

KEVIN GASKELL

THE 100-DAY PLAN

**How to transform your leaders
and the future of your business**

WELCOME

This is your blueprint to guide you through one of the most important steps in becoming an inspired leader. That step is having a clear plan for success that your entire team help to create, accept ownership and then put into place.

This approach will guide you to:

- Build a foundation and a plan of action for the next stage of the business.
- Give yourself a clear set of priorities, especially if your business is in stress.
- Establish the launch pad to move the business towards success.
- Reenergise your business with the rocket fuel of an inspired team.

Firstly, a health warning. If you're happy to plod along with 3% growth each year, then this plan is not for you!

This plan is designed to help you to add a zero or two to the typical 3% growth aspiration and challenge you and your team's thinking about how the operation can achieve that.

Tomorrow is not like today plus a bit. To be truly successful, you cannot continue to do what you are currently doing. Inspired leaders look to the future and build a vision of success which is exciting and compelling.

*"If you always do what you always did,
you'll always get what you always got."*

- Henry Ford

Building a business which is successful for the long term is not about cutting costs, reducing manpower or cutting corners – it's all about engaging and inspiring people.

- Inspired leaders are special – they think in a different way to operational leaders.
- Inspired leaders are dreamers – and are prepared to commit to making their vision of success into a reality.
- Inspired leaders are committed – 100%. And they ensure that every member of their team is invited to buy into the dream with the same commitment.
- Inspired leaders are connected to the goal – and stay on track.
- Inspired leaders improve their business not by 3% or even by 30%, but by 300%.

The structure of the process

Nobody can build a world class organisation in 100 days. But you can pull a struggling business back from the brink, revitalise a sluggish business or set a new direction with a team who become excited about positive change. In 100 days, you can make extraordinary progress if you are focused.

The role of the inspired leader is to create a culture of authority and accountability in the team. This is achieved when individuals feel they have the authority to drive change and also feel responsible for the delivery of that change.

This must be based on a clear understanding of what success will look like when we get there. This vision of success must be developed with the complete involvement of the team members. It cannot be imposed, and it must not be a set of numbers – if we get better then bigger, numbers will follow. It typically does not work the other way around.

The first 100 days is just the start of the long term process of change and improvement within the organisation – but it is the critical part. This is the stage where hearts and minds are won and commitment is gained. The tools and approaches detailed later in this paper are fed into the process within the different phases – they may well be repeated according to the progress that is being made.

Divide the 100 days into three phases

Day 1 – 25: This is when the determination to change must be developed. All communication must be in support of the process with a cascade of information through the layers of the leadership team and the entire staff. This is the **COMMIT** phase.

Workshops are held with team members and open discussions encouraged about the business/what it is/what it could be/how the team can drive the change. An outline plan is agreed.

Day 26 – 75: The plan is now developed by discussion amongst functional teams who have been allocated responsibility for the delivery of the priority projects included within the plan. The vision of success is shared with all staff. A WAR room (weekly action review) is created as the control hub for the development and implementation of the plan. This is the **CONNECT** phase.

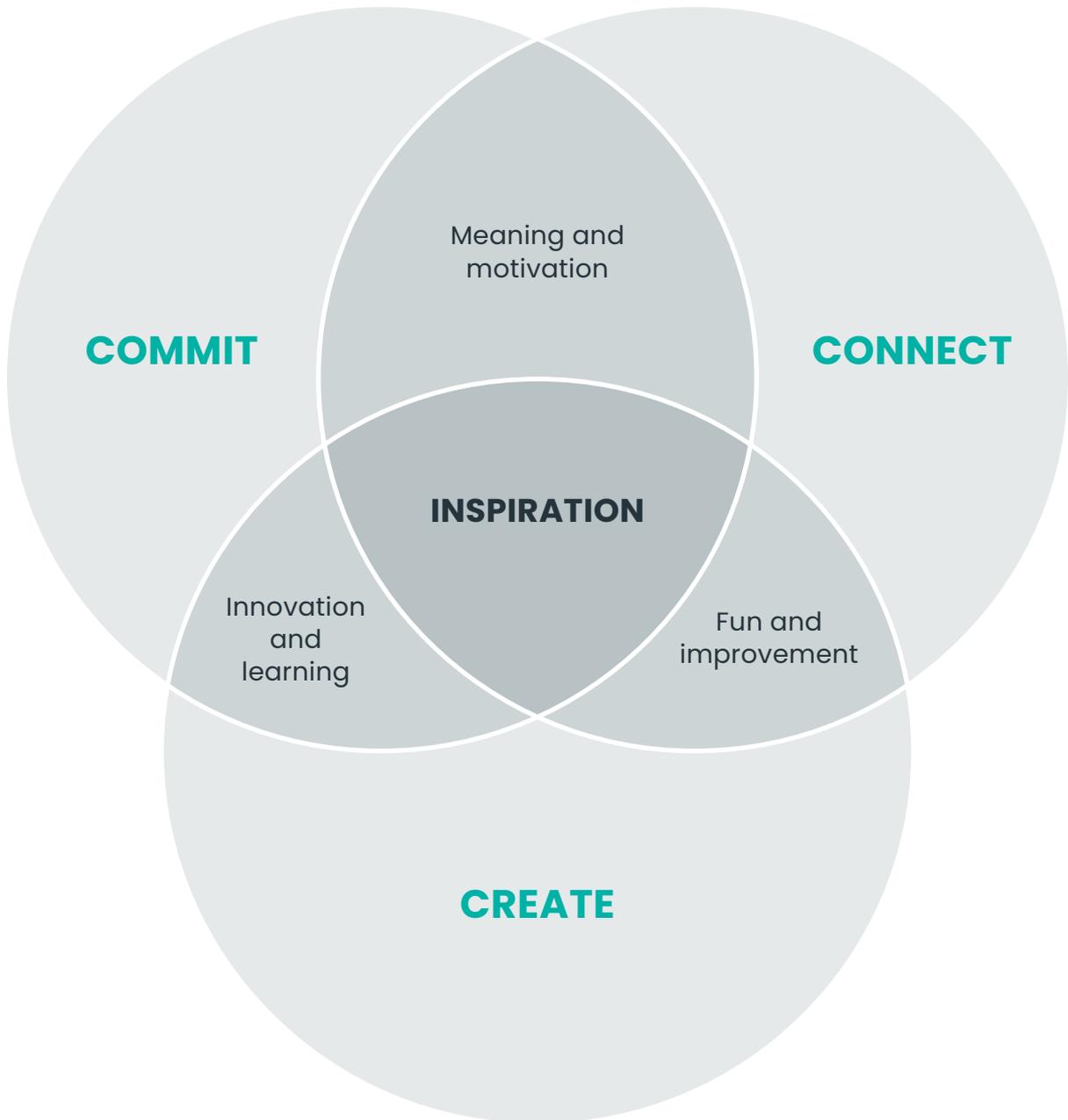
Communication with all staff is held every 25 days to update in progress and challenges (there will be challenges!).

Day 76 – 100: The detailed project plans are rolled out through the organisation. Individuals are invited or volunteer to join project teams. All wins are celebrated and the culture of ownership extended by inviting all project leaders to communicate with all staff about the early wins and progress being made. Leaders at all levels are encouraged to take the initiative. The culture shift to accountability and positive energy begins. Now the heartbeat of the business has been raised and the pace of change accelerates. This phase is the **CREATE** phase as the progress becomes self-generating.

Are you ready to accept the challenge?

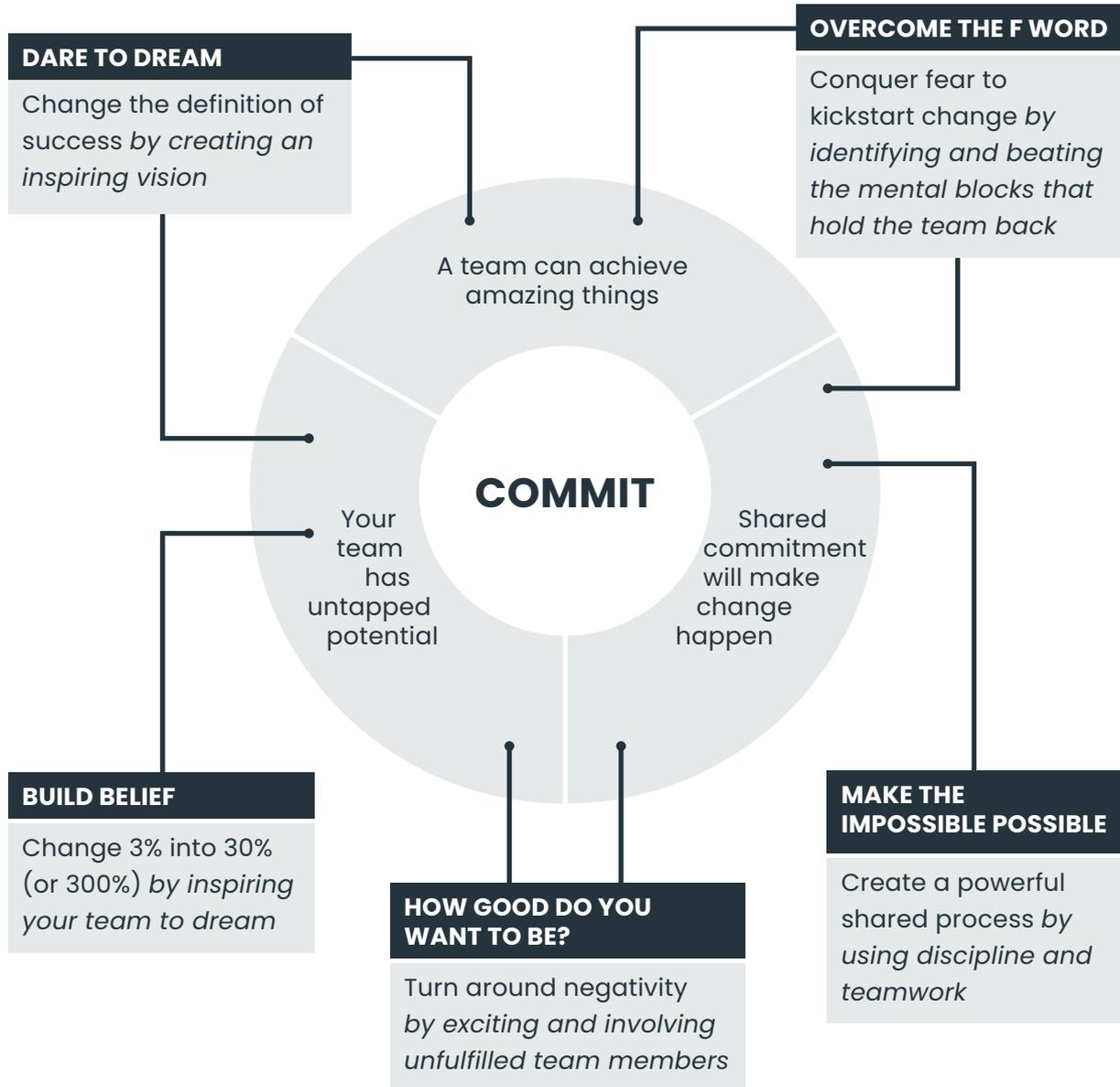
The blueprint

This is where the inspiration is generated:



Let's start with Commitment.

COMMIT



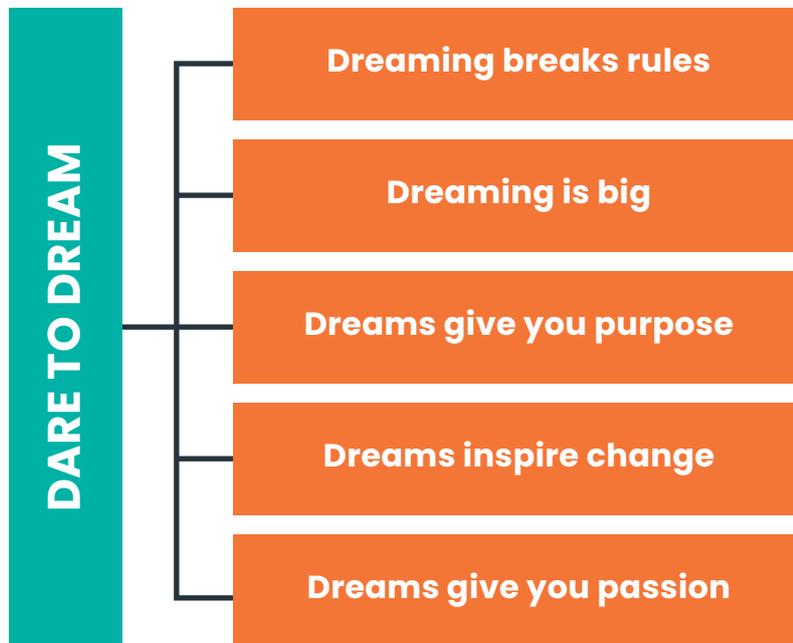
1: Dare to dream

Change the definition of success by creating an inspiring vision.

Don't start with numbers. Start by imagining what this business could be if we had endless resources and all of the perceived barriers were taken away.

Give yourself permission to dream about what could be possible.

Ask yourself and your team what your success will look like, sound like and feel like when you get there? This is your inspiring vision of success. Share the excitement and belief that achieving this vision is possible.



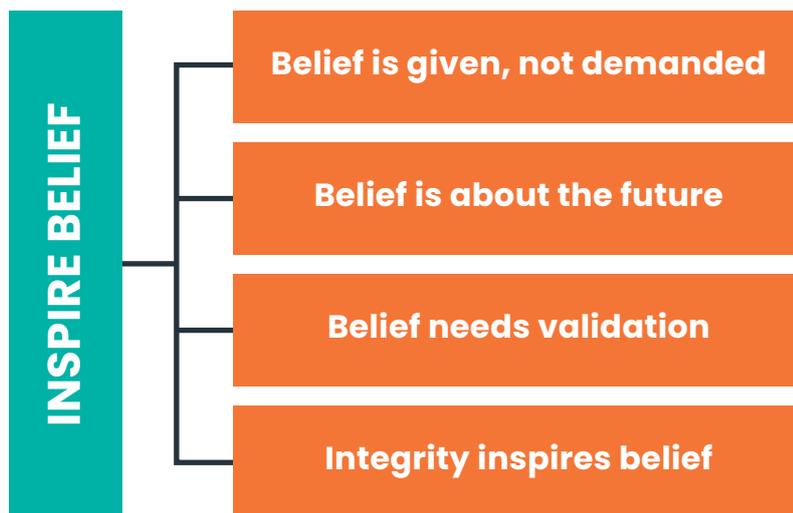
2: Inspire belief

Change 3% into 30% (or 300%) by inspiring your team to dream.

Remember, the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do! Most limitations in this world are the ones that people place upon themselves – so give the team permission to think differently.

Invite them to imagine how it could be possible to achieve extraordinary results.

Inspired leaders are committed to the goal and give their team permission to dare to dream about what could be possible. Together their inspiration will develop belief that the vision of success is achievable.



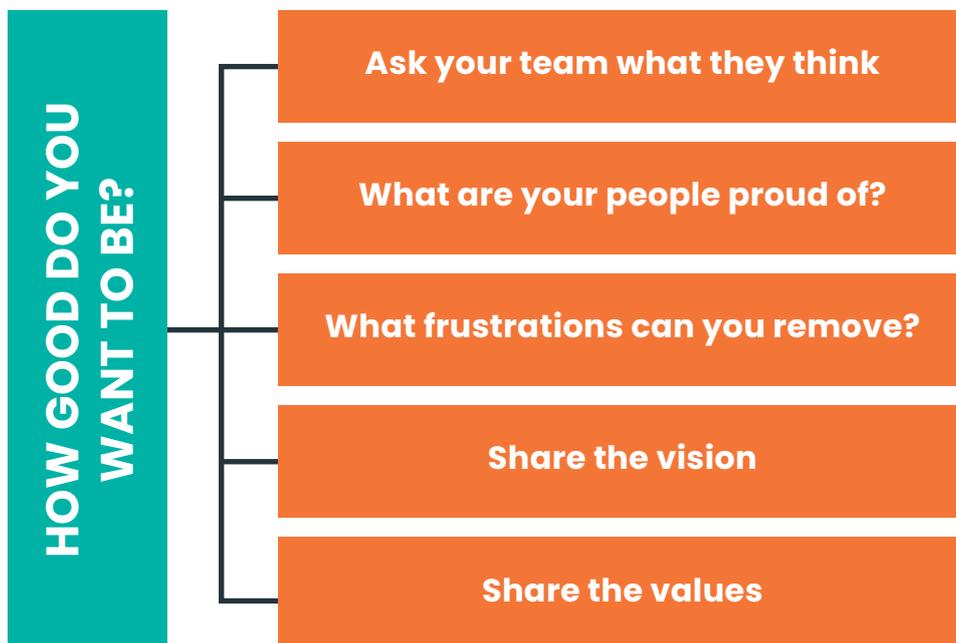
3: How good do you want to be?

Turn around negativity by exciting and involving unfulfilled team members.

Many people see a difficult situation and choose not to get involved – or worse, they never look! The role of the inspired leader is to hold up the mirror to the business and invite everyone to look into it. To see the reality of the current operation.

This is not a negative process. It is about recognising the reality of the current performance and asking whether this level of performance will achieve the vision of success. Recognise both the good parts and the poor parts of the operation. Create the intention to build on the strengths and minimise the weaknesses. Be honest.

Inspired leaders recognise the skills and passion in the team and accept the responsibility for coordinating those skills and energy towards the achievement of the vision.



4: Make the impossible possible

Create a powerful shared process by using discipline and teamwork.

No leader can move a team from A to Z in one step. The world simply doesn't work that way. The team would be confused and disillusioned if they were expected to achieve immediate success. Inspired leaders appreciate that they need to break the journey – from the current situation to extraordinary success – into achievable stages.

The planning stage is critical. This is where the priority activities are identified and become the focus for the team. Sometimes external support may be necessary to hold the mirror for the team but generally the team should be able to do it for themselves.

Openly discuss all possible approaches to moving forward, leave nothing out. Remember to be a bit crazy in your thinking – use imagination to plan big changes then agree the steps that will be taken to deliver that change. Support those in the team who are concerned by change. Maintain the discipline and bring the team forward together. Shared commitment to a common goal is inspirational. The plan that you make is the plan that you will execute together.



5: Overcome the F word

Conquer fear to kickstart change by identifying and beating the mental blocks that hold the team back.

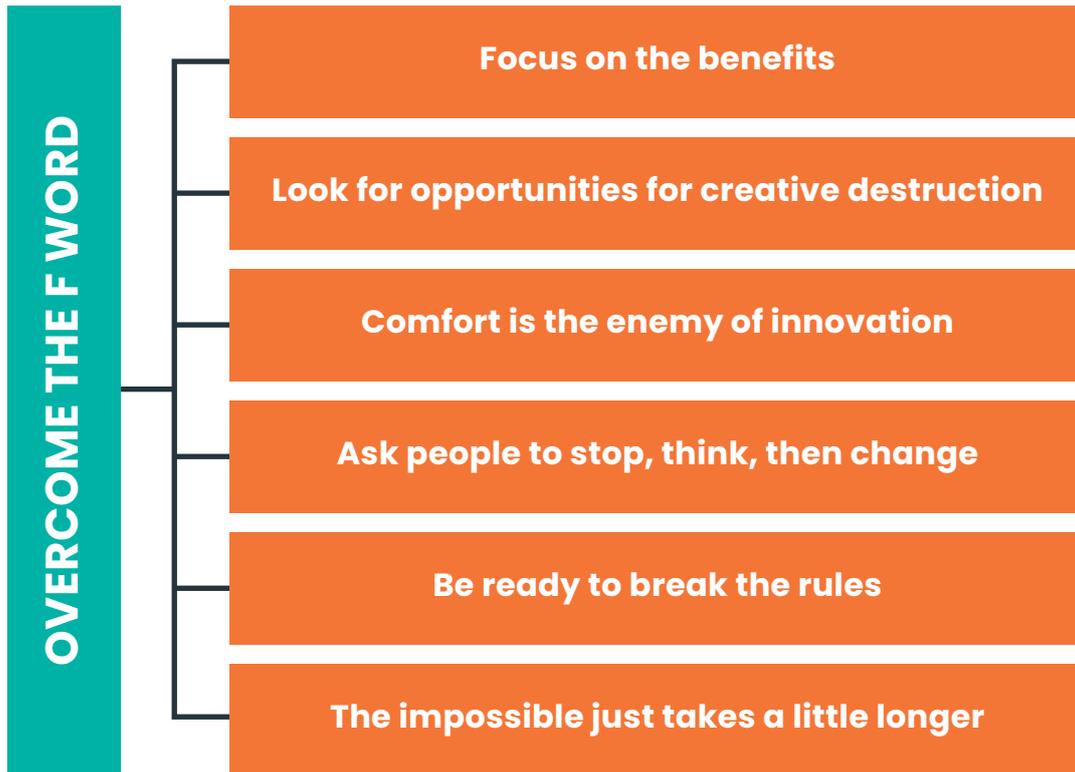
Some team members will be excited by the idea of driving for major change in the organisation. Others will feel absolute terror at the thought of launching into the unknown.

As an inspiring leader you are allowed to feel fear. This is a natural human reaction to stress and the unknown. Fear of failure, fear of appearing uncertain, fear of rejection and fear that people will not follow you are all normal.

To overcome the fear, we must commit completely to the new success. You have already recognised that the previous way of working was not compatible with long term success. Therefore, recognise the new way of thinking and operating as a natural part of moving to a new level of performance. Transforming and adapting the way of operating is the route to a new success. Welcome the change, be confident and use the energy of fear to drive action.

“It is not the strongest of the species, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.”

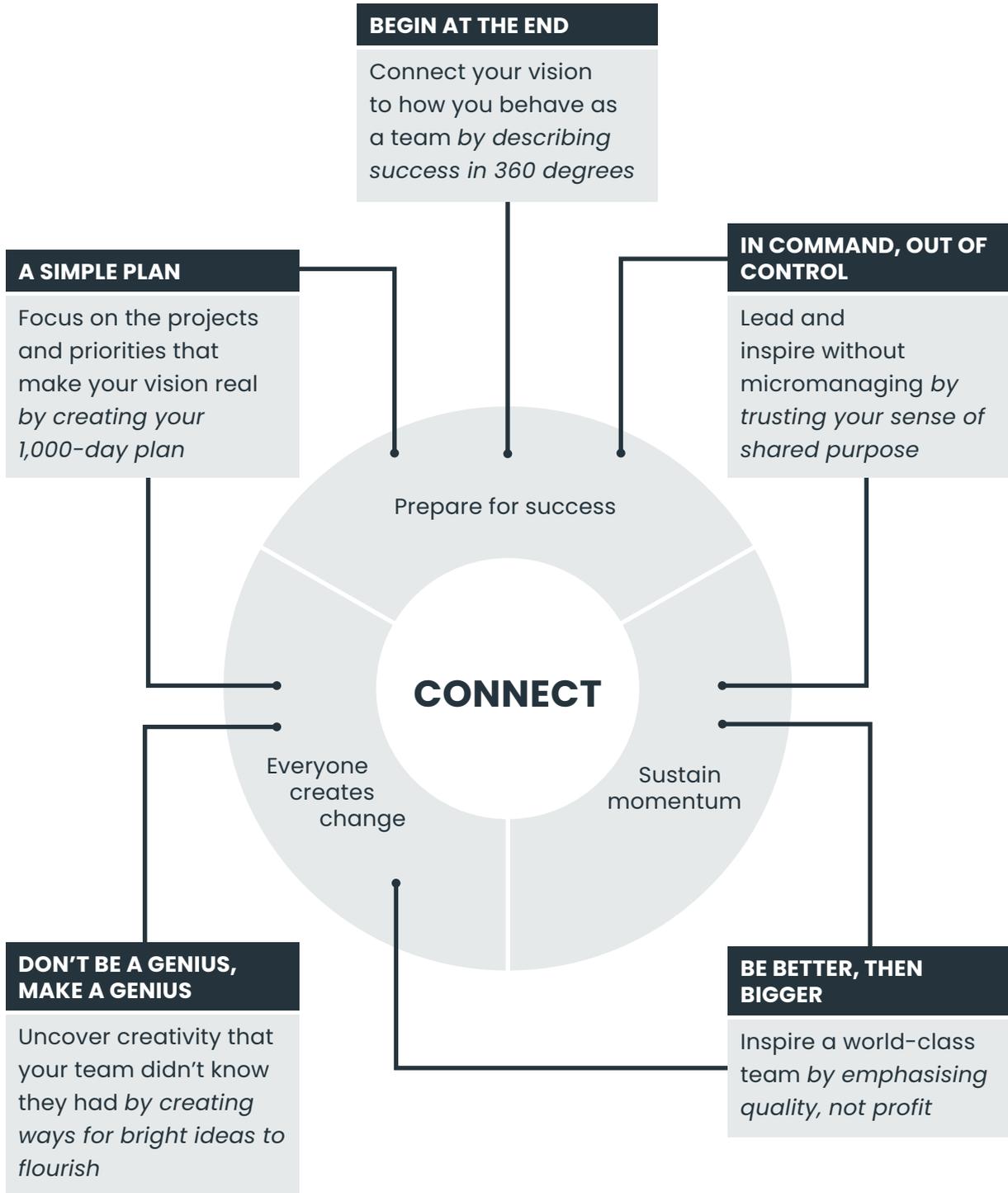
– Charles Darwin



Top tactics

Create a 'Whinge Wall' and an 'Ideas Wall'. Let people get things off their chests – and come up with ideas for change that will **ELIMINATE** those whinges - not **SOLVE** the whinge.

CONNECT



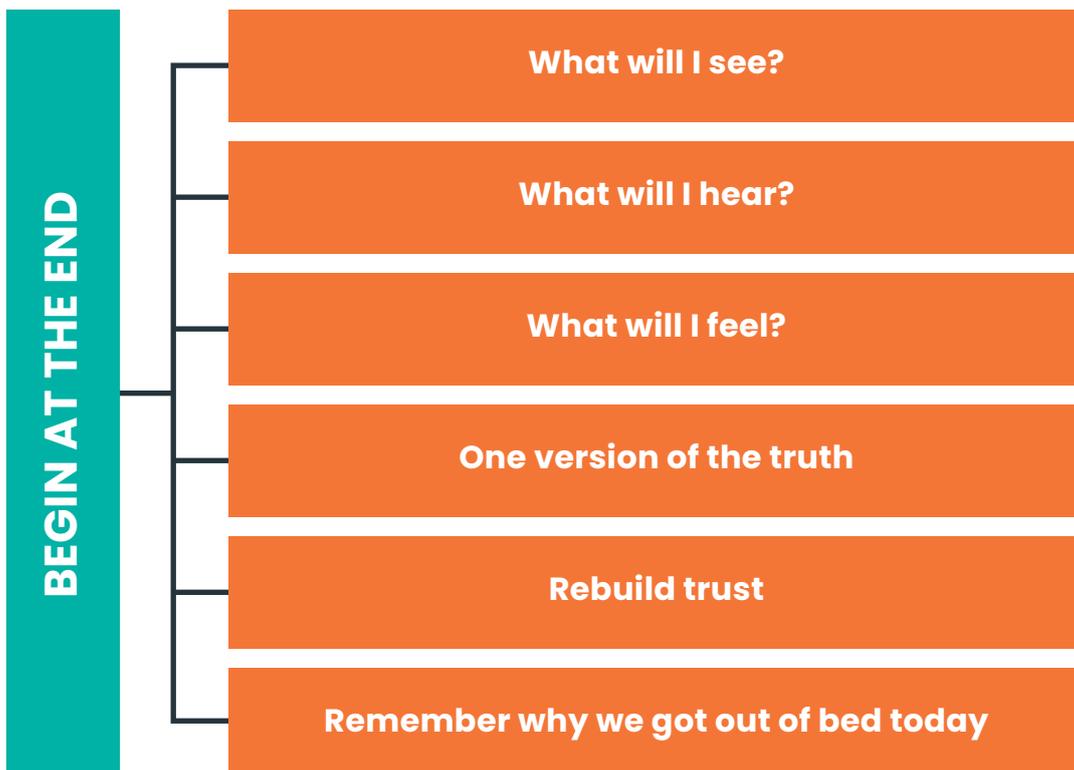
1: Begin at the end

Connect your vision to how you behave as a team by describing success in 360 degrees.

Be specific and precise about what the vision of success will actually create. Who is the success intended to benefit? It may benefit the shareholders but if it doesn't also benefit the customers, it will not be sustainable as they will move elsewhere. A positive definition of success, one that benefits the company and the clients, is the goal. Define that point because that's where the plan starts.

Start at the end and work back to where you are. Then look at every aspect of the organisation – consider it from each of 360 degrees. When we are successful, what will we look like? What will we sound like – what will we say about ourselves and what will others say about us? What will our customers feel when they deal with us?

Consider each of those aspects and how the organisation can become world class in each area. Develop your plan to deliver that organisation. Your plan must take you from where you are to where your vision of success is. Never take your eye off the end point.



2: A simple plan

Focus on the projects and priorities that make your vision real by creating your 1,000-day plan.

The 100-day plan is the first stage of a longer term process of change and improvement. From experience, I know it is possible to build a world-class company in 1,000 days. Considering this, the 100-day plan is the launch of the process and must be designed for maximum acceleration.

In the first 100 days, as well as defining the vision of success, developing the plan and inspiring the team, actions must be prioritised for maximum effect and engagement.

In discussion with the team, identify the key projects for transformation. These are the projects that will make the biggest and fastest changes. Go through three stages of prioritisation halving the activity list each time. Reduce the focus to 25% of intended activities and then prioritise those again. This is the action list. Launch it.



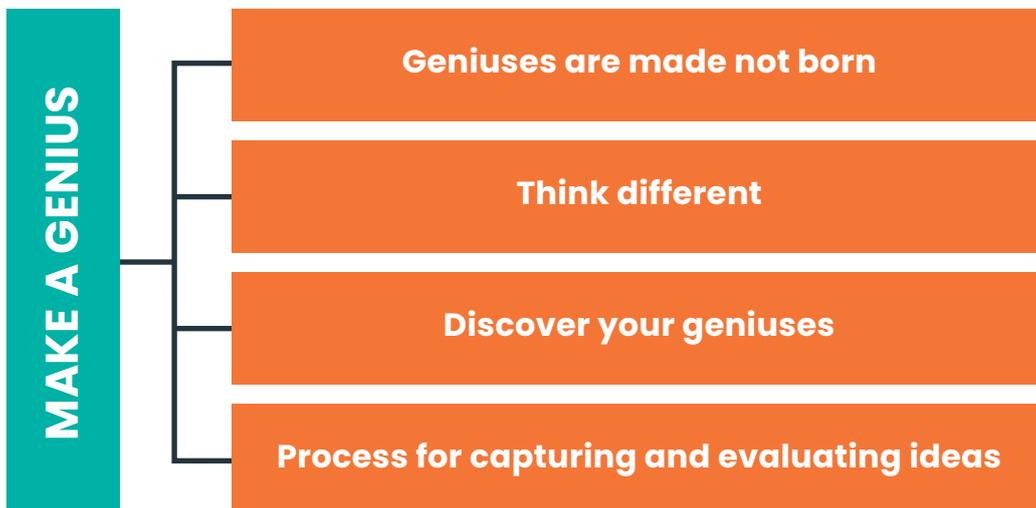
3: Don't be a genius, make a genius

Uncover creativity that your team didn't know they had by creating ways for bright ideas to flourish.

Successful organisations do not rely on outspending their competitors, rather they out-think them. This requires smart ideas, and plenty of them. The best ideas will come from the team in the business who see opportunities for improvement every day.

The role of the inspired leader is to create the culture for the team to contribute their ideas and innovations freely and openly without risk or concern. Recognise that everyone is 5% genius (Einstein may have been 50% genius but he's not available) and that 20 team members focusing their combined innovative energy on the same challenge is the equivalent of one complete genius.

Inspired leaders cultivate creativity and experimentation whilst measuring the results very precisely. The best ideas are encouraged and nourished while less successful innovation is seen as an opportunity to learn.



4: Be better, then bigger

Inspire a world-class team by emphasising quality, not profit.

Do not set an arbitrary numerical target when planning long-term success measurement. This is a limiting approach which places an upper limit on potential success. Numerical targets limit creativity.

For an organisation to achieve a world-class standard of operation, every process within the business must be consistently world-class. Wherever the customer touches the organisation, their experience should be world-class.

Focus on getting better in every aspect of the operation. Achieve world class. This will retain current and attract new clients. Focus on getting better then bigger will naturally follow.



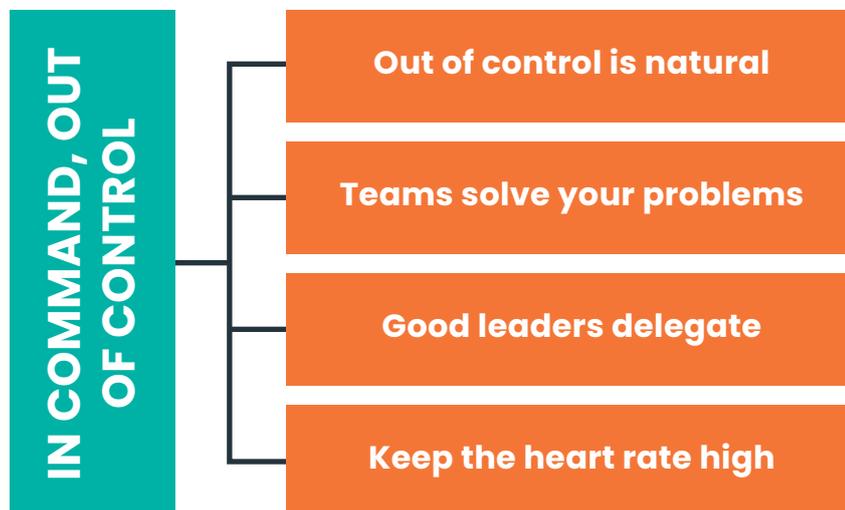
5: In command, out of control

Lead and inspire, without micromanaging, by trusting your sense of shared purpose.

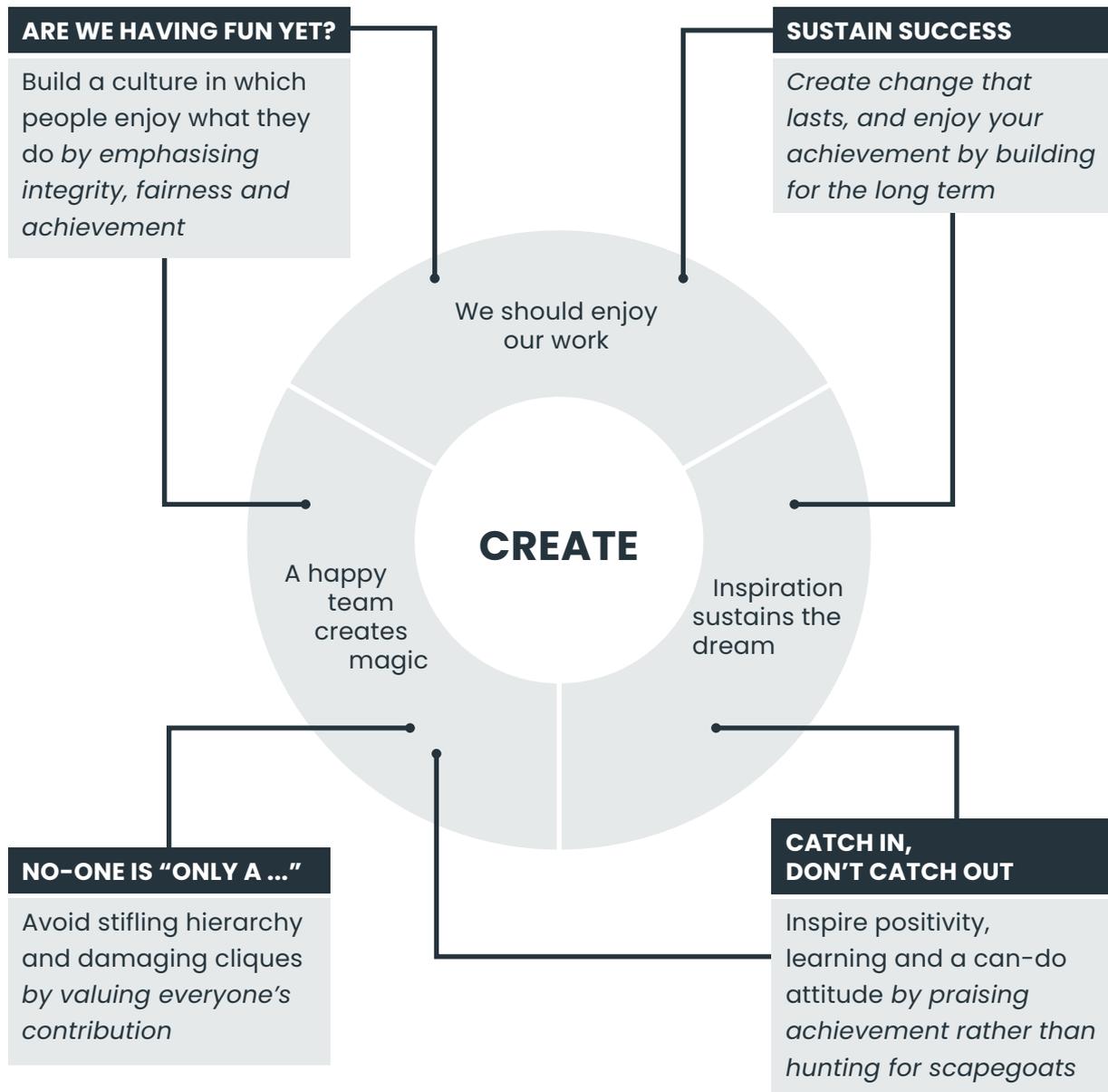
The most powerful words in a business are not spoken, they are understood. An inspired leader will create a culture where the team are empowered, trusted and accountable. Where everyone knows the plan and is aware of the part they play in achieving it.

Trust in the team to move fast and make decisions for themselves is critical to quickly delivering the 100 day priority activities. Inspired leaders do not interfere in the details – make sure that is delegated clearly to the specialist in the appropriate role.

Inspired leaders must be in command of the overall plan but they are not, nor should they be, in control of the details. The best decisions on the details are made at the point of contact with the operation. Empower and trust those making the decision.



CREATE



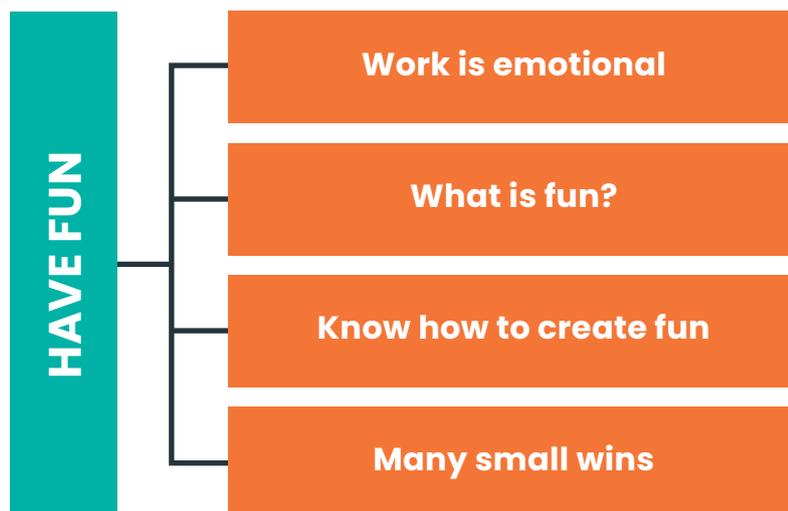
1: Are we having fun yet?

Build a culture in which people enjoy what they do by emphasising integrity, fairness and achievement.

There is very little which is more satisfying than being part of a team that is creating something worthwhile and amazing. In this environment people come into work each day looking forward to making a difference. It becomes fun to achieve, and more fun to imagine the progress we are going to achieve.

Reinforce the positive culture by giving the credit for their achievements to those who are making a positive difference. Be honest about who was responsible for the good idea/process improvement/sales result. Inspired leaders encourage their teams to take the credit for their contribution.

Maintain the energy levels of the team by encouraging challenge, being in control of the situation and producing results. The single most important element of having fun – also known as being inspired to make a greater contribution – is making progress in meaningful work. Demonstrate progress by celebrating wins and victories whether they are small or large.



2: No-one is “only a ...”

Avoid stifling hierarchy and damaging cliques by valuing everyone’s contribution.

Inspired leaders treat everyone with respect. They never use hierarchy or rank to intimidate or force their personal agenda. The best leaders make everyone’s success possible by allowing them to use their own skill, judgement and hard work to achieve results.

There is no such person as “only a ...” – he’s only a car cleaner, she’s only a marketing director. Everyone has a role to play and is a key member of the team which will deliver the plan. If they are not contributing, then the leader must determine why not, identify what is wrong and resolve it. Welcome feedback – it is the fastest way to improve the operation.

To treat anyone as if their ideas and contribution have less value is to lose the benefit of their knowledge and experience. Leaders make sure that the team works cohesively, collectively and creatively as a team. To achieve the extraordinary, it is important that everyone matters.



3: Catch in, don't catch out

Inspire positivity, learning and a can-do attitude by praising achievement rather than hunting for scapegoats.

Many good ideas start out as bad ideas – achieving the extraordinary involves making mistakes and failure along the way. Each of these is an opportunity to learn – what went wrong, why, how do we get it right next time? Allocating blame is the worst possible approach.

Nobody ever wants to do a bad job. If communication is poor or the plan is not clear then team members may not know how best to contribute to the achievement of the goals. Resolving this is the responsibility of the leader, not of the team member.

For the organisation to be agile, innovative and successful, every member of the team needs to be engaged and enthusiastic. That culture requires leaders to 'catch people in' by celebrating their contribution and not 'catching people out' through harsh words when something goes wrong. Missing opportunities because team members were afraid to be wrong is something to always be avoided.



4: Sustain success

Create change that lasts, and enjoy your achievement by building for the long term.

Inspired leaders build an organisation which is able to stand without them and be successful for the long term. They build a capable and inspired team and delegate authority and accountability. Transfer of responsibility creates a culture which accepts the need for sustained change and challenge as positive energy.

Leaders must not be afraid to give others the opportunity to use their own creativity, value and principles to make decisions. Ultimately, this breeds confidence and creates a team and business culture which grows and transmits and survives beyond any single leader.

In 100 days, inspired leaders can create an exceptional team working to a clear vision of success and making extraordinary progress. Remember that the first 100 days are the launch pad for the next stage which is a 1,000-day plan. This is when real value and sustainable success is generated. Leaders should be eager and energetic, but not frustrated or impatient.



For support with the next stage of building your 1,000 day plan, see:

Inspired Leadership by Kevin Gaskell.

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