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SOCIAL VENTURE INSTITUTE HOLLYHOCK

Agile Strategy for the Social Venture

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

Mike Rowlands

I work at the intersection of business, and community, supporting visionary leaders around the world, helping to reshape business as a force for good.

I've advised some of the world's most courageous enterprises on strategy, branding, values-based leadership, and social impact.

I'm happiest hosting juicy, generative conversations with people and groups, in service to humanity.

- Partner & CEO, Junxion Strategy
- Co-Founder, Canadian Purpose Economy Project
- Chair Emeritus, Hollyhock
- Director, ORS Impact
- Ambassador for B Corp
- Ambassador for the Inner Development Goals
- Producer, Social Venture Institute

Let's be Audacious, Together…

Junxion is a fractional strategy partner for purpose-led boards, CEOs, and their teams. From offices in Vancouver, Toronto, and London we've supported over 600 clients on five continents, who tackle everything from AIDS to Net Zero.

Through our integrated suite of services, we help businesses and nonprofits to navigate complexity, deepen resilience, and drive sustainable growth. We're here to help you build the leadership and organizational resilience to thrive in a changing world.

We combine business fundamentals, deep sustainability expertise, and the latest practices in corporate social purpose. No matter what point you are on your journey, we'll meet you there.

Junxion is a proud founding 'champion' of the Canadian Purpose Economy Project, a long-time member and advocate for the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, and is an award-winning, 'Best *for* the World,' Certified B Corp.

Certified B Corporation

CANADIAN PURPOSE ECONOMY PROJECT

MEMBER of the WELLBEING ECONOMY ALLIANCE

adidas

FINANCE
UNEP INITIATIVE

DANONE
ONE PLANET. ONE HEALTH

The Guardian

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

INTERSPORT

GERDAU

THE BODY SHOP

coastcapital

CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

wjs
Canada

PRINCES
GROUP

Artfinder

BROMPTON

TAKE A HIKE
FOUNDATION

Nordea

Crown Agents
Bank

colart

IMPACT
HUB

SEASALT
CORNWALL

Agenda

How to Plan When You Don’t Know What’s Coming….

- Debunking Four Myths About Strategy
- Q&A Along the Way
- Tools & Opportunities to Go Deeper

Myth #1: Strategy is for the Big Guys

What is Strategy?

What is Strategy?

Strat-i-jee, noun: A plan of action to achieve a desired goal

- "A plan": Singular! (Not half a dozen plans.)
- "…of action"—not mere ideas or wishful thinking.
- "…to achieve a desired goal." Aligned toward a meaningful outcome.

What is a Strategic Plan?

A guiding document that defines an organization's approach to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision.

It answers a few important questions:

- Why does our organization exist?
- What do we hope to achieve?
- What must we learn, and what work must we do to achieve our vision?
- What principles will guide our approach to the work?

What is Strategic Planning?

An extended conversation with stakeholders designed to optimize the organization's work.

- Inclusive of diverse stakeholders.
- Open and transparent as possible.
- Prioritizes milestones, capabilities, and initiatives.
- Begins with the end in mind—the enduring benefit.

Where Should You Start?

Purpose	Values
Vision	Value Proposition
Mission	Brand Narrative

Where Should You Start?

Purpose

Vision

Mission

Values

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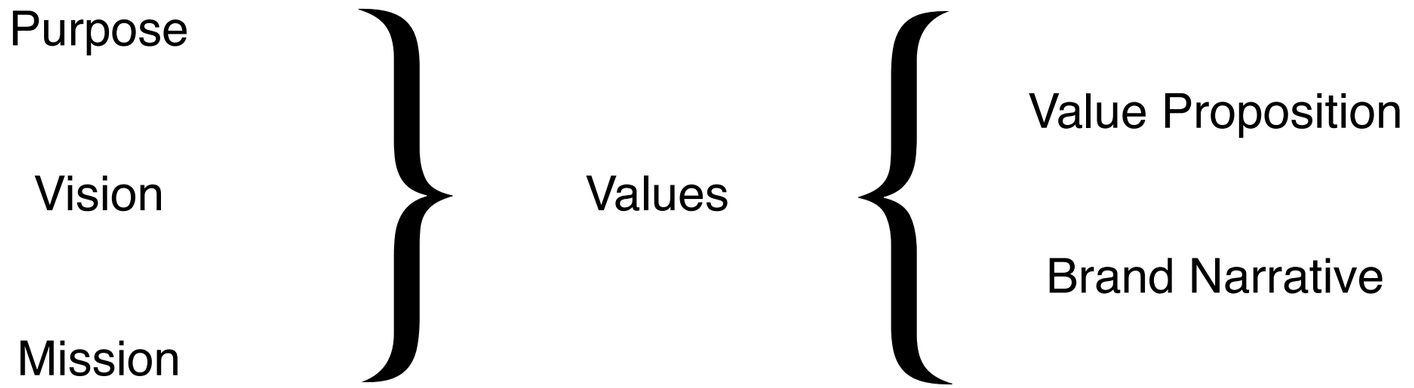
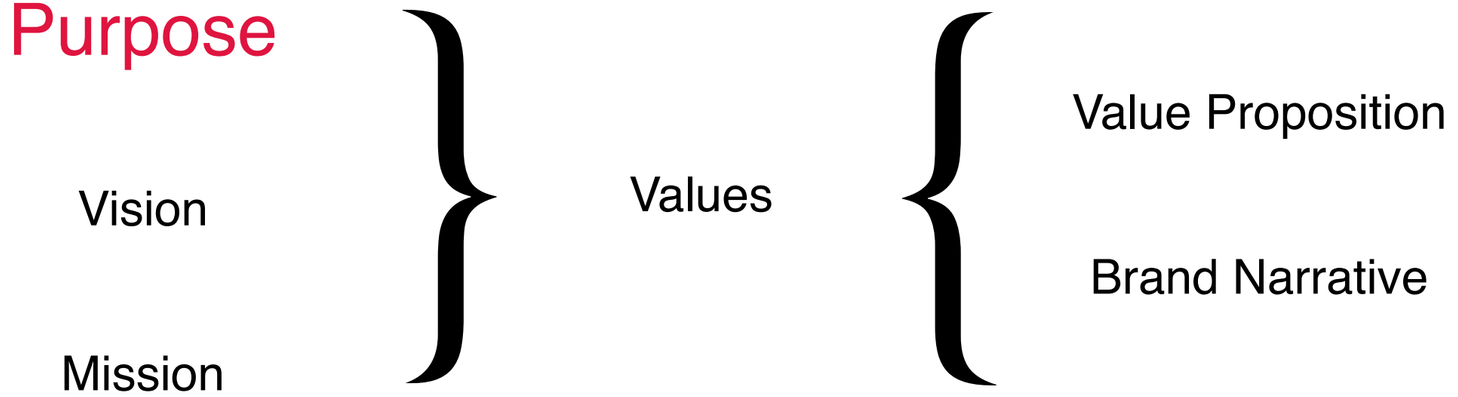
Brand Narrative

Where Should You Start?



Where Should You Start?



What is Purpose?

A Social Purpose Business is a company whose enduring reason for being is to create a better world.

It is an engine for good, creating social benefits by the very act of conducting business. Its growth is a positive force in society.

—UNITED WAY BC SOCIAL PURPOSE INSTITUTE

A Social Purpose Business exists to solve the problems of people and planet profitably, and not profit from causing problems.

—**BRITISH ACADEMY**
Principles for Purposeful Business

The Social Purpose Business's reason to exist is to make an optimal, strategic contribution to the long-term wellbeing of all people and the planet.

—BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION
Dr. Victoria Hurth, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership

Optimized for the scale of the company.

> The Social Purpose Business makes an **optimal**, strategic contribution to the long-term wellbeing of all people and the planet.

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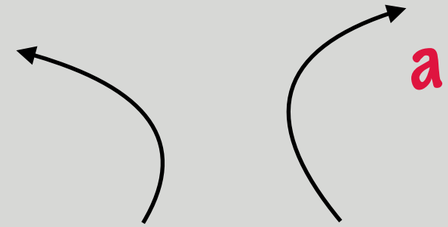
Optimized for the scale of the company.

In pursuit of a meaningful end



The Social Purpose Business makes an optimal, **strategic** contribution to the long-term wellbeing of all people and the planet.

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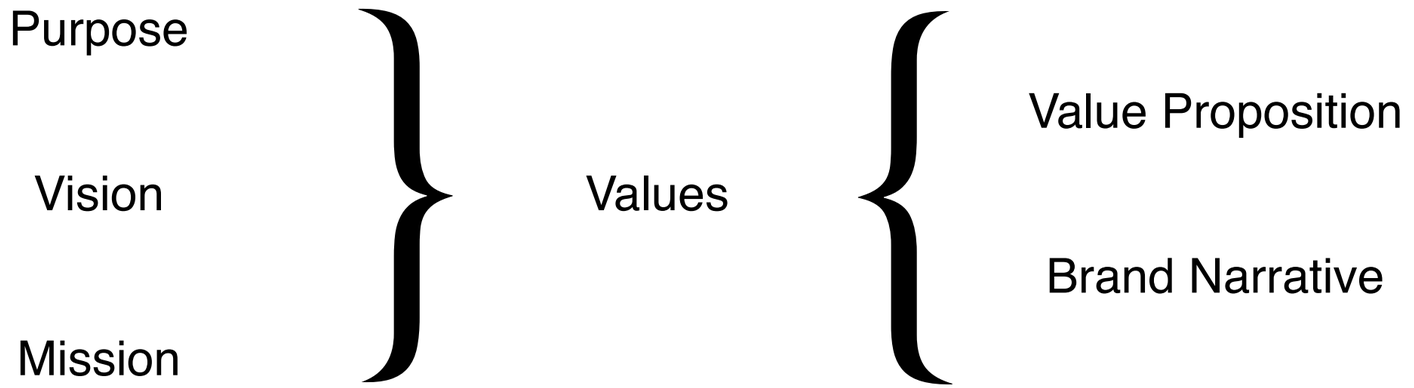
Surely the definition of the purpose of society as a whole

Why Does Your Organization Exist?

What’s Next?!

What Comes Next?



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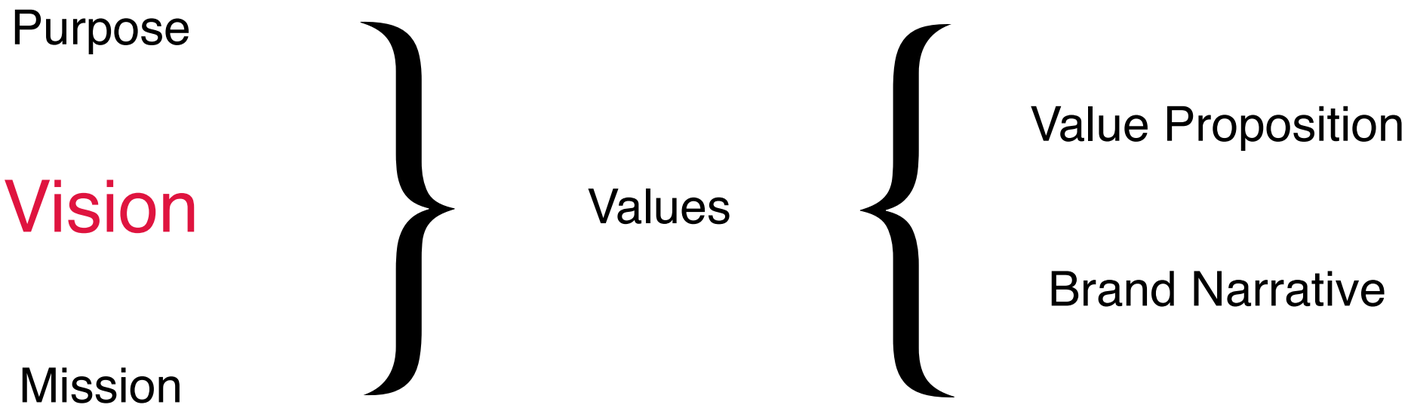


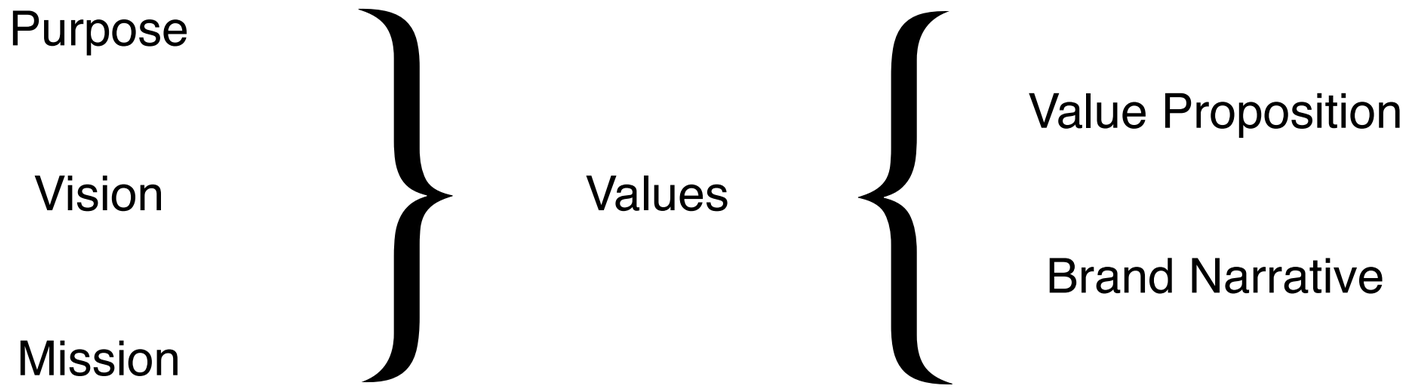
How will the world be made better by your work?

Guidelines for Effective Vision Statements

How is the world made better by your work?

- Aspirational: Lofty and bold!
- Actionable: Can you make progress every day?
- Clear: This is a jargon free zone!
- Concise: Seven words. Not a single word more.

What Comes Next?



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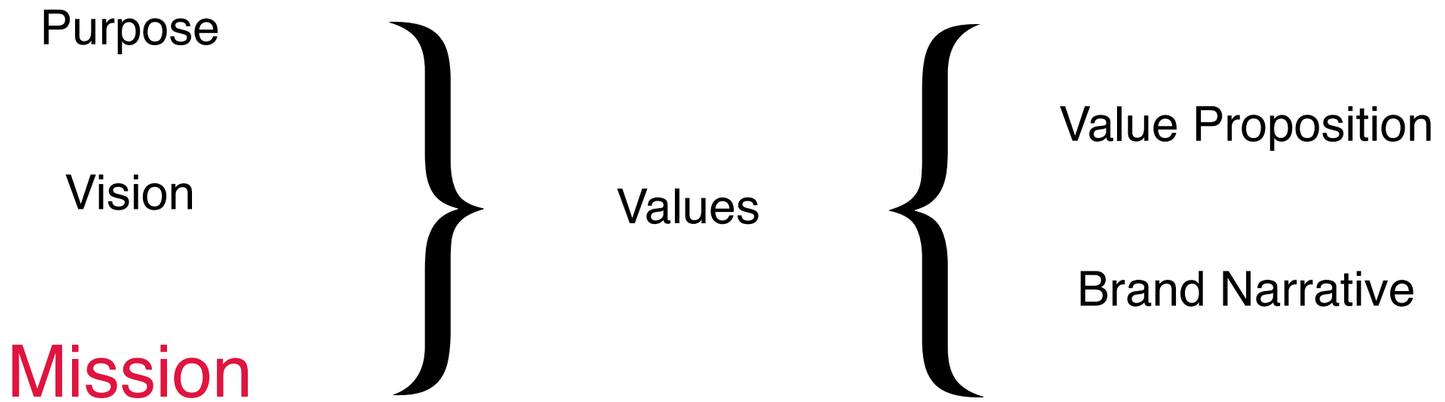

> What work are you uniquely able to do, in pursuit of your vision?

Is strategy just for ‘the big guys?’

Strat-i-jee, noun: A plan of action to achieve a desired goal

- “A plan”: Singular! (Not half a dozen plans.)
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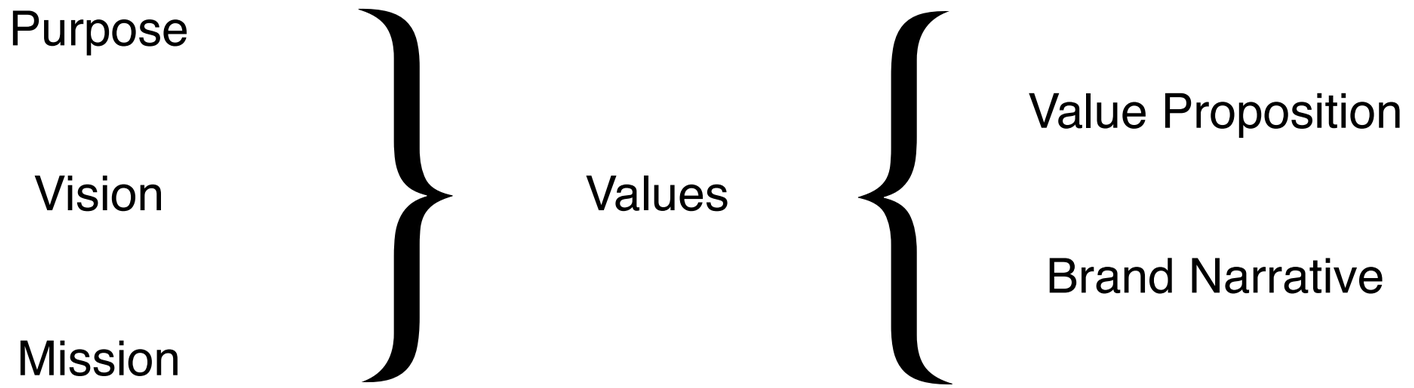
Myth #2: Culture Can Wait

Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

What Comes Next?



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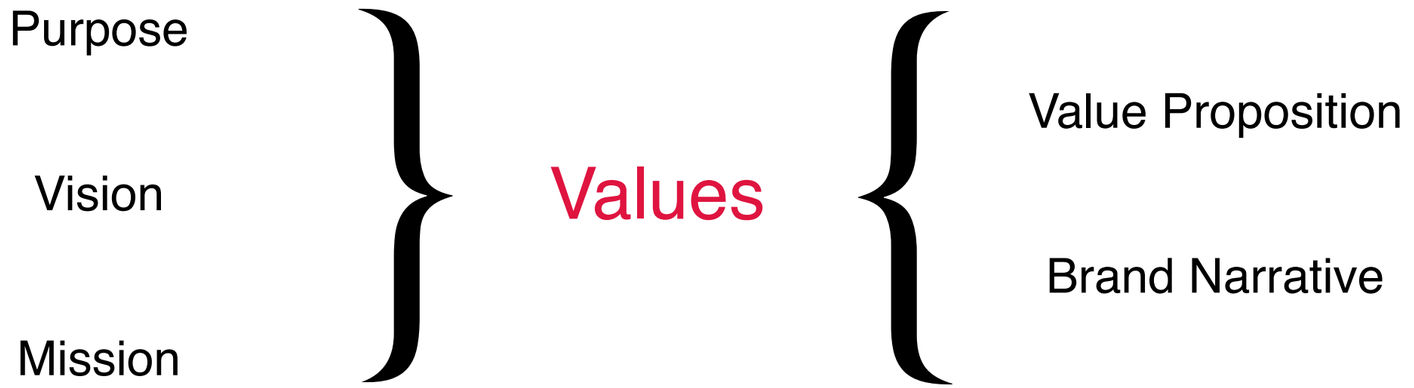


Immigrant Services Society of BC

“We all thrive together in community.”

When organizational values are articulated well, they support a healthy, vibrant culture by shaping decisions, engagement, and behaviours.

If strategy is *what* we’ll do, values are the equally important *how*….

There are four types of values:

- Baseline values
- Core values
- Aspirational values
- Accidental values

Immigrant Services Society of BC

“We all thrive together in community.”

When organizational values are articulated well, they support a healthy, vibrant culture by shaping decisions, engagement, and behaviours.

If strategy is *what* we’ll do, values are the equally important *how*….

- We work with **purpose**
- We **aspire** to improve
- We cultivate **belonging**
- We are **genuine**

Immigrant Services Society of BC

We work with **purpose**

- We recognize we're all connected to an effort that's greater than each of us.
- We are thoughtful and deliberate with our choices.
- We pursue change for the better.
- We build enduring relationships.

The GUIDE Framework

Principles should be…

- Guiding—ie. ‘do this.’
- Useful—ie. doable!
- Inspiring—ie. they say what matters.
- Developmental—ie. relevant as the context shifts.
- Evaluable—ie. measurable.

Myth #3: Strategy Comes Before Branding

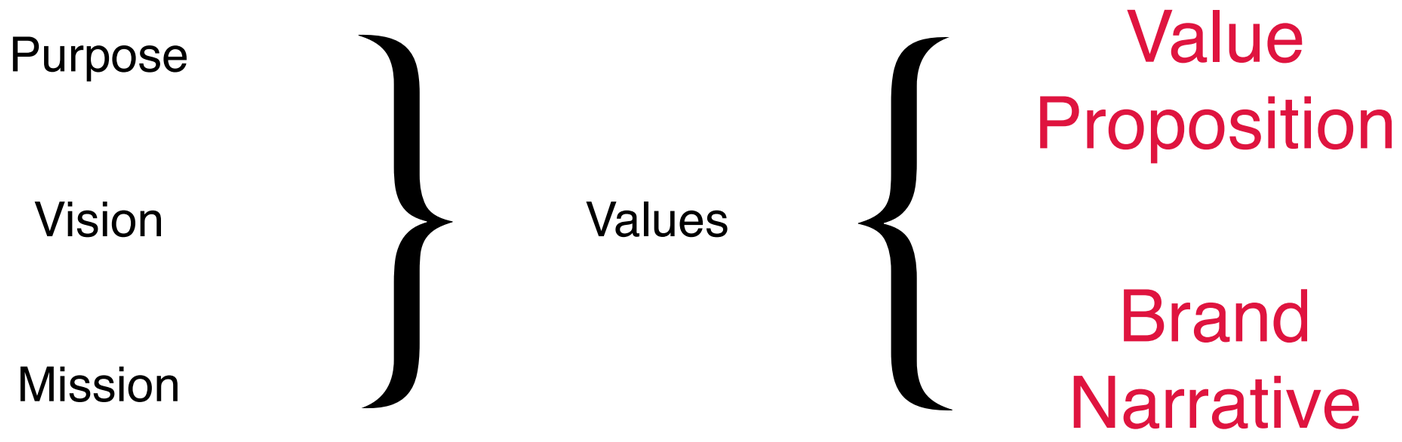
What’s a Brand?

What's a Brand?

Brand, noun: The public face of strategy

- It's more than a logo, colour palette, and fonts.
- It's more than a slogan or marketing campaign.
- It's a toolkit for stakeholder engagement.

Where Should You Start?



If you closed your doors tomorrow, who would miss you? And why?

Myth #4: Strategy Comes Before Implementation

Cast off the Bowlines…

Thematic Goals:

- Establish our 2018 budget.
- Secure new debt financing.
- Launch & complete a beta test of a new Affiliate program.
- Complete documentation of our consulting approach.

“Working *on* the Business….”

Agility has a Rhythm

Biennial strategic planning retreat – two days

- Define the key capabilities and action areas to develop toward our vision

Annual business planning retreat – two days

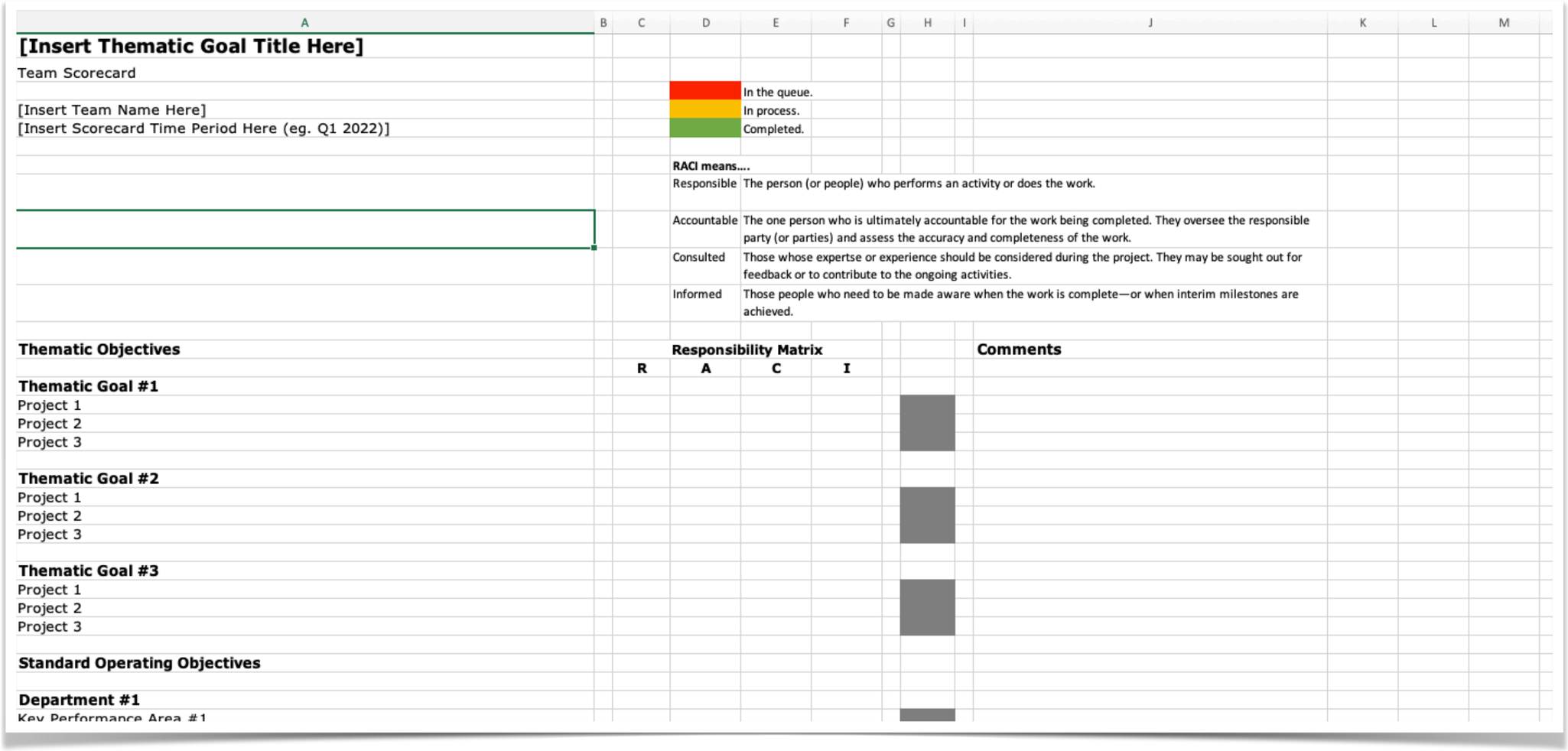
- Review the strategic plan & define annual targets

Quarterly theme-setting offsite – half day

- Review past quarter’s performance, set initiatives for next quarter

Semi-monthly team check-in – one hour

- Check-in on progress and lend mutual support



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	
[Insert Thematic Goal Title Here]													
Team Scorecard													
				In the queue.									
[Insert Team Name Here]				In process.									
[Insert Scorecard Time Period Here (eg. Q1 2022)]				Completed.									
			RACI means....										
			Responsible	The person (or people) who performs an activity or does the work.									
			Accountable	The one person who is ultimately accountable for the work being completed. They oversee the responsible party (or parties) and assess the accuracy and completeness of the work.									
			Consulted	Those whose expertse or experience should be considered during the project. They may be sought out for feedback or to contribute to the ongoing activities.									
			Informed	Those people who need to be made aware when the work is complete—or when interim milestones are achieved.									
Thematic Objectives			**Responsibility Matrix**						**Comments**				
		R	**A**	**C**	**I**								
Thematic Goal #1													
Project 1													
Project 2													
Project 3													
Thematic Goal #2													
Project 1													
Project 2													
Project 3													
Thematic Goal #3													
Project 1													
Project 2													
Project 3													
Standard Operating Objectives													
Department #1													
Key Performance Area #1													

Agile Strategy for the Social Venture

- Strategy is *not* just for the big guys.
- It's about what you do *and* how you'll do it.
- Engages your whole ecosystem or value chain.
- Includes a rapid cycle of learning and responding.
- Focuses on short term needs *and* long term value.

Tools & Opportunities to Go Deeper

- Visit Junxion.com/AgileStrategy
- Download and use…
  - These slides.
  - Thematic Goal Scorecard.
  - *Finding Purpose: A guide for companies to drive value, improve lives, and restore nature.*
- Reach out to Junxion!
  - mike@junxion.com

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