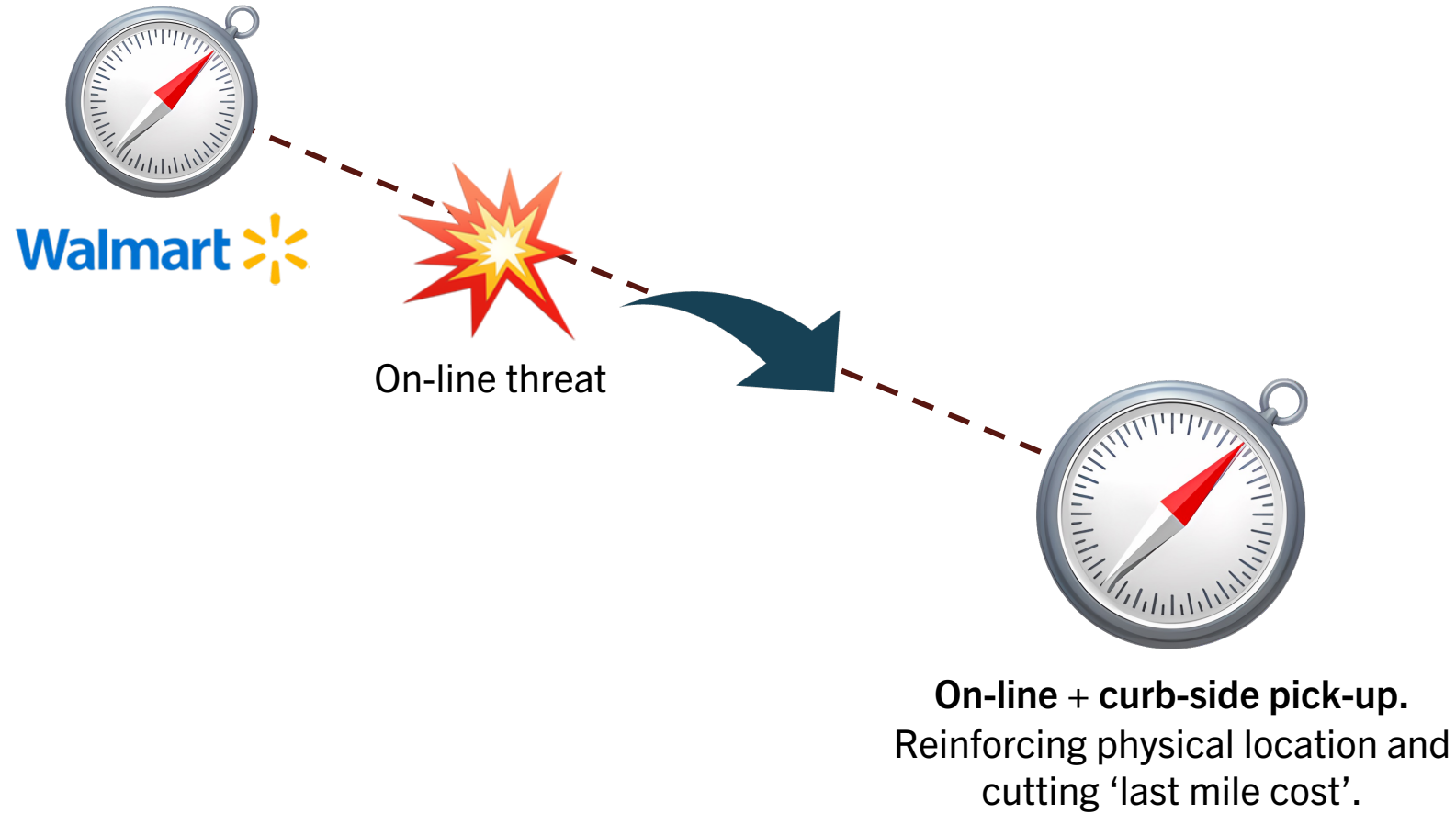
**Leap on a hunch, then  
validate with data!  
Until they confess 😊**

\* Wild problem: A challenge with no single owner, no permanent solution, and no clear path forward. A problem that lives in the grey areas, where choices must be made not just with the mind but with the heart and gut, knowing that every choice shapes the future in unpredictable ways.

# Examples of Implied Strategy

“The best of the adjacent possible”

# Case: Walmart vs Amazon



# Case: Blockbuster vs Netflix – the story retold



## BUT THEN

CALL-TO-ORDER: Activist investor  
short-termism: + new CEO; – New  
strategy (online out; late fees back in).



## IT WORKED

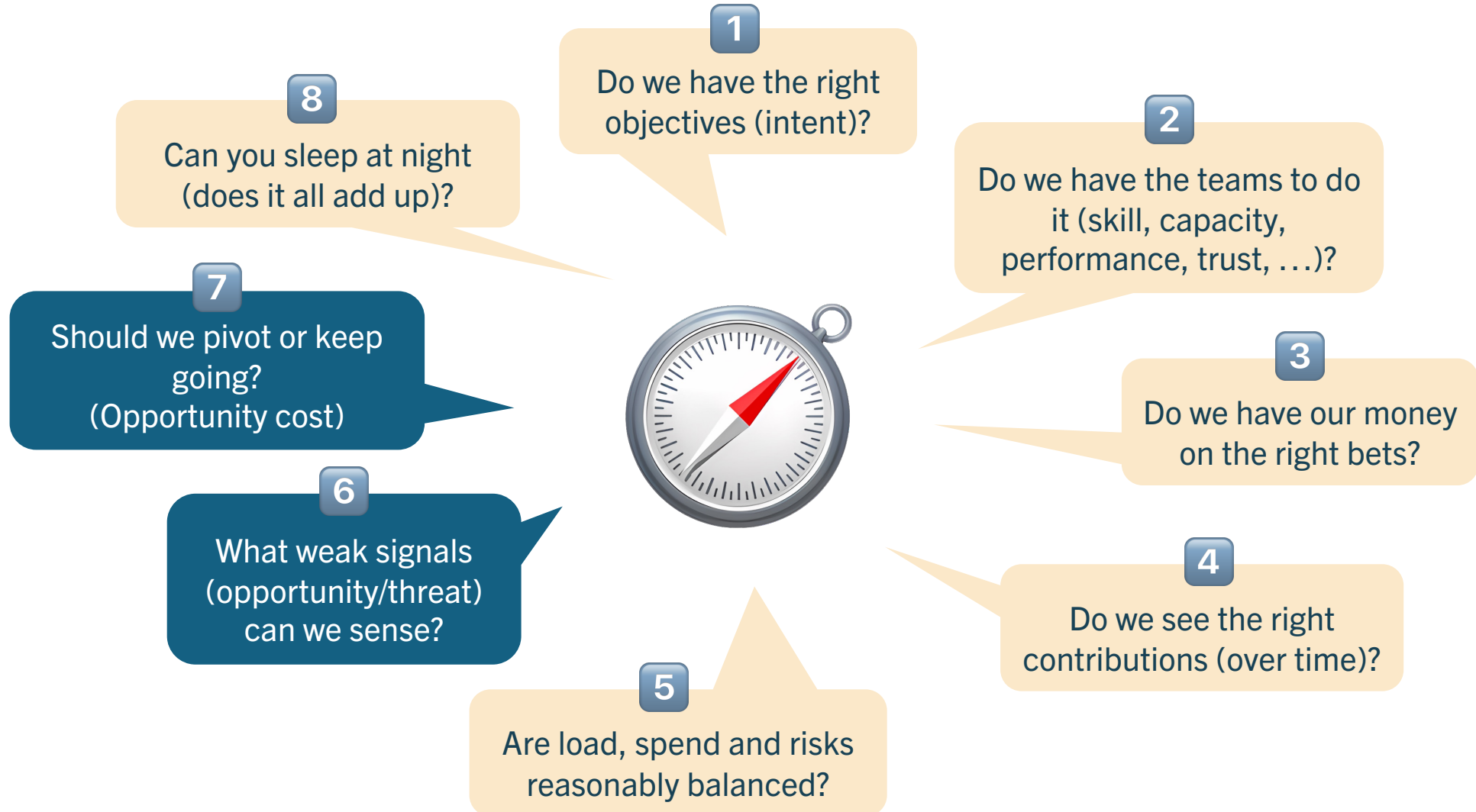
Netflix lost 50K+ subscribers, Blockbuster continued to grow. Netflix's Marc Randolph: "...It was good. It was killing us. They were getting all the new subscribers."

Adjusted strategy to better compete  
... by reinforcing physical location  
with a hybrid in-store and a by-mail  
DVD rental program.

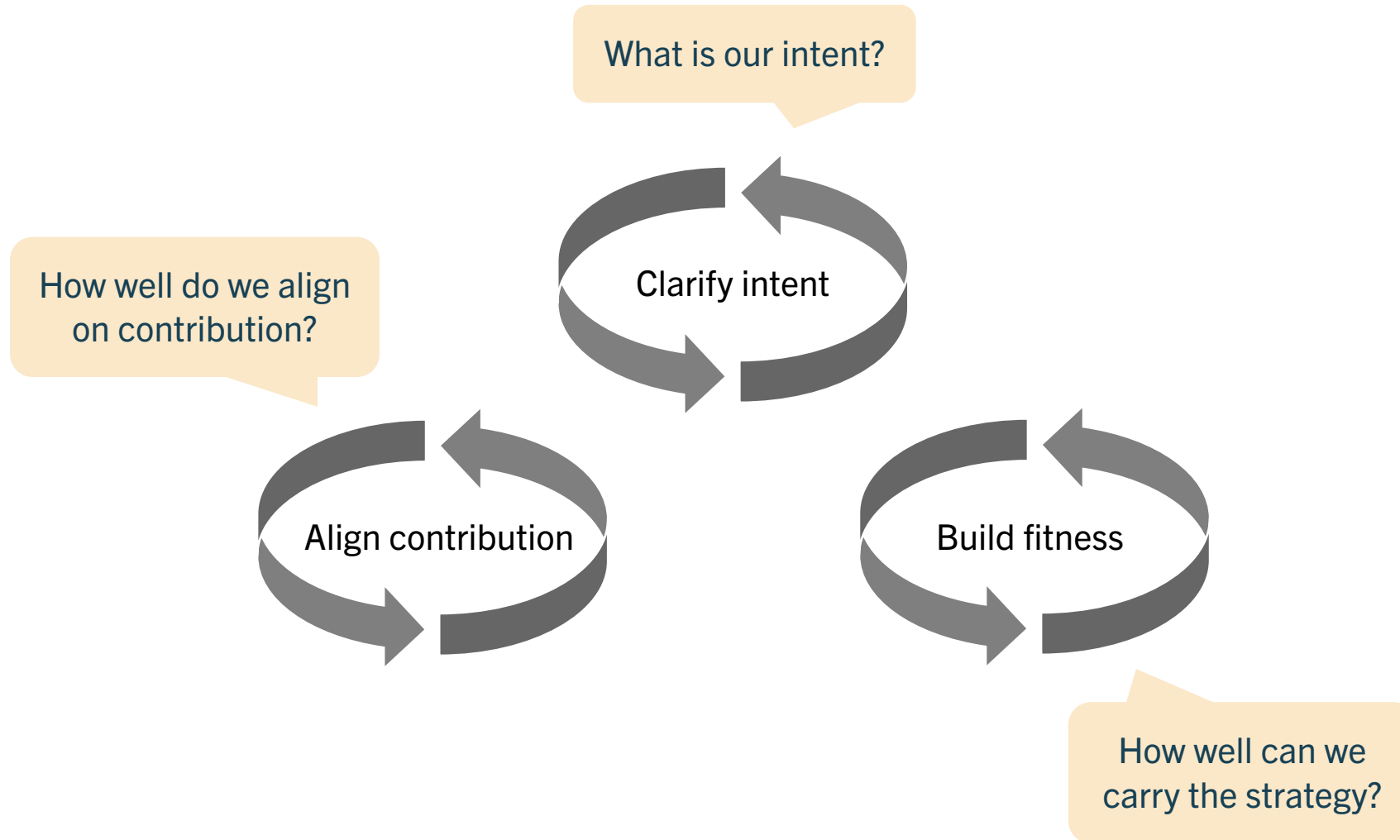
# How can we **STAY ON STRATEGY**



# Decoding the strategy conversation



# Rearrange conversation to stay on strategy



So, what is  
strategy?

# What does strategy look like?

**Aspiration**

==== CHOICE ====

**Action**



*Align on aspiration*

*Reconcile on action*

*Keep a healthy balance*

*Change your choice when needed*

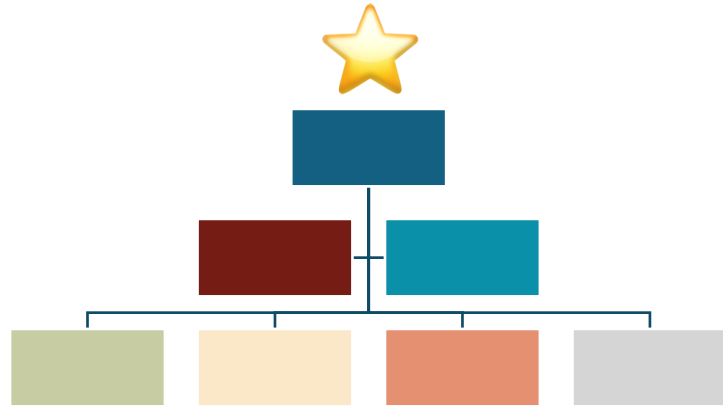
# The strategy-led liquid organization



# A shift from Solid to Liquid: Strategy as a ...

## GUIDING STAR

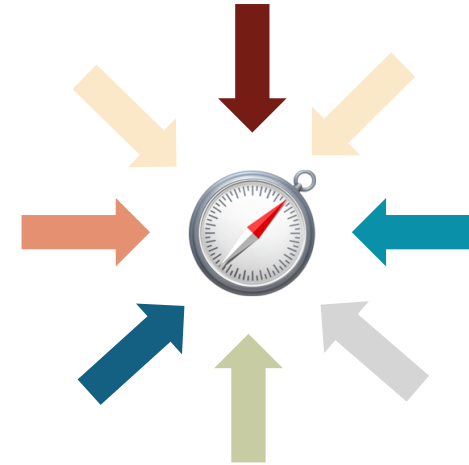
Power + Speed + Destination



- Delegate & escalate **GAPS (NON-CONFORMANCE)**
- Solid boxes, gating roles, delegated responsibilities
- Governance is where choices are made and who is responsible
- Align on dependencies and actions
- Technology **TRANSFORMATIVE** (enabling, augmenting)
- Solid plan ... **WHAT** value to drive for
- **GAPS GIVE STEER** (distance to the star)
- Information flows from the strategy (**COMPOSE**)

## COMPASS

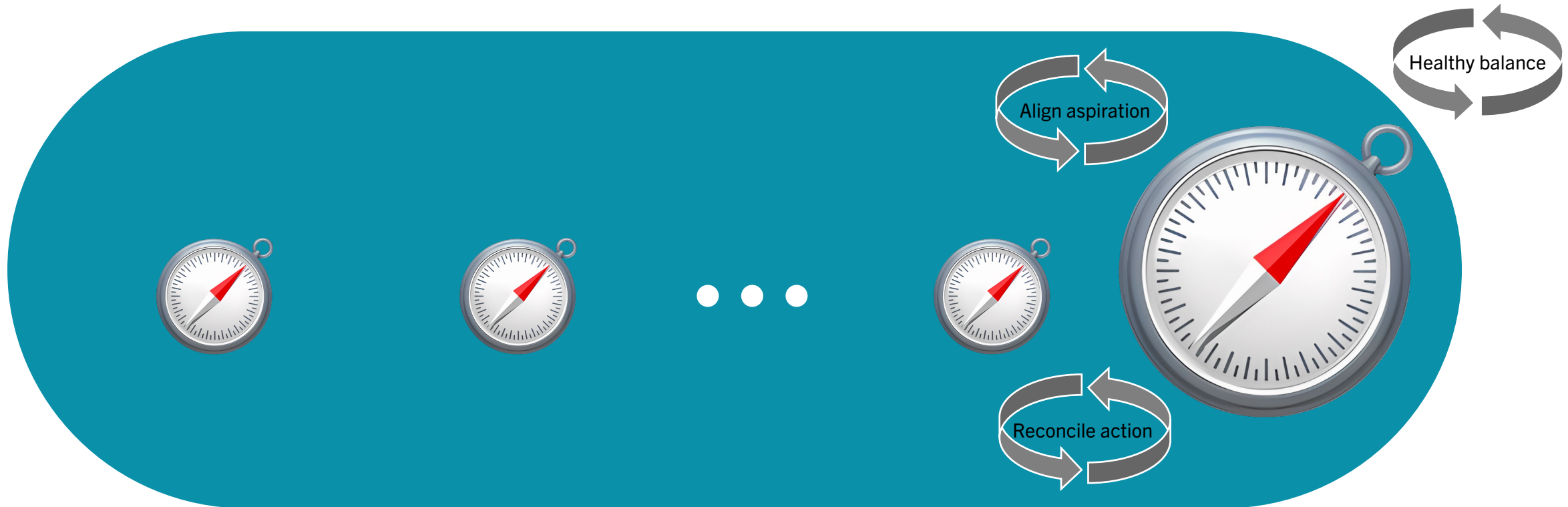
Navigation + Caution + Direction



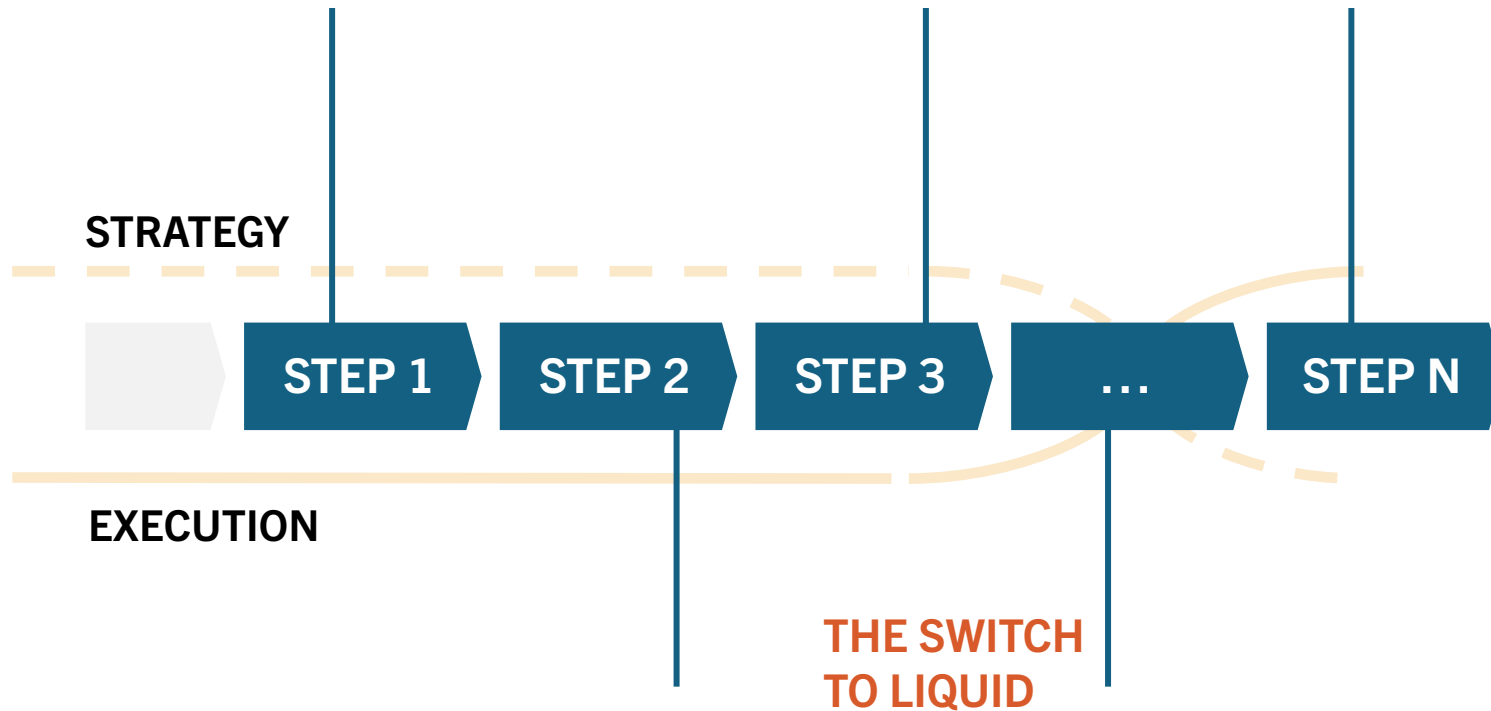
- Monitor & act on **TENSION (OPPORTUNITY)**
- Portfolio structure (cohesive circles), with accountable contributions and useful collaboration.
- Governance is accountability for contributions.
- Align on aspirations; reconcile on actions
- Technology **CATALYTIC** (amplifying, liberating)
- Healthy balance ... **HOW** to avoid failure
- **TENSIONS GIVE STEER** (direction of the compass)
- Information flows to the strategy (**ORCHESTRATE**)

# Useful collaborative structure with accountable contributions

Align on aspiration; reconcile on action; healthy balance – with all other portfolios

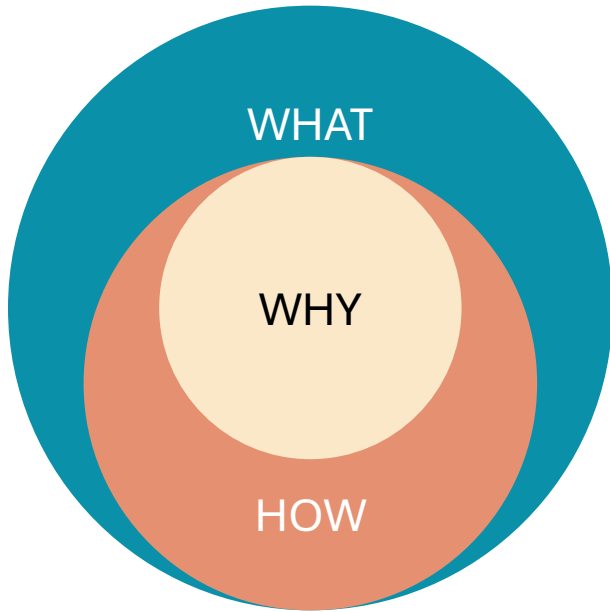


# Journey to experience the strategy-led approach

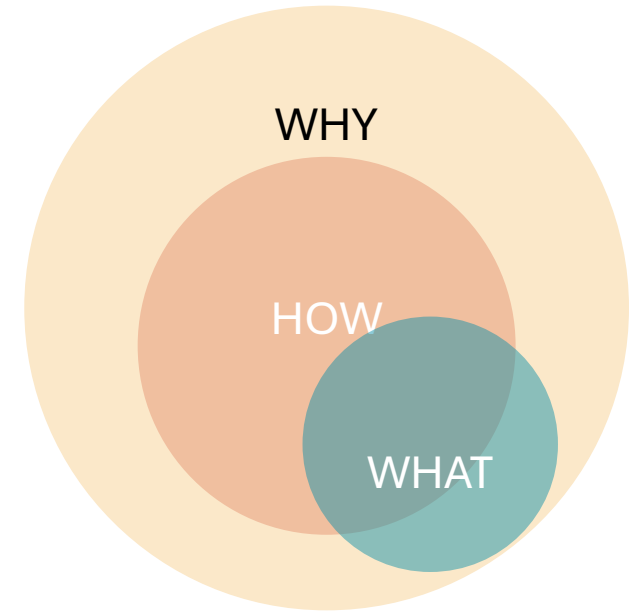
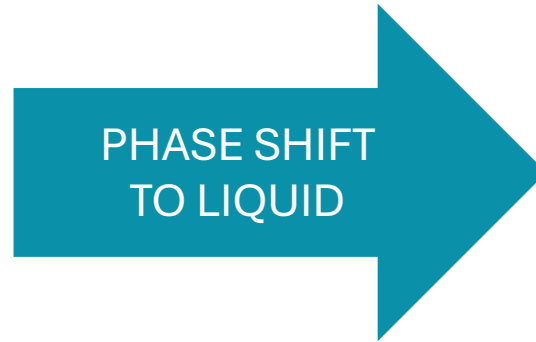


- PERSPECTIVE ON YOUR SITUATION
- CHANGING ROLE OF STRATEGY
- WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE
- THE STRATEGY-LED APPROACH
- HOW TO GET STARTED

# Golden circle → Liquid Circle



Start with “WHY”!



Start with “HOW”!

# So, what is going on at work?



- Not sure what to do
- Battle of the future of work
- Changes are coming faster and faster
- You are the worlds only hope



- Liquidity is a must to win the battle
- Manage at a speed you can afford to lose
- Absorb and prosper from surprises



*People say that culture  
eats strategy for breakfast;*

*In the liquid organization  
there is no breakfast ...*



Morten Elvang

ThinkingTwice.Works

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### Are you sensing

If, like us, you  
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