



# The Human Component of Building Strategy

Here are 12 tips on making the Strategy Development process an experience that's **energising** ... because it involves meaningful **debates** ... that result in true **commitment**.

**“We just wanted to say how delighted we were with the strategy process. You are a breath of fresh air, with the energy, intellect coupled with a pragmatic approach, that we needed so desperately to cut through and develop a coherent strategy”**

Four Points client

To see if we can help enhance the design and engagement of your upcoming strategy process, please get in touch at [ravi@fourpoints.net](mailto:ravi@fourpoints.net) OR [aahuti@fourpoints.net](mailto:aahuti@fourpoints.net)



### 1. Confirm your Objective

Be honest about your true objective for the strategy process. Have you already made tentative decisions for which you require validation and alignment, or are you seeking to co-create strategic choices with diverse perspectives? One is to seek compliance, the other commitment. Which one is it for you?



### 2. Get Aligned

Have 1-1 conversations with everyone that is to be involved in the strategy formation to agree on: scope, outcomes, approach. This way, you already know what concerns to deal with upfront, and it gives you a chance to align expectations.



### 3. Foster Engagement

Resist the temptation to send your team a strategy template to complete. Whilst that can be a very efficient way to get the work done, it will not foster creativity and most certainly is not the most effective way to get to a quality output. Design a process where topics are broken down into manageable chunks and build in sufficient time to discuss / debate options.



### 4. Select the Right Players

Don't let hierarchy be the only criteria to identify participants for the strategy formation. Engage people who will challenge your thinking, who can think systemically and who know the industry.



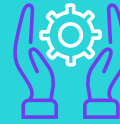
### 5. Define a Higher Purpose

Give the team 'space' to confirm or realign on the company's purpose. Not only does it serve as a compass for your decision making, but having a higher purpose (beyond making profit) is a real driver for your staff and other key stakeholders. Research by Korn Ferry (People on a Mission 2016), illustrated that companies that make a strong commitment to purpose achieved CAGR of 9.8% vs. 2.4% of S&P500 over a 5 year period.



### 6. Use Evidence and Experience

Invest in getting data and analysis to give you further insight on the environment that you compete in. This will ensure your choices are grounded in objectivity and fact, to support the experience, intuition and judgement of the people involved in the process.



### 7. Separate 'Role' vs. 'Soul'

Remind everyone that final decisions may not necessarily reflect individual input and so should not be taken personally. The outcome is not about any one individual's input but about the collective process. Proactively follow-up with people that may not have been fully in agreement with the choices with intent to reconcile the gap in alignment. The last thing you need is to allow cynicism to breed.



### 8. Stay Healthy

For your strategy sessions, schedule them away from the office in an environment that facilitates 'big' thinking; closer to nature, open spaces, walking debates, exercises, insulin regulating food, the list can go on and on ... but you get the point.



### 9. Get a Strategy Facilitator

Engage an independent facilitator to guide your work and inject some powerful questioning. The Executive team will have enough to cope with on the content ... and making decisions. So bring in someone new that keeps the dialogue focused, ensures fair contribution and builds the right environment. As a bonus, they can also help alter the dynamic, so people do not revert to their normal 'type'.



### 10. Test Understanding

At the end of any significant strategy sessions, have the team individually create a stakeholder focused elevator pitch ... it's a great way to check everyone's understanding and alignment.



### 11. Appoint an Analyst

Have someone responsible for pulling the entire process together ... doing the detailed work to ensure the data, insights and decisions connect up.



### 12. Determine New Habits

Have an honest debate regarding organisational or Executive team habits to answer the question "What do we need to stop doing/start doing/change, to have the strategy successfully implemented?" Depending on your track record, it could be the most insightful debate you end up having!