

# Key Initiatives

Break your goals down into concrete components

You've formulated 3/4ths of your commander's intent. You've practiced setting clear, stretch, and extraordinary goals. Now you need to "shape the path" by creating a practical pattern of activity for your team to follow.

## PART A: IDENTIFY KEY INITIATIVES

### STEP 1: INVITE EXPANSIVE THINKING

Gather your team, hand each person a stack of sticky notes, and set a timer for a couple of minutes. Share parts 1 and 2 of your commander's intent from Exercise #3, and ask everyone to write down as many ideas as possible for accomplishing them—one idea per sticky note—and to stick them to the wall in a random order.

### STEP 2: INVITE CONTRACTIVE THINKING

If you have a large group, divide them into two teams, and invite each team to take half the sticky notes off the wall and group them into 4-6 clusters or themes. These are your potential key initiatives. (You'll have some leftover ideas that don't fit into a theme, and that's okay.)

### STEP 3: IDENTIFY YOUR KEY INITIATIVES

Ask each team to present their 4-6 clusters or themes. You'll find that one or more of those clusters will be very similar across the two teams, making them key initiatives front runners. Use the wisdom in the room to identify other clusters or themes that should become key initiatives as well. Write your final key initiatives in the chart that follows.

<b>KEY INITIATIVE #1:</b>	
Extraordinary goal (measurable outcome):	
Owner:	Date:

<b>KEY INITIATIVE #2:</b>	
Extraordinary goal (measurable outcome):	
Owner:	Date:

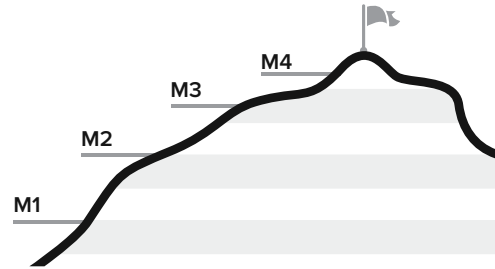
<b>KEY INITIATIVE #3:</b>	
Extraordinary goal (measurable outcome):	
Owner:	Date:

<b>KEY INITIATIVE #4:</b>	
Extraordinary goal (measurable outcome):	
Owner:	Date:

<b>KEY INITIATIVE #5:</b>	
Extraordinary goal (measurable outcome):	
Owner:	Date:

## PART B: MAP YOUR MILESTONES

What works for climbing a 14,000-ft. peak also works for accomplishing a key initiative. Select ONE key initiative from Part C that you'd like to break down into milestones. Remember, your goal is to create the smallest possible plan.



Rewrite the key initiative here:

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### STEP 1: LIST MILESTONES

Ask your team, “What is one thing we will have to do for sure to meet the extraordinary goal for this key initiative?” Include it as a milestone below (M1, M2, etc.). These are the big rocks you have to move, and they will all move at different rates and paces—not necessarily sequentially.

### STEP 2: BARELY ACCOMPLISH

Pause after each milestone and ask, “If we stop there, will we just BARELY achieve the key initiative?” Circle NO or YES. Keep adding milestones until you hit your first YES. That’s your last milestone.

M1: \_\_\_\_\_ NO / YES

M2: \_\_\_\_\_ NO / YES

M3: \_\_\_\_\_ NO / YES

M4: \_\_\_\_\_ NO / YES

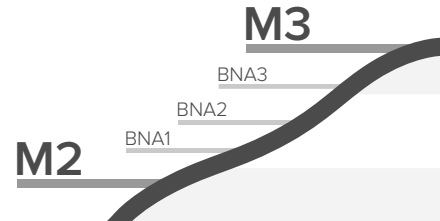
M5: \_\_\_\_\_ NO / YES

### STEP 3: EVALUATE

If after five milestones, you find you still haven’t hit a YES answer, then you aren’t working at a high enough level.

## PART C: DETERMINE YOUR BEST NEXT ACTIONS

So you have a key initiative identified, and you've divided it into no more than 4-5 Milestones. You've now shaped the path that your team will follow. Now you need to determine how to navigate along that path. That's where best next actions come in.



### STEP 1: BRAINSTORM YOUR BEST NEXT ACTIONS

Take each milestone and write down a few actions you are confident your team can accomplish in the next couple of weeks.



### STEP 2: ADD DETAIL

Determine what “done” looks like for each BNA, and assign each one an owner and a date. Do this for each milestone. Your BNAs do not have to be sequential, and you can work on BNAs for several different milestones simultaneously.

### STEP 3: START KNOCKING OUT YOUR BNAs

The secret to activating momentum and direction is insisting that the current BNA gets done and then relentlessly refocusing on one new BNA (but not ten) at least every couple of weeks.

## PART D: FINALIZE YOUR COMMANDER’S INTENT

Flip back to Exercise #3, Activity 1, where you started formulating your commander's intent, and complete Part 3 “The team will accomplish their objective by...” with a brief summary of the key initiatives you just identified.

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