

Transforming Schools:

Sustainable Success Series

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by

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Keys to long term success for schools that recognize the need for transformation in times of change

Includes Key Element Summaries on:

- **Strategy**
- **Value**
- **Innovation**
- **Alignment of vision and practice**
- **Jobs To Be Done**
- **Organization change tools**

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Process of Change

MAJOR KEY

HOW effective organizations change is not a mystery; forward-leaning schools are starting use time-tested models.

How do effective schools engage in strategic change?

The most widely used model of strategic change is that of Kotter, a close variant of which looks like:

- **Build a sense of urgency around a big opportunity**
- **Unwrap and articulate a North Star; identify the core elements of OUR aspirations.**
- **Accelerate movement by removing barriers**
- **Research, design, prototype, and test**
- **Visibly celebrate significant early wins**
- **Institutionalize changes in culture**

Once a school community has largely recognized the urgency and opportunities offered by a change, creation and use of a shared North Star ensures that innovation is aligned to value-generation, not randomized. Then change agents can build teams, research and design, and launch prototypes supported by the resources of the school and leaders.

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Value

MAJOR KEY

Every organization has a value proposition, and few successful organizations have multiple value propositions.

What is a value proposition?

There are many definitions of “value proposition”; this is the one I like best for schools:

VALUE

The difference between what you say you are going to do and what you actually do, as viewed through the eyes of your customers.

Value is not found in a memorable tag line. A strong, differentiated value proposition that will attract families is not a mission statement that sounds like every other schools’ mission statement. A winning value proposition has nuance; it is different from others’; it has clear purpose defined in words that your community understands and will rally around.

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Innovation

MAJOR KEY

Innovation is *not* about having a great idea; schools are FULL of great ideas!

What is innovation?

There are many definitions of innovation, but this is the one that I think resonates best for schools:

INNOVATION =

**IMPLEMENTING IDEAS THAT
ENHANCE VALUE FOR
THE ORGANIZATION**

Innovation in schools is NOT about a new technology! True innovations are those ideas, effectively implemented, that will increase the school's value proposition over time. Most value-rich innovation we see now in schools are those related to a "deeper learning" model that increases student engagement, perceptions of relevance, curiosity, and a more personalized student ownership of the learning experience.

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Strategy

MAJOR KEY

Strategy is, very simply, about winning. Nearly everything else in traditional “strategic” plans are actually *tactics*, not strategy.

What is strategy?

Roger Martin, Dean of the Business School at the University of Toronto, identifies the five key questions of strategy:



Before building a necessary set of tactics to implement strategy, we have to first ensure that we answer these questions: What is our best aspirational version of our school? What is our market? How will we win enough customers in those markets to thrive? What systems do we need in place at our school to deliver on or aspirational value proposition? How will we know if we are succeeding? Once we have defined these, we can fill in below with tactical plans.

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Strategy is NOT...

MAJOR KEY

Effective strategy is as much about what you DON'T do as what you do.

What is Strategy NOT?

According to Michael Porter (HBR 1996):

Strategy is
NOT...

- Vision, which can be vague
- A plan, which is just writing
- Optimizing the status quo, which tends towards stasis
- Following best practices, which can empower mediocrity

Strategic plans that are full of ambiguous adjectives lead to haphazard results. Plans packed with many tactical goals and measurements sit on the shelf and are impossible for educators to actually implement. Strategies that are not focused on winning may nurture continuation of practices that are less than aspirational or may no longer be relevant.

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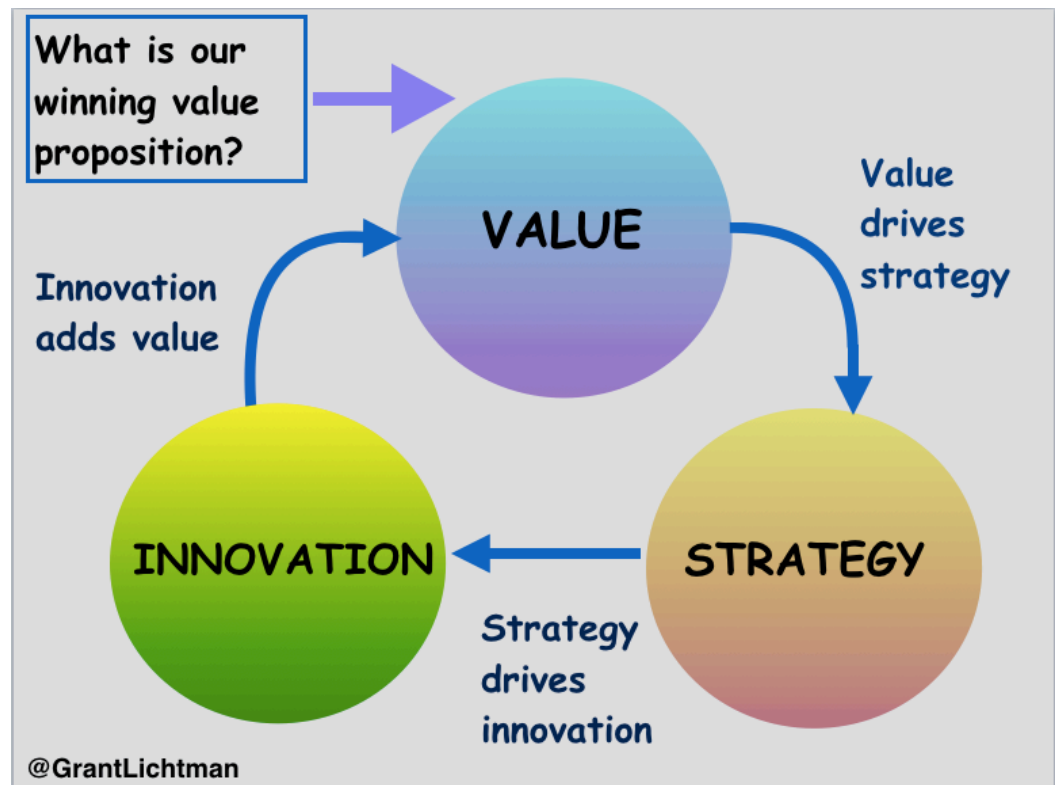
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The Value-Innovation-Strategy Equation

MAJOR KEY

Effective organizations understand the critical relationship between value, innovation, and strategy

Does your school have intentional alignment amongst these three key drivers?



Our schools' values are what creates a winning aspiration; our best version of our school now in the future. Strategies are the steps we take to "win" that future. Innovations are changes in practice or program that will ensure those strategies succeed, which, if successful, increase the school's value proposition.

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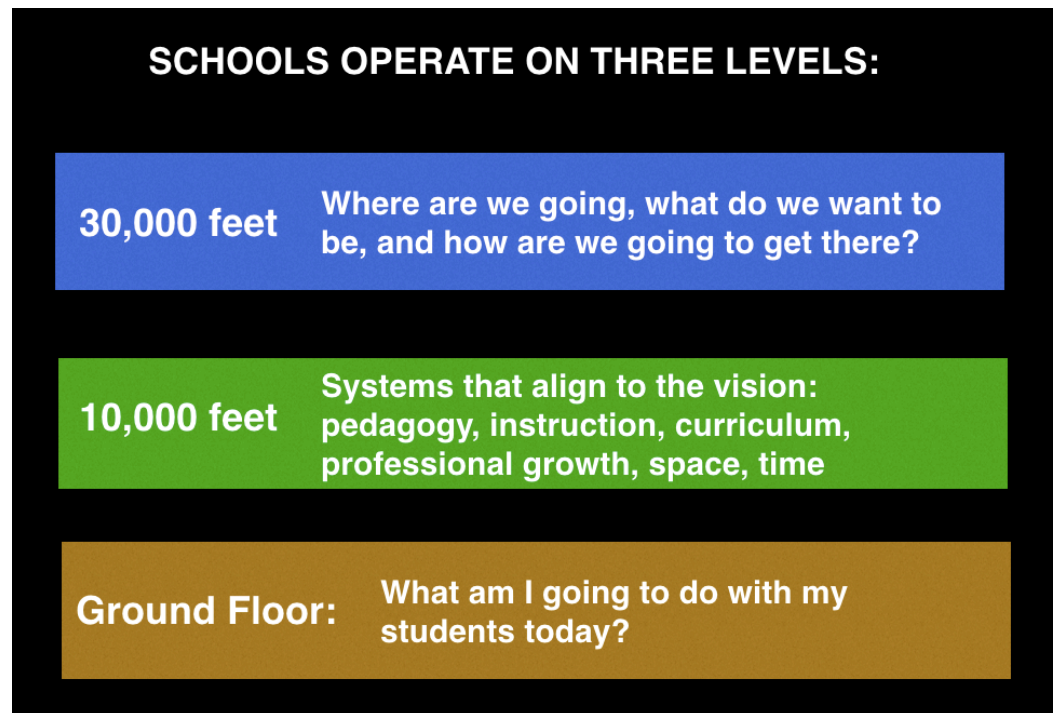
Value-Rich Alignment

MAJOR KEY

Effective schools demonstrate strong, visible, frequent alignment between vision and practice.

What are the keys to aligning a school?

Schools, like most organizations, operate on three major levels:



In schools with *weak* value propositions, teachers (who are responsible for the Ground Floor), and administrators (who are generally responsible for the middle level) struggle with how their work directly supports the top level. In schools with *powerful* value propositions many adults (and students!) can clearly articulate how daily learning and the major systems of the school directly and frequently contribute to the vision and winning aspiration of the whole school.

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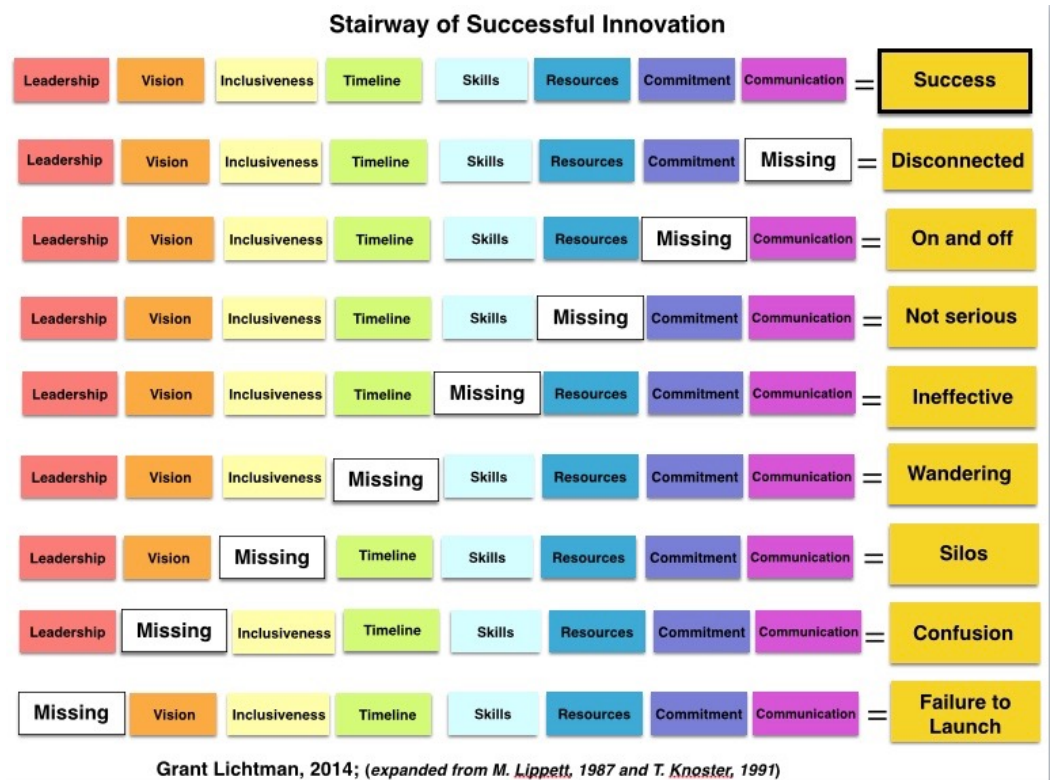
Stairway of Successful School Change

MAJOR KEY

History and research tells us that these are the key steps that lead to successful organization-wide change

What is this stairway?

Going back to at least the 1980's, studies have shown that some ingredients are essential for successful organization-wide change:



The good news is that many schools have strengths in some of these elements. The bad news is that missing any of them leads to something short of success. The stairway is a great place to start an internal check-up; what will your school need to put in place to ensure that real change actually happens?

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Jobs To Be Done

MAJOR KEY

Customers come to a provider of goods or services because they have a job that needs doing.

What job is your school being hired to do?

Successful innovations that disrupt the marketplace are those that do a job better for customers than the traditional product or service (*Jobs To Be Done*, Anthony Ulwick):

Jobs To Be Done		
Jobs To Be Done	Old Solution	New Solution
Ingest medicine	Pills and Shots	Skin patches
Make many products for mass market	Many craftsmen	Production line
Execute rote legal functions	Lawyers	legalzoom.com
Detect enemy at night	Flares	Night vision
Keep windows clean	Clean with squeegee	Self-cleaning glass
Clean teeth	Manual brushing	Automated with sound waves
Search for information	Library	Internet

The reasons parents send their children to school have remained fairly static for decades. Most schools viewed the “job” of school through lenses like:

- Teach children how to read, write, do math, and solve problems.
- Teach students how to interact with others.
- Prepare students for the next grade.
- Keep students and teachers safe within quiet, well-managed classrooms.

When we apply the JTBD process, we find that there may be a completely different set of “jobs” that drive buying decisions as viewed by our primary customers, parents, students and even teachers, jobs like:

- Help my child overcome obstacles.
- Help my child to fulfill her potential.
- Give my child opportunities to impact the world.
- Motivate my child to find and pursue his passions.
- Teach my child how to effectively work as a member of a team.

