

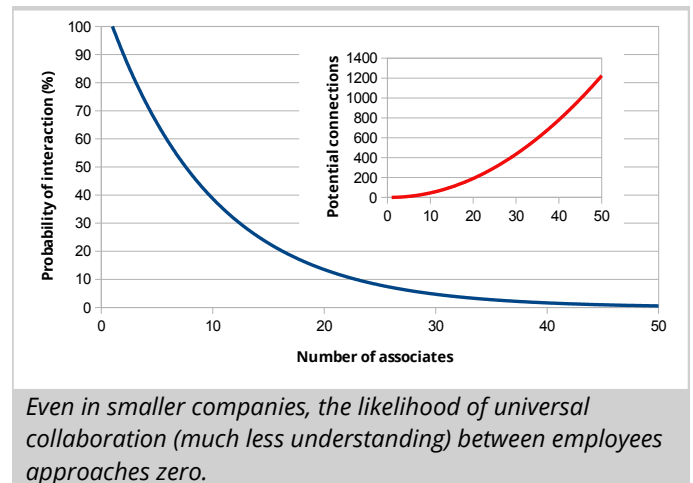
Improving organizational alignment and performance with active planning

Formal divisions exist within companies for important reasons, but they can lead to misalignment and stifle innovation. Though the importance of continuously aligning a company's goals and operations is universally recognized as imperative, few organizations have an established process in place to measure or monitor this in a useful way.¹ Indeed, failure to focus and execute on strategic priorities company-wide has been singled out as the most frequent cause of business failure.² Active planning tools can help your company determine what goals may not be fully articulated across the organization while identifying tactics that may be redundant or even divergent from current objectives.

"Silos" can increase short-term efficiency, but only at the far greater cost of reduced long-term efficacy. Whether as an individual or group, focusing exclusively on one's own functional area can lead to a reduction in cooperation as well as any sense of shared responsibility for organizational results. Misalignment between sales and marketing teams alone, for example, has been estimated to cost companies up to 36% of their top line.³ With an active planning system in place, your business can get and keep its teams on the same page,



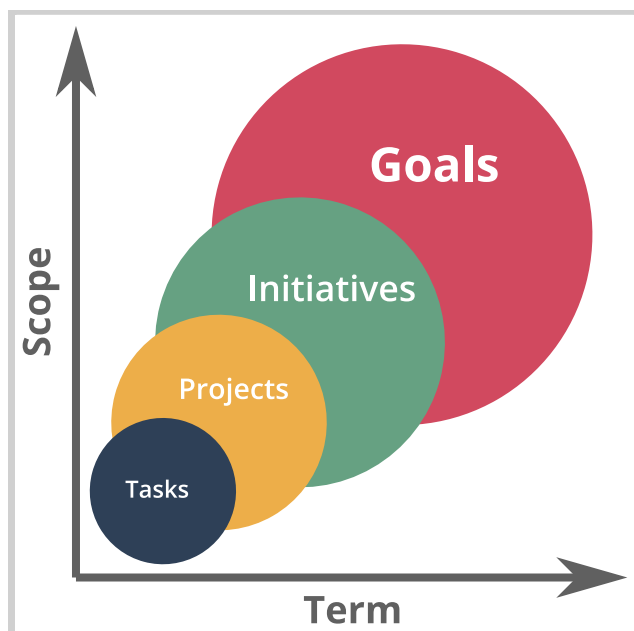
MIT Sloan, 2017.



Misaligned tactics lead to missed opportunities and redundant or even orthogonal efforts. The best strategies are useless without the right tactics to implement them. In a 2015 survey, it was found that 80% of employees could not see a clear connection between their own tasks and company goals, while 45% of middle managers were unable to name *any* of their company's top priorities.⁴ Active planning ensures that "activity" is not confused with actual progress by consistently communicating present goals and allowing each member to understand how their own work maps to them.

Teams left out of the planning process are forced to play catch-up (but usually don't). When senior management fails to build consensus between teams, its processes cannot scale effectively (feeling "left out of the loop" is the #1 reason top performers give for leaving their employer⁵). With numerous studies confirming the continued validity of both the "Allen Curve"⁶ and "Dunbar's Number"⁷ in the Internet age, the emergence of COVID-19 has only accelerated the potential for disconnect

between company strategy and individual tasks. Even in environments where objectives are well communicated and understood, employees often do not have the opportunity to provide constructive counsel or signal their personal interest in how they wish to grow within the organization through their next assignment. While dialogue can at times lead to disagreements, these can be a powerful tool if managed and channeled properly towards building consensus and making faster progress as a unified team.



By definition, the strategic planning process is long-term with a company-wide scope. Clearly aligning each project to specific goals motivates employees, ensures common understanding and facilitates impact assessment upon completion.

Active planning up front reduces the need for reactive (and costly) corrections later. While many companies conduct periodic surveys to capture employee feedback, a uni-directional set of fixed questions to measure a lag indicator offers no ability to identify, much less collaborate, on effective solutions. By gathering

buy-in and enthusiasm from the entire workforce from day one (something that 88% of Millennials consider to be “very important”⁸), management can motivate their workforce to contribute their full range of talents while reducing employee churn and more readily attracting newcomers, a boon to every hiring manager and department (including HR). Furnished with the most recent data available, they can also recognize any need for course correction before additional complications emerge.

Alignment is an essential component of well-run companies, bringing different teams to the same page so that mutual goals can be achieved. Through active planning, companies can unify their top-level strategy and ground-level operations with a proven approach⁹ to better organizational performance¹⁰ and learning.

To learn more about active planning and how it can help your business align its goals and operations, please visit www.viavote.com or contact us at info@viavote.com.

- 1 ["How aligned is your organization?"](#), HBR, 2017.
- 2 ["A simple way to test your company's strategic alignment"](#), HBR, 2016.
- 3 ["The economics of alignment"](#), Forrester Research, 2015.
- 4 ["The use cases for big data"](#), BARC Research, 2015.
- 5 ["Why Do Employees Quit on Their Bosses?"](#), M. Schwantes, 2018.
- 6 ["Workspaces That Move People"](#), HBR, 2014.
- 7 ["Why we can only maintain 150 relationships"](#), C. Ro, 2019.
- 8 ["2016 Millennial Employee Engagement Study"](#), Cone Communications (Porter Novelli), 2016.
- 9 ["The potential benefits of advanced planning and scheduling systems in sales and operations planning"](#), Chalmers University of Technology (Sweden), 2010.
- 10 ["The ROI of Alignment"](#), CIO, 2007.