



# The Language of Leadership

Making Sense of Strategy

Leadership Golden Notebook Two

Extraordinary Engagement  
The Seven Competencies of Great Team Leaders

JONATHAN (JONNY) SCHAUDER

## **The Language of Leadership:**

### **Making Sense of Strategy**

Jack is like any of us. He is trying to improve his leadership and relationships.

In the first book in the Leadership Golden Notebook™ series Jack explores the concept of inspiration – how to inspire others and ourselves.

In this second book Jack is exploring the concepts of leadership, strategy and engagement. He confronts ‘corporate speak’, terms such as visions, missions, values and key result areas which are so widely used in corporate planning and governance. Jack finds these concepts bewildering. He believes that there must be a way to make sense of the jargon, and to understand why it is taken so seriously.

Jack goes on another quest to meet people who can help him puzzle out how the confusing jargon of strategy might become relevant – or even critical – for engaging himself and his colleagues, and for getting results. During his journey of discovery Jack continues to add to his golden notebook the powerful, simple and usable ideas he has gathered about leading people, and organisational or project management.

What Jack discovers will change the way you understand the role and competencies of team leaders. And if you are a team leader his discoveries will make you realise how critical your role is for exceptional engagement.

## **Titles in the Leadership Golden Notebook™ series:**

### **In-Spire: Vision Driven Leadership**

Leadership Golden Notebook One

### **The Language of Leadership: Making Sense of Strategy**

Leadership Golden Notebook Two

### **Moments of Meaning: The Competencies of Communication**

Leadership Golden Notebook Three (Forthcoming)

### **Creating Cultures: High Performance Explained**

Leadership Golden Notebook Four (Forthcoming)

### **What previewers said:**

*Everyone must get this book. Everyone must talk this language. I was really sceptical until I got it.*

(Project Director, IT)

*Honestly, I admit I never really used these ideas properly until I read this book ... And I did a management degree.*

(Recruitment and HR Manager, major law firm)

*If you read the first two books together, the world seems easier and clearer. No more corporate confusion.*

(Charity and Fundraising Manager, major charity group)

*It all makes sense ... finally!*

(Strategy Specialist, local government)

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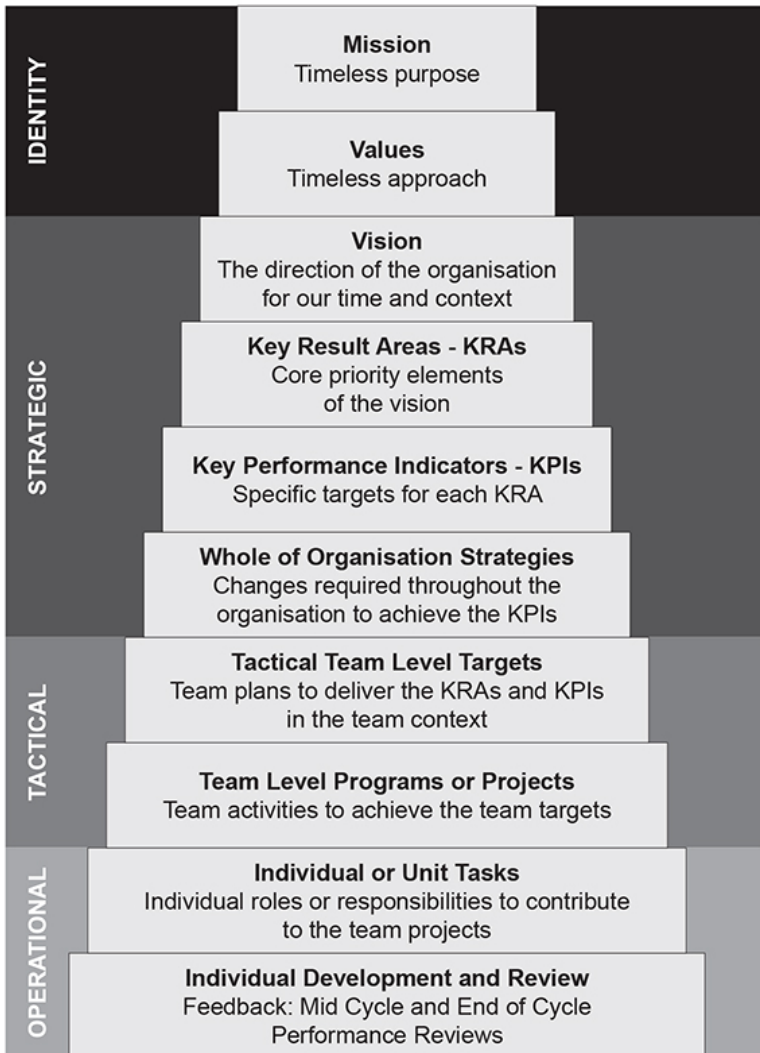
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## THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP PYRAMID\*



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\*Original concept developed in collaboration with Kevin Devlin, Director, Melbourne Water Resources Alliance (2012).

## 1. A New Journey Begins: ‘Corporate Speak’

In Notebook One, *In-spire*, Jack is a corporate middle manager on a quest. He sought out critical ideas around people skills, building inspiring relationships and vision-driven leadership. He felt transformed by his discoveries – clear and usable ideas which he believes are helpful in every context.

Jack now finds himself sitting in his global organisation’s strategy planning conference. People from everywhere have been flown in for two days to achieve alignment on the organisation’s strategy. There is a facilitator at the front doing a lot of talking.

“So where do we want to go this year?” The facilitator has asked this question perhaps 30 times in the past three hours. Jack’s ‘internal voice’ (described in Notebook One) finds itself straying. He starts thinking about his kids, the weekend, the bills and what his work team has coming up.

“We need to redo our values,” one manager suggests.

“Well, no idea is a bad idea,” says the facilitator. “Does anyone else agree?”

“No,” says a senior manager who has flown in from Asia, “I think we are not really measuring anything in the organisation and it’s time to look at the hard numbers. After all, you manage what you measure.”

“We really should complete our SWOT,” suggests the CEO. “Surely that will tell us what we have to work on?”



Jack had never really understood why anyone wanted to spend days on SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats. While he felt it was valuable to have these sorts of discussions, they never really seemed to go anywhere. And as a 12 year corporate veteran, Jack was getting just a little tired of wasting time.

Jack's internal voice and negative assumptions take over as the strategy session winds on. He finds himself going to a very frustrated place in his mind. He notices that the others in the room are looking bored. Everyone seems to be just going through the motions.

He reflects that he has been in organisational life way too long still to be confused by all this corporate babble and bingo that seemed to be going on around him. (Corporate bingo was a game invented by bored executives who took lists of jargon words into their organisations' planning meetings, then ticked their list every time a speaker used one of the terms. When all terms were ticked they would whisper 'bingo' to the player next to them.)

When he came out of the conference, Jack reviewed in his mind what the day had achieved. They had looked at the organisation's values and produced a long, laundry-style list of 'how we do things around here'. The outcome seemed to be twelve words finally displayed on the digital screen – words like 'respect' and 'fun' and 'integrity'.

"What's that all about?" he wondered.

They had reviewed the mission of the organisation. In part this involved about 50 minutes spent arguing whether they should be aiming to be Number 2 or Number 3 in the world. They had all agreed that Number

1 was a place held by another organisation. In the end, just to wrap it up, the facilitator had said something like ... “Look, let’s use Number 3 for this year and go from there.” People had nodded ... maybe smiled. But it had left Jack a bit cold.

There was much discussion about expanding the customer base and apparently the new vision for the organisation was to double its revenue over the next 20 years. “Is that going to inspire my crew in the way – from my first quest – I learnt a vision should?” thought Jack. “Not a chance really... and I don’t think today’s outcomes have filled anyone with purpose and positivity.” He imagined himself trying to report and explain the conference to his team, and cringed at the confusion he’d have to narrate.

“Come on Jack,” he says to himself. “Something is not working here. And you have learnt that when things seem not to be working some choices based on positive assumptions need to be made. It is time to really get clear on how all this strategy stuff works.”

Jack’s new quest had begun. “Clarity,” he said to himself. “Clarity is the new goal. It is time for a new journey.”

He pulled his gold coloured notebook out of his briefcase. “My notebook was really great for storing the golden ideas about how to inspire people,” he reflected. “Now it’s time to add to it with terms about strategy that will be clear and meaningful. The terms need to imbue us with a sense of purpose to achieve practical outcomes.”

At that very moment Sophie, the head of his division strolled up to him, yawning, and looking like she’d just woken from a poor night’s rest. “Phew, that was bizarre

huh?” she whispered. “Make any sense to you? ... What do we do with all that?”

Jack explained his new quest. “There surely must be a clear path to be found through this maze of terminology.” He flourished the notebook and told her he would start immediately. She reflected on how much she had learnt from Jack’s first journey. “Positive assumptions!” she thought. “He’s going to find ways to bring this together and help all of us.”

Jack made his first entry: