

Start With Why

Delivered at the Framework and Fuel for the Future Conference

October 22, 2024 by Ted Havelka

The Importance of Planning: A Transformative Approach

Many might think that planning is complicated, time-consuming, and a distraction from immediate actions like increasing student enrollment or funding. Let's talk about this.

Winston Churchill once said, “Plans are of little importance, but planning is essential.” The process of planning makes us think about problems and solutions in a way that points to the actions and outcomes we want. It changes our mindset, and with a changed mind, we can change the world.

Start With WHY

Let's start with something bigger than the plan – the WHY.

Churchill had a why – freedom for the UK and the world. Similarly, President Kennedy's moonshot speech in 1962 inspired and united a country. Despite numerous immediate challenges, he presented a vision and a plan to send a man to the moon, emphasizing the importance of having a goal that unifies people to act and work together.

*We choose to go to the Moon in this decade **and do the other things**, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because **that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills**,*



Without a plan and a WHY, we're just drifting, reacting to one problem after another.

Kennedy's declaration of a WHY and setting a goal to put man on the moon, kept people focused on something bigger than themselves, leading to remarkable achievements.

Simon Sinek's Golden Circle

Simon Sinek, in his TED Talk "Start With Why," explains why some leaders and organizations inspire in ways others can't. He introduces the concept of the Golden Circle, which inverts the logical order of What, How, Why.

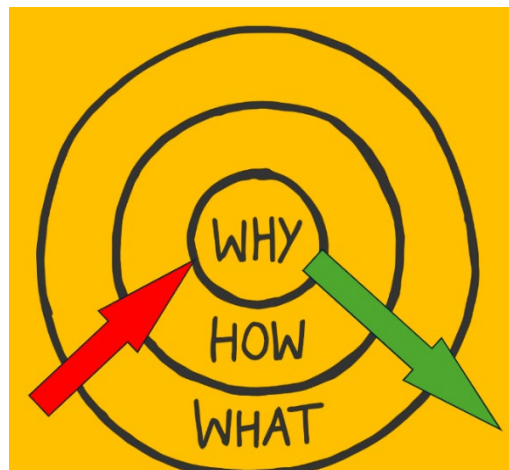
Most organizations start with What they do, then move to How they do it, and maybe get to Why. Inspiring organizations like Apple for example, starts with WHY:

"We believe in challenging the status quo. We Think Differently."

This approach gives people a cause to join and a reason to believe, not just a commodity to buy.

People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it.

This principle applies to our schools as well. Instead of focusing on what we have, we should communicate the better world we see for our children and the WHY behind our existence.



Communicating Our WHY

Instead of all the focus on communicating *what* we have, which is similar to many other schools, we have an opportunity to be entirely different.

"Don't be the best at what you do, when you can be the only one."

What if we start with our WHY?

- **WHY:** We believe God loves and has a plan for our children. We believe every child should know this when they go to school.
- **HOW:** We give them a Foundation for Life. We partner with parents in this amazing journey.
- **WHAT:** We teach the ABC's: Academics, Belief, and Character.

Does that sound like something you want to join for your child?

By communicating our WHY, we can inspire parents, teachers, donors, and trustees to join us and support our mission.

People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it.

The goal is not to do business with everybody who needs what you have.

The goal is to do business with people who *believe* what you believe.

The Biology of Decision-Making

There are three levels in the human brain: the neocortex handles rational and analytical thinking - and language. It can reason with what you are saying, but it does not control the action.

Deeper in is the limbic system which is responsible for emotions, memories, and decisions. The limbic brain drives actions through feelings, which is why people don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. People can rationally understand what is being offered, and how it's the better the choice, but if we don't communicate from the inside out, you end up with 'It doesn't feel right'. No action is inspired until you reach the part of the brain that drives action!

Let's create a plan that people can buy into. Let's leave today with an elevator pitch that changes our narrative and inspires our teams to help us create and live our WHY.

People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. Share the why!

I hope this leaves you with some fuel to remember, and to share, and to live your WHY.

As leaders, your people, from parents and students to teachers and donors, are not buying what you do, they buy why you do it.

So tell 'em, and show 'em.