

CHAPTER 1

Think Inside the Box

The concept of “thinking outside the box” has been the go-to, we’re-all-about-it superstar for decades. TED Talks offer up a chorus of praise for this invocation to innovation, certain to bring greater success to businesses and organizations. Proponents say thinking outside the box fires up creativity and that it can result in inventive solutions to an organization’s most nagging problems. But for all the positive promotion it’s received over the years, that philosophy may be putting too much emphasis on the wrong side of the box.

I believe, and our work has found, that you have a much better chance of success if you understand the parameters you’re working *within* as an organization, and then see if you can stretch the box to meet your goals and vision. In other words, taking into account real-world limitations—such as budget constraints, industry regulations, looming deadlines—can actually help to spark creativity by keeping it focused rather than using an open-ended, anything-goes approach that doesn’t reliably result in ideas that can be implemented from a practical standpoint.

Thinking outside the box sounds like a great way to spur creativity and innovation, but it can take you in directions far removed from your true goals or what you can actually accomplish. We find it to have ambiguity in that there are no boundaries, there are too many variables, and too many unknowns. When working in the box, your playing field is more defined and there is greater understanding of specifics

and their possible impact on your desired outcome. There is also more empathy and connectivity in the box because there is definition. The box perspective is not only critical for the leader to define the parameters of the organization, it is equally important for the employees to have clarity around the business focus and the elements that directly affect them. Furthermore, the box provides a critical context for the board and leader to work together and create commonality around the expectations of the company. The box provides a form of clarity for all to grab hold of and work toward. The powerful point is that the box is of your own making. There are no rules or regulations with the box. There is no size requirement. Only you can determine the right box for your company, one that is big enough for your wildest performance objectives, but focused enough to allow you to achieve the goals you establish. You should also understand that while the sides of the box exist, they can be permeable, to let things flow in and out, and be flexible, to expand or contract when deemed necessary; but, once inside, each element serves to interact with the whole. This in itself contributes to being in clarity. While society celebrates wild, outside-the-box ideas, even though most of us don't have the creativity or vision to really be far outside, the complexity of today's business environment dictates that you must be more focused, more purposeful, more connected, and more strategic. The definition of your box and willingness to push the parameters inside the box is therefore critical to your long-term sustainable performance.

BUILD YOUR BOX

The construct of each box is unique. We have helped companies across the world devise strategies to create an original and appropriate box for their industry, markets, products, services, and realities. While the challenges for each company are unique,

the components and framework are consistent. Let's examine what each of the four sides of the box represents and how they can be defined to ensure alignment with the organization. The four sides of the box are:

1. Direction
2. Operations
3. People
4. Engagement

These four components are the critical factors that contribute to and directly affect performance and culture. Organizations that put the effort into defining their box by actively planning for, talking about, and populating each of these sides are those that can uncover clarity—the gem inside the box—and through the processes presented in this book, drive vibrant and lasting performance.

Now that we have four sides of the box, it is important to provide greater definition by populating each side with three dimensions, each critical to organizational performance. When you think inside the box, you'll have a better handle on the organization's structure, strategy, and culture as well as their undeniable impact and influence on each other. (See Figure 1.1) That in turn will help determine the best way to shape, grow, and stretch the organization's box to meet and ultimately exceed goals. While thinking outside the box offers the allure of freedom without constraint, thinking inside the box actually gives you structure and an approach to thoughtful expansion, which provides more effective thinking freedom with the foundational mediums from which to springboard. Working inside the box generates collective impact where you can identify and envision your future state as well as understand your current

state. We believe that it is the expectations leaders set that serve to close the gap between their current state and desired future state.

As we create the box and provide more robust understanding of the composition of each side, we have identified 12 dimensions

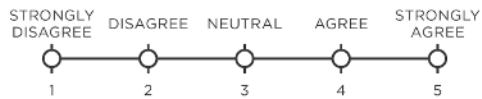
HOW CLEAR IS YOUR CULTURE?

Please answer each question based on your perception of your company or organization.

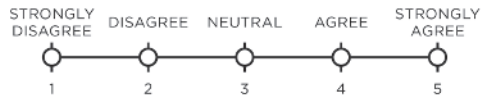
My company's values are clearly defined.



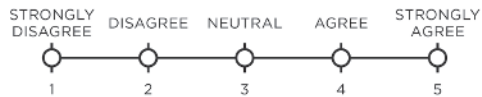
I have a clear sense of where my company is headed.



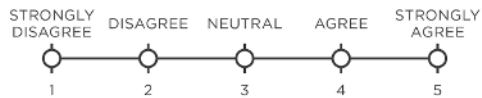
The behavior of our leaders is reflective of the company's ideal culture.



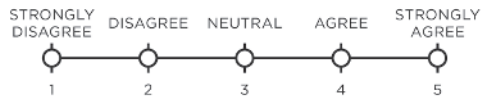
My company adapts well to change.



I have clear metrics to assess my company's performance.



My company's systems and processes help me get my work done.



I consistently provide coaching/feedback to my team.

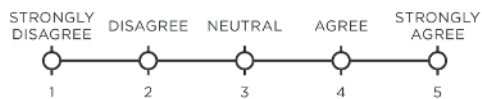
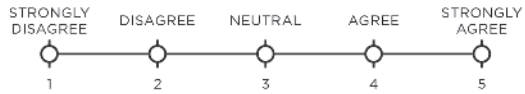


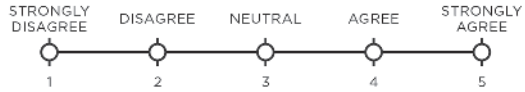
Figure 1.1 How Clear Is Your Culture

THINK INSIDE THE BOX

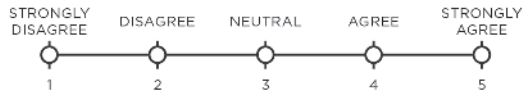
We have an effective performance evaluation process.



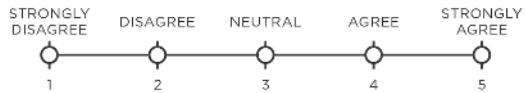
Our organization is highly collaborative.



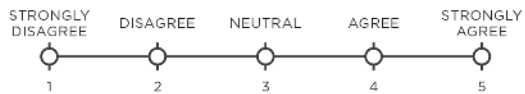
Employees know how their work contributes to company goals.



We do a great job of engaging our customers.



We share information effectively.



ADD UP YOUR SCORES TO FIND YOUR OVERALL CLARITY SCORE SCORING LOGIC

54-60

ACTUALIZED CULTURE

Fully embraced and lived out by all individuals.

48-53

PURPOSEFUL CULTURE

Well-defined, on its way to being embraced.

42-47

ACCIDENTAL CULTURE

Lacks definition and is an unintended byproduct of every employee.

41 OR LESS

POTENTIALLY MALADAPTIVE CULTURE

Misdirected and toxic, benefiting the few at the expense of the many.

(three for each side) that bring color and definition to each of the four sides of the box. We have listed here the side of the box with the corresponding dimensions:

Direction:

1. Vision and values
2. Strategy
3. Leadership

Operations:

4. Adaptability
5. Performance management
6. Systems and processes

People:

7. Employee clarity and fit
8. Customer focus
9. Communication effectiveness

Engagement:

10. Coaching and development
11. Talent management
12. Team capabilities

Side One: Direction

Without strong leadership, established and exhibited values, clear vision, and a strategy to achieve the vision, an organization will not be successful. The findings from our research consistently demonstrate that without direction employees become

disengaged and less productive, negatively affecting culture and performance—theirs and the company's. Direction affects every aspect of the company and its ability to connect with and move its people to a shared vision of where the company is going. As you will read throughout this book, it is not simply the environment that defines outcomes; rather it is the expectations that leaders set that play a fundamental role in driving individual and collective performance.

Dimension: Vision and Values

All too often, we, as leaders, think that this dimension will take care of itself. A clearly defined and stated vision is the first step to aligning the organization. Vision is one of the most important skills of leadership and flows from the leader down. A strong and well-defined vision creates a momentum that compels others to follow and actively promote it through their work. If there is no top-down vision, departments, teams, and individuals are going it alone to attempt to create something of value. Vision unites, inspires, and sets the tone for higher thinking throughout the organization. But, the great caveat with vision—if it is not defined with clear expectations, it is only a grouping of often carefully crafted words. We must say what we mean, then define it and be clear about what success will look like.

Values set the standards of what is important to your company. Yes, it seems like there are values that all companies share, such as integrity, creating profit, building exemplary products, or contributing to a community through service. Having clearly articulated values that distinguish your company from others in the industry, however, is crucial for employees and customers to directly identify with. These cannot be values that live on cards that employees carry or on posters affixed on walls throughout the organization, but real values that connect the employee with the heart and soul of the company.

Think about your company's vision and values with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- Employees have a shared vision of the company's future.
- Employees know what the company's core values are.
- The company's values are typically reflected in employees' behaviors.

Dimension: Strategy

This dimension is familiar to all leaders, but each may define it differently. To us, your strategy tells the plan of where your company is headed—it is your definition of change. It gives form to a general idea or plan, and informs it through assigning specific language to what it is you plan to achieve and specific pathways describing how you are going to go about it. These seem like tried-and-true business tools, and they are, but we often find that there is either no clearly communicated strategy in place or one that is too complex to implement; and if there is a clear plan, it isn't clear who is responsible for what, and how it collectively fits together. In short, too many strategic plans are developed, intricately built out, and sit on shelves in the C-suite. Leadership needs a strategy that they can collectively believe in, rely on, and act on. Strategy sets the direction with specific actions to take you toward your vision.

Think about your company's strategy with the following three statements. How does your organization perform?

- I have confidence in the strategic direction of the company.
- Leadership clearly communicates the strategic plan to employees.
- Our strategy is updated regularly to keep the company competitive.

Dimension: Leadership

Leadership is foundational to clarity. It is the highest and most reliable indicator of success. Purposeful culture is led. The ideas, values, and strategies in this quadrant begin to define a purposeful culture that is inextricably linked to overall organizational reliability and performance. Culture happens, with or without your attention. It is up to the leadership to establish a purposeful culture and empower a consistently productive working environment.

Think about your company's leadership with the following statements. How do your organization's leaders perform?

- Leadership inspires and motivates me to work hard to accomplish company goals.
- Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by our leadership.
- Leadership encourages new ideas and problem solving.

I had the opportunity to interact with the CEO and board chair of a highly successful international retailer experiencing dramatic challenges to the company. Their once-proud legacy was under attack by a new CEO empowered to change the very fabric that defined the company. Yet, with each change the leader made, the organization moved further and further away from its long-standing traditions. The loyal employees became disconnected from the organization. And, more, the customers felt left behind as evidenced by decreasing sales. What was central to the issue was the very clear definition of the box in which they had always operated and the fact that the new CEO was brought in to be completely outside the box and reinvent the brand. But the leader's focus was new for the sake of being new as opposed to rethinking key organizational

elements like the brand, delivery model, and culture. The new leader understood the pressures coming, brought on by the rapid change in market share gains of the mega-retailers and could see that brick-and-mortar retail would be increasingly squeezed by this shift in consumer behavior. While the leader was clearer than anyone in her company that the old service delivery method, focused heavily on direct mail catalogs, was in jeopardy, she chose to overhaul everything at once, including the well-established, clearly defined brand. This avalanche of change for a legacy brand resulted in the alienation of prideful employees and loyal customers who wanted the product the company had always delivered. The leader's out-of-the-box efforts brought the board into clarity about what it was they really wanted, which was very different from the idea of changing everything. The board and the new CEO eventually had to part ways. While the board wanted change, the change they got was too far outside the bounds of the company they loved and had jumped entirely out of the box of what they wanted. The company had the choice to, as we say, "change the people or change the people"—meaning change their behavior or change the actual individual's employment status with the company. Their solution was to change the people at the top and they immediately regained the trust of the workforce with a return to the long-standing culture and a fresh look inside their box.

Side Two: Operations

Here we measure the company's ability to respond to external changes, as well as employees' ability to respond to organizational changes. The performance management dimension gathers data regarding the organization's use of data to make management decisions. The final dimension asks questions to

determine whether an organization's systems and processes are effective in helping employees do their work well.

Dimension: Adaptability

This dimension is directly related to change. As discussed in the Introduction, change is ongoing and something which we all are constantly navigating. Adaptability is a dimension about which you often experience the relevance of circuit breakers because they impede adaptability. In clarity, we recognize that we are always in a state of change, so adaptability and circuit breakers are fatefully linked. In a purposeful organization, the box creates an optimal environment in which adaptability is part of the way the company operates, not an individual struggle. Leadership identifies, anticipates, and makes way for adaptation as *part of* change instead of as a result of change.

Think about your company's ability to adapt with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- The company responds well to change.
- Company changes usually have a positive impact on me.
- I am willing to question the norm to improve the way we do things.

The foundation of a national philanthropist had earned a reputation for generously doling resources out to every worthwhile cause in the region. Many organizations relied on their contributions. The foundation's leadership worked hard to establish and build a reputation of broad generosity and meeting many of the needs in the community. This was supported in both their words and actions. There was an undeniable pride by the leadership of the foundation from this reputation. For years, they were stuck in the ways of how they had always operated, with a

fixed perspective on not only who they were, but in their minds, who they needed to remain. However, the philanthropist gained insight into the help they were providing and believed that the foundation could make a more meaningful impact by doing a lot for a little rather than their strategy of doing a little for a lot. The philanthropist tasked leadership with redefining the box in which they operated to now focus on four distinct areas where they could make a quantifiable difference. Rather than be all things to all people, the foundation became laser focused on the causes most near and dear to its purpose. While the organization defined its new box, the original leaders were unable to adapt to the redefined box. This led to new people at the top of the foundation, a new vision and strategy, new operational platforms, and new engagement techniques to identify the causes they will support within their box. They moved from being accidental, even though intentional to spread as much good as possible, to being purposeful in populating their box and focusing initiatives in clarity that met their vision and goals. The building of their box, and the adaptability that was required, has led to new energy in their mission and a clear definition as to the legacy they will leave.

Dimension: Performance Management

Operating in clarity means having clear data metrics in place that measure those behaviors, actions, and outcomes that are an integral part of key initiatives. Without the proper metrics, quality feedback and directional intelligence is impossible. Data metrics are imperative to leading an intentional operation. In clarity, we define what we need and perpetually revise as change occurs.

Think about your company's performance management capabilities with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- We have performance measures to show us if the company is achieving our goals.
- The company uses performance data to make business decisions.
- The company constantly seeks ways to improve how we do our work.

Dimension: Systems and Processes

This dimension exists to streamline work. In most of the organizations with which we work, we initially find that the systems are outdated and the ever-quickenning pace of short-term gains that has become the norm today destabilizes systems that are often found lagging behind what is needed to get ahead. As your directional quadrant is defined, you will need to determine if you have the right systems and process to streamline the path that your strategy will follow. What needs should you be anticipating that you're currently overlooking, which assist with adaptability? Can you tap your directional quadrant to strategize the creation of or update a system that is needed? Are you clear on what and when it will need to be ready and what it needs to support or produce? Systems and processes that do not serve to streamline become one of the circuit breakers as clutter.

Think about your company's systems and processes with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- The company's systems and processes ensure high-quality work.
- The company's systems and processes distribute information in an effective way.
- The company regularly improves our processes so I can be effective.

Side Three: People

We believe that without the right people who are treated well and are well-supported, an organization cannot live up to its full potential. Ultimately, the people of a company are what motivate growth and sustain the parameters of the box that you define. Without their investment in the vision and their understanding of the pathways in place to reach optimal performance, your strategy will inevitably fall short of its expected outcomes.

Dimension: Coaching and Development

People want to feel valued. And, they want to positively contribute to the organization. The onus is on the leadership to recognize the talents, sometimes hidden in an employee, and help to elevate them to a new level of performance with focused coaching and development. Commitment to people becomes palpable when intentional.

Think about your company's coaching and development and fit with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- My supervisor regularly meets with me to provide feedback and discuss my work.
- The company is committed to my professional learning and career development.
- The company provides clear pathways for advancement.

Dimension: Talent Management

This dimension is often one that brings a unique contradiction of both passion and dissatisfaction from employees in our initial interviews and data collection. We have seen how talent management is a critical factor in clarity as teams and individuals grapple

with increasing demands placed on them, including the pace with which we work, technology updates and demands, and general uncertainty.

Think about your company's talent management with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- My team is staffed appropriately to get our work done well.
- I consistently receive annual reviews of my performance.
- Promotions are granted on talent, not tenure.

Dimension: Team Capabilities

The term *capability* holds such promise. Aligned teams working in clarity find a boost in capability through organized effort. Clarity in teams makes the way for more open and honest communication. When collaboration and co-creation are valued, hired for, and expected, it releases the need to be the smartest person in the room. Teams add to clarity by providing sounding-boards for ideas and possibilities. Teams are especially important in high-potential events when reliance on one another exposes circuit breakers that need repair. Diversity in teams adds to clarity by working a problem from different angles and points of view. When you pair two people who normally wouldn't work on something together, you can gain insight and open a way to a third point of view that emerges from their work together. Clarity has a different agenda from just the individual elements involved.

Think about your employees' team capabilities with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- The company has a spirit of teamwork and cooperation.
- Working in teams generates new ideas.
- Teamwork is a big part of how we get things done.

Side Four: Engagement

Our view of engagement focuses on having engaged employees but also examines the extent to which an organization engages with other stakeholders, both internal (including board members and volunteers, if applicable) or external (including clients or customers).

Dimension: Employee Clarity and Fit

Employees are frequently recruited and hired because of their knowledge, skills, and abilities. In clarity, we are looking for fit, which is a much better indicator of longevity and success. In addition to the requisite skillset, we hire, evaluate, and train based on shared values and core competencies. Employee engagement and satisfaction are enhanced when expectations and behaviors are clearly defined and communicated. Clarity ensures that every person has a place and a role that is compatible with their individual traits as well as the collective traits defining the company.

Think about your company's employees' clarity and fit with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- My role, goals, and objectives are clearly defined.
- I have a good relationship with my co-workers.
- I take pride in my company's success.

Dimension: Customer Focus

Companies and customers enter into an exchange of expectations and delivery of goods and services. As with internal culture, these expectations can be clear and purposeful, or they develop unintentionally as either an informal or even a more formal social contract.

Think about your company's customer focus with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- The company understands our clients' expectations.
- The company values feedback from our clients.
- Employees are empowered to solve client problems.

Dimension: Communication Effectiveness

We see the attempts of businesses trying to communicate their way to clarity every day. This is often the case when leaders haven't created the whole of their box and are looking for a quick fix. Effective, clear communication is a positive outcome of clarity, but it cannot be the primary driver. Clarity brings a whole other genre of communication that exceeds what is routinely experienced. In clarity, communication evokes a connection, a response, and establishes transparency and authenticity as its goal. With this style of communicating, everyone involved wants to interact with it and contribute to it. Communication effectiveness is predicated on a two-way dialog and genuine commitment to engagement.

Think about your company's communication effectiveness with the following statements. How does your organization perform?

- Lines of communication are open all the way to top management.
- Information passed down from leadership is detailed and accurate.
- I receive the right amount of information to do my job effectively.

For my own company, I recognized that whatever distinct industry our company was once a part, no longer existed. We started out as one thing and wandered for years, before defining our box and creating the clarity we help others achieve. We started as a strategic communications firm that dealt with highly complex issues. In fact, the more complex and multifaceted, the more they were in our wheelhouse. Our journey started with a basic understanding. We believed that in the 1980s, the advertising industry gave away the intellectual high ground to consultancies—basically saying, “You be smart and we’ll be creative.” We recognized this shift, but also understood we didn’t fit in either world. It forced us to make a critical decision—did we want to be a local boutique focused on design and advertising, or did we want to be a bigger player in the space of consultancy? There was an appeal to both.

When we built out our own box, it was made clear by the complexity and dimensionality of the needs we were addressing for our clients that our box could grow and make this shift. But, it did require us to do something fundamentally different from others in our space. We understood to truly create that unique hybrid we would be forced to make fundamentally different decisions to address all four sides of our box. We recognized that we could not address two obvious sides of it—strategy and engagement—alone. Our allocation of resources, especially around talent, became a central focus—prioritizing the hiring of organizational anthropologists and psychologists over account executives and creatives sent shockwaves through the organization and created challenges in how we sold services. Every side of our box was challenged and rethought. While we were ahead of our time with this approach, it is interesting to see how prescient this decision was with major consulting firms like McKinsey and Deloitte acquiring design firms to build capacity and retrofit their operations into this

new world. Our ability to see the four sides of our box and to build them out together in a purposeful way allowed us to become our own brand and distinguish ourselves from our competitors.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Each Side

In our early days of conducting research for clients, we reviewed and sometimes used a number of high-profile surveys available in the marketplace, including culture-specific and employee-engagement surveys. Based on our theory of organizational effectiveness centered around clarity, however, there was not a single survey that would help organizations quickly measure their performance on the key indexes which are critical to fostering clarity. Organizations that focus only on employee engagement, for example, are often missing other important and foundational elements of a high-functioning company. On the other hand, leaders who focus only on strategy and vision are also missing key elements that affect performance. Based on our vast, multidimensional experience across myriad fields and industries, our researchers, social scientists, and business consultants collectively recognized the necessary connections and balance between direction, operations, people, and engagement as crucial. All together, these components were not being carefully measured or analyzed in any of the other surveys on the market. Therefore, we developed a unique, proprietary assessment, the Clarity Performance Index (CPI), which provides an overview of an organization's performance in each of these areas. Ultimately, the Clarity Performance Index measures the extent to which an organization has focused on these key areas and established their foundations to maximize overall performance.

Figure 1.2 provides you with the opportunity to assess and map your company's performance.

CLARITY PERFORMANCE INDEX®

HOW IS YOUR COMPANY PERFORMING?

(Step 1) Carefully read each statement that corresponds to each of the performance dimensions, and rate your company based on the following scale:

1 – strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – agree; 4 – strongly agree.

DIRECTION

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
VISION + VALUES: My company has clearly defined values.....	①	②	③	④
STRATEGY: My company has a clear sense of where it is headed...	①	②	③	④
LEADERSHIP: The behaviors of leadership reflect the company's ideal culture.....	①	②	③	④

OPERATIONS

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
ADAPTABILITY: My company adapts well to change.....	①	②	③	④
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: My company uses clear data metrics to assess performance.....	①	②	③	④
SYSTEMS + PROCESSES: The processes and systems put in place by my company help streamline my work.....	①	②	③	④

PEOPLE

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
COACHING + DEVELOPMENT: My company provides consistent, helpful coaching and feedback to each team and individual.....	①	②	③	④
TALENT MANAGEMENT: My company has an effective performance evaluation process.....	①	②	③	④
TEAM CAPABILITIES: My company encourages collaboration.....	①	②	③	④

ENGAGEMENT

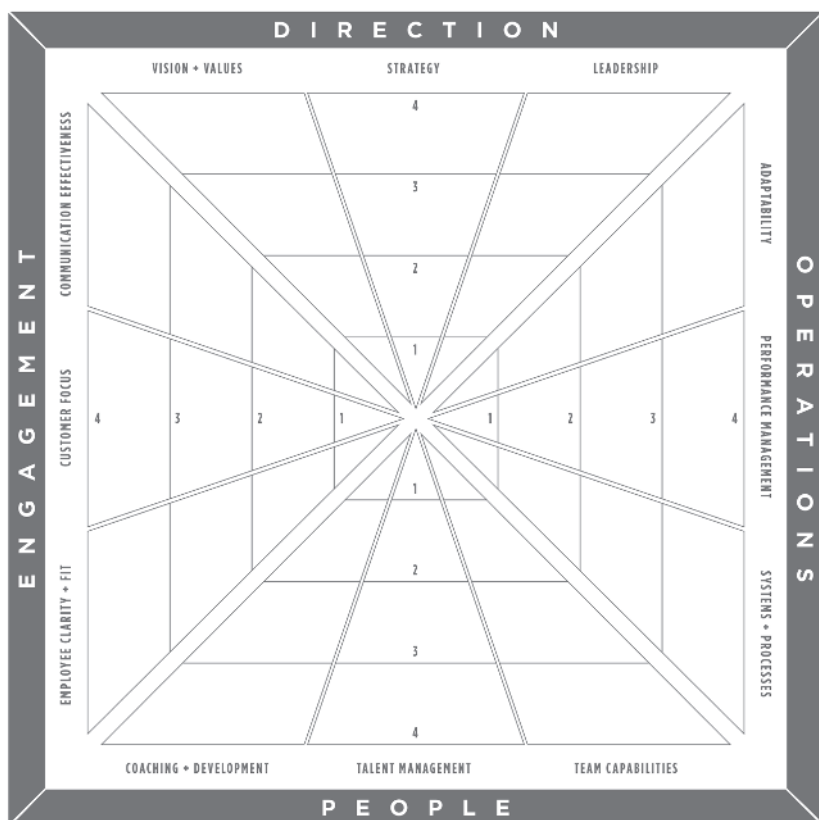
	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
EMPLOYEE CLARITY + FIT: Employees know how their work contributes to company goals.....	①	②	③	④
CUSTOMER FOCUS: My company does a great job of engaging with customers.....	①	②	③	④
COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS: My company effectively shares information between its parts.....	①	②	③	④

Figure 1.2 Clarity Performance Index

THINK INSIDE THE BOX

CLARITY PERFORMANCE INDEX®

(Step 2) Using the chart provided, shade in your results for each performance dimension. Example: If you scored your company's strategy a two, you would shade in the first two sections of the strategy triangle.



(Step 3) Reflecting on your Clarity Performance Index results, do you see any imbalances within your box? Answer on the lines provided:

The Clarity Performance Index is a first step in establishing a baseline for any organization to understand where they currently are. It is also a diagnostic tool to help understand areas of strengths and areas of opportunity. It is an important tool for leaders to have quantitative data to assist in planning and decision making. It is also important to re-administer the CPI at regular intervals to assess progress and to catch any areas that might be falling behind before it affects overall performance.

Some of our clients have seen that when they focus too much on a couple of areas while ignoring other important areas in their company, their scores drop, as does their overall organizational performance. Again, we are looking for purposeful, balanced improvement of all four sides of the box. A company must continually monitor and revisit these areas to ensure that they are continually making progress and moving forward—together.

Four Sides, Two Systems

As we look at the four sides of the box, leaders are constantly trying to search for ways to drive performance in each of the dimensions in each of the quadrants. There is no company that we have worked with that has universally achieved perfect scores in every dimension. In fact, we have yet to have any company with the highest possible score in any one single dimension. Some clients become focused on the numerical values identified in the survey. The score is less important—what is important is how it ranks relative to the other areas. Balance is critical. The organizations that over-index in one area or another often show deficits that correlate to lower-than-expected returns.

We are first focused on clients having a balanced score in each of these areas because each area is needed for an organization to do well. For example, a strong strategy is meaningless

without the people and processes needed to achieve an organization's vision and goals. Similarly, smart and talented people cannot be productive as a group without shared vision and values. If an organization's systems and processes are not designed to help employees work effectively, or if an organization does not communicate well with its employees, even the most talented workforce will not be successful at achieving the organization's objectives.

Balance becomes mandatory. We have found that when there is balance between direction and operations, which represents what we have identified as the strategic system and people and engagement, which represents the cultural system, the natural energy in the company is able to flow more organically, driving performance throughout. Overwhelmingly in the research we have conducted, clients have demonstrated that where there is a lack of balance in the systems, there is a lack of organizational performance that correlates directly with the research.

A 2012 *Fast Company* article perfectly captured the need for a balance by stating, "Ultimately, the culture versus strategy question is a false choice. It is like asking whether you would rather back a great poker player with weak cards or an average player with great cards. You're more likely to win when you have both: a great player and great cards. The same goes for culture and strategy. You don't have to choose. Culture doesn't eat strategy, and the company that lets culture do so is likely to starve."

The companies that have stronger strategic systems often have a workforce that is less engaged and less productive. Conversely, companies that have a stronger culture system at the expense of their strategic system have passionate, connected employees who expend energy and resources in ways that do not fully contribute to the company's business objectives.

One of the great examples of the necessary balance of the two systems became obvious as we worked with an international oil and gas exploration and production company. They had become wildly successful due in part to their wildcatter mentality. This entrepreneurial spirit and willingness to take risks served the company well while they were a smaller, more domestically focused operation and during a time when oil climbed steadily toward \$100 a barrel. But as the company grew and expanded into international theaters, concerns about the company's commitment to safety grew among the tight-knit oil and gas community. The company believed they had a delicate balance to strike between conforming to best practices established by the "majors" in their business (Exxon, Shell, BP, and so on) while remaining true to their own identity. That identity had unique characteristics that greatly appealed to their employees, many of whom had come over from other, larger oil companies because they were tired of that type of corporate culture. Our work with this company initially focused on populating their box to find innovative ways inside the box to strike this balance. You'll find out a bit about best practices in Chapter 7 on masqueraders. But in this discussion, let's say that we want to populate the box with what is true and enduring for the organization. If there is a reason to adopt practices from an industry standard, your box facilitates a way to commit to that practice while being clear about the impact on your organization. This only happens with purposeful intent. Your box helps you see when an operational issue can affect a value, creating a negative effect with your people as they lose faith in the organization. Everything is connected. With a well-populated box, you can navigate change and be purposeful and in clarity about how each dimension will be affected. You can actually see the wave of change that the impact will bring across the quadrants of the box. Through clarity, we were able to identify ways to be committed

to safety and compliant with all regulations while remaining true to the things that defined them and made them successful over time. We were able to elevate safety to the same level as the operational drivers that had always defined the organization. This focus on operational excellence impacted not only safety, but fundamentally recalibrated their approach to business. By populating their box and identifying their four sides, we built out ways to meet their evolving operational needs and create the necessary balance between their strategic and culture systems. This clarity allowed them to grow bigger by thinking small. It also allowed them to shift priorities toward five key imperatives that they saw as crucial toward continuing to grow the business the right way—their way.

Inside the New Normal

The shifting paradigm of going from outside to inside the box takes some getting used to. Leaders worry about losing the innovation and creativity that they previously believed comes from outside-the-box thinking. But, inside-the-box produces more efficiency, more alignment, more purpose, and is a far easier and more effective platform from which to lead. We have always believed that people universally want to support their company and contribute in a positive way. They, like people of all ages and places in life, need structure. They also need and crave definition, connectivity, and a reason to believe. The box provides the structure and the belief system for the company, the leadership, the board, and the workforce. It also provides a tangible thing for all to understand and hold on to. The reality, as our work has proven, is that when everyone is holding on to the same box, they come alive, encourage responsible creativity, and drive real innovation.

