

Why Are You Special?

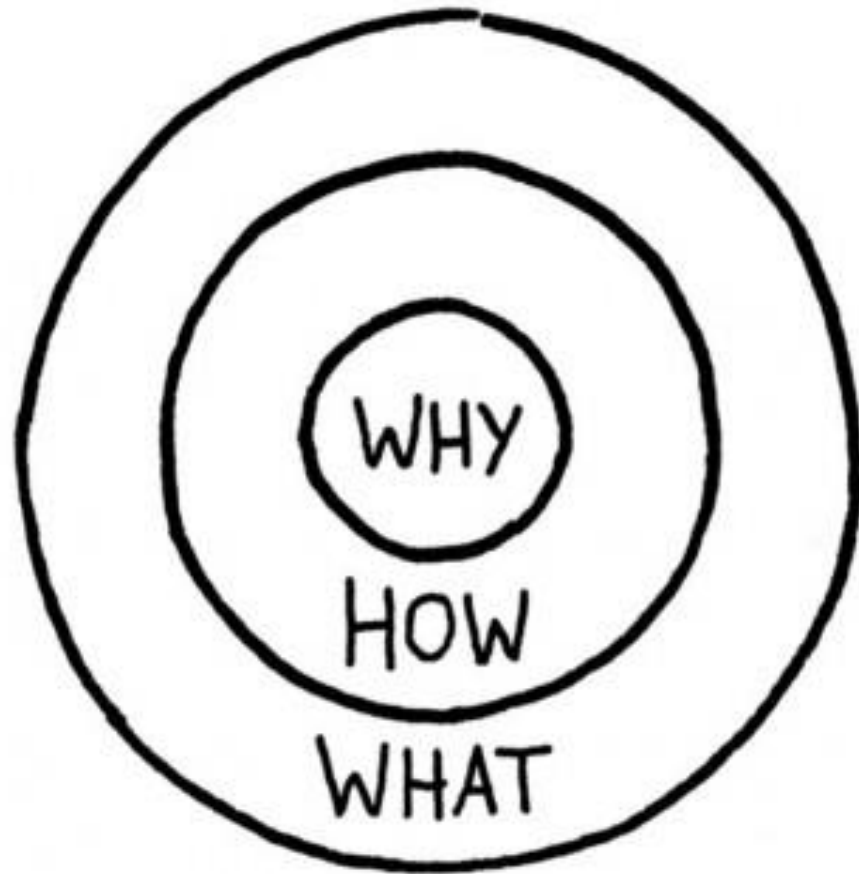
Creating and communicating your local school culture. Defining your identity and moving beyond buzz words.

What to expect from this session

- ▶ Learning objective: Attendees will come away with actionable items to work with their teams towards defining their school's culture
- ▶ Agenda:
 - ▶ Introduction
 - ▶ Definitions of key terms
 - ▶ Why is knowing your school culture important
 - ▶ What is your school culture
 - ▶ Define your identity
 - ▶ Moving beyond buzz words
 - ▶ How to communicate that culture to build enrollment
 - ▶ Q and A

Key Terms

- ▶ School Culture - the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates.
- ▶ Identity - defining who you are and clearly communicating that definition to your staff, students, and community.
- ▶ Buzz Words - a word or phrase, often an item of jargon, that is fashionable at a particular time or in a particular context.



What

Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services they offer.

How

Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

Why

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. It's a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.

Why is knowing your school culture important?

When a new family is deciding between multiple schools, they want to know what makes your school special. Are you able to truly communicate this?

Are you able to move beyond trendy buzzwords and really define your school?

Are your staff, parents and students able to communicate this effectively?




What is your school culture?

- ▶ What are the guiding beliefs and values that your school operates by? (Hint: Go beyond Christ - Centered and Living Gospel Values)
- ▶ Really dig deep and get specific with the values and beliefs.
- ▶ This needs to be a group discussion and should not be done in 10 minutes



MIT Mission Statement

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- ▶ The MIT community is driven by a shared purpose: to make a better world through education, research, and innovation. We are fun and quirky, elite but not elitist, inventive and artistic, obsessed with numbers, and welcoming to talented people regardless of where they come from.

A row of pencils is shown against a dark, chalkboard-like background. Most pencils are dark grey or black, but one pencil in the center is bright yellow and stands out significantly. The pencils are arranged in a slightly curved line, and their tips are sharp and pointed.

Defining your Identity

- ▶ Once you have decided on the culture that is the beating heart of the school take that to build your identity.
- ▶ You don't need to be the "technology" school, you can be the "community" school for the neighborhood or the service school.

Move Beyond the Buzz Words - Dig deeper and be more descriptive

- ▶ Christ - Centered and Gospel Values - define how you live this every day and prove it.
- ▶ Diverse Society - define how you embrace diversity and prove it.
- ▶ 1:1 Technology (This is expected, not something extra) - define what technology training you offer and prove it.
- ▶ Safe (This is expected, not something extra) - define how it's safe and prove it.
- ▶ Small Classes - define why this is good for their child and do you actually have small classes
- ▶ STEM/ STEAM - Be very careful throwing these around, make sure that you actually are offering STEM curriculum, not just science and calling it STEM

How do I communicate our Culture and Identity?

- ▶ Every day the entire school needs to be living and breathing the culture and identity
- ▶ Sharing your culture and identity via social media, your website, PR, social events, word of mouth with families.
- ▶ Educating your families so they are spreading the correct perception of your school and culture.



Conversation with those seated around you

- ▶ Which school are you with and how do you currently describe the culture at your school?
- ▶ What are the changes you would like to make to the description?
- ▶ Do you feel your school has a defined culture or needs to work to truly understand what the culture is?



Q and A

If you would like a worksheet to work through with your team to streamline your identity or if you would like assistance please let me know ckeville@diobrook.org or call 646-981-8676

