



Organizational Clarity

The Case for Workforce
Alignment & Belief



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Clarity as a case for workforce alignment and belief:**

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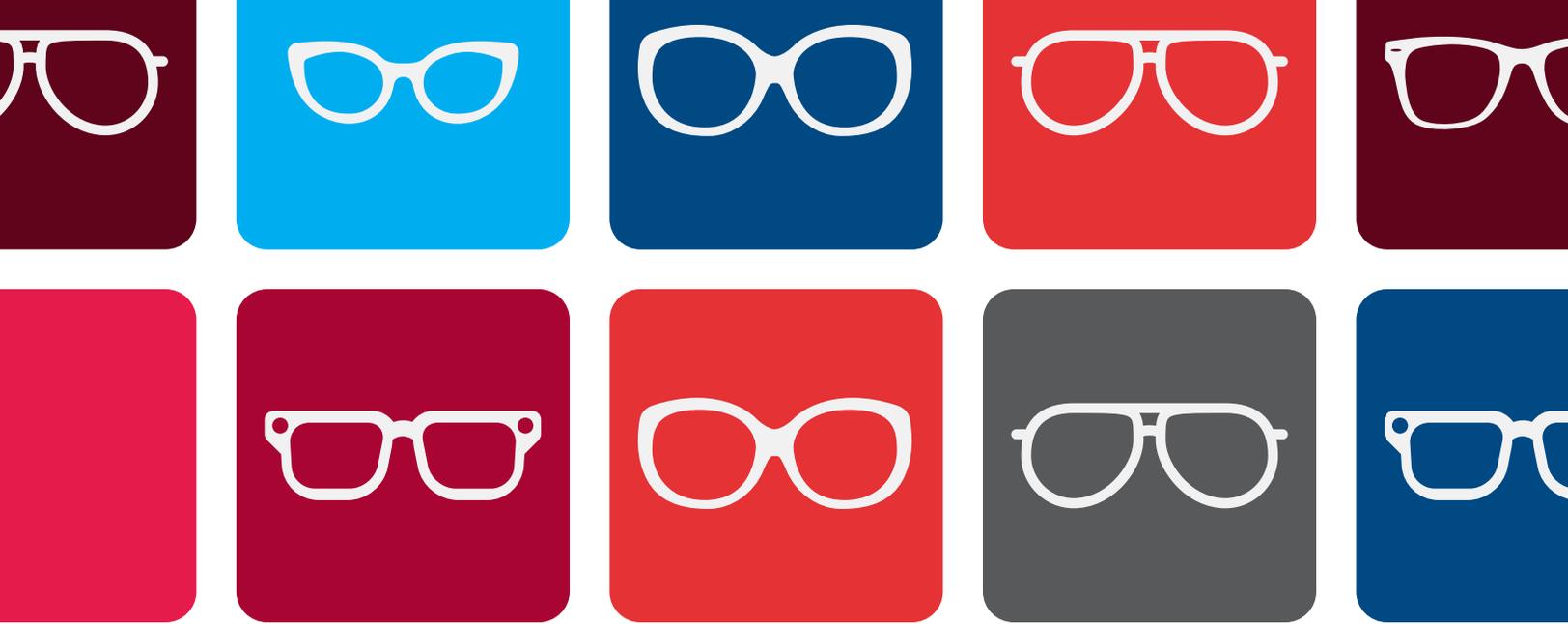
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Perspective

In its zenith, a global shipper took a gamble and hired a new courier who had outlasted a queue of 1,400 other job applicants on a rainy Saturday morning. This young professional went on to become a star performer – loyal and undying in his devotion to the company.

Then came the winter of his discontent. One October afternoon, he backed his truck into its space and opened up the rear panels to begin sweeping out dust and trash. But on this day, his manager appeared abruptly and interrupted him.

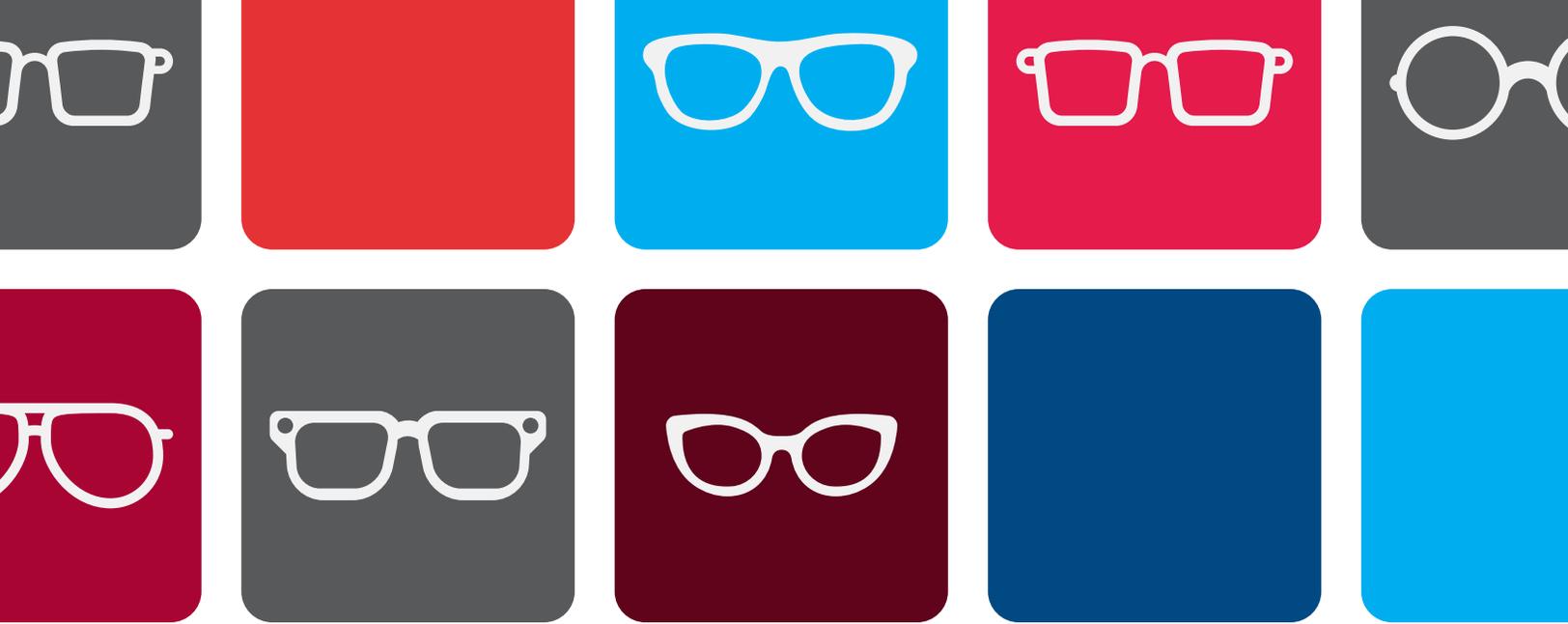
“You can stop right there and go clock out!” he instructed his report.

“But why?” his courier asked. “I always clean my truck after every shift.”

“No, not today,” he was told as the station manager turned and walked away with a sniff. “Go inside and clock out for the day. Just go...”

His gait was slower and less sure, but the courier did as he was told. Questions flew through his head like daggers: “Did I do something wrong today?” “Am I in trouble with my manager?” “What’s the problem?” And that night, he sat quietly with his wife and continued replaying the scene from a troubled afternoon and wondering, “Why?”





The next morning, he went into his station and immediately went to see his manager. He told him about a fitful night of sleep and his worries over any mistake he may have made. The manager listened and then began chuckling softly.

“What’s so funny?” the courier asked.

“You thought you were in trouble,” the manager responded. “You did nothing wrong. It turns out yesterday we changed the procedure for how the trucks are cleaned out at the end of the day. We’ve hired a new service to do this job so you can clock out and go home after your route is complete.”

The room fell silent. Then the courier grabbed his hat, thanked his manager and left to get his deliveries ready for the day.

Simple, clear communication of the new procedures had failed badly. A station manager was at fault for not announcing the change to everyone. When we asked the courier, a true brand ambassador of one of the world’s great companies, what he remembered most about this experience, his eyes welled up in tears.

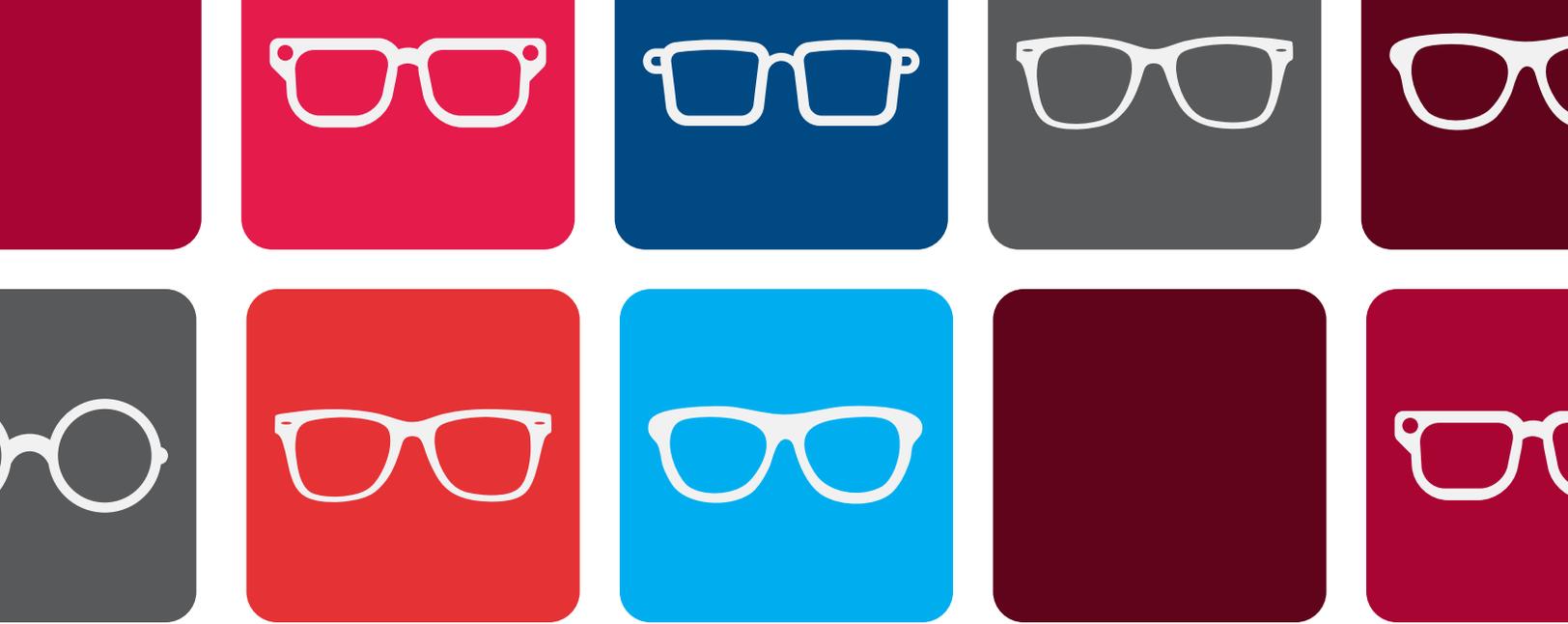
“I remember it made me feel like a very little man.”

Now, change the scene. It’s three days before Christmas Eve. A young man comes home from a long day’s work and sits down for dinner with his family.



The phone rings. He picks up and the voice on the other end starts in, “Good evening, I’m Andrea.” “I’m the lead manager in shipping from XYZ End, and I’m calling to inquire about an order you recently placed with us. Before we ship to you, we need to verify that you want the same sweater but in three different sizes – Small, X-Large, and XX-Large. Is that correct?”

At first, the young man is taken aback. Is this a crank call, he wonders?



Then, Andrea chimes in again. "It's three days before Christmas Eve and if we don't get it right someone may not have a nice Christmas."

What characteristics are inherent in these two scenarios that cause certain behaviors regarding employee performance, attitude, motivation to manifest itself or not?

We live and work in an increasingly global, digital world where boundaries and borders are blurred. We're global travelers and global consumers yet we still need to feel like human beings that matter. We need to know that our voices are heard, our preferences and beliefs are considered, and that our stories will make a difference.

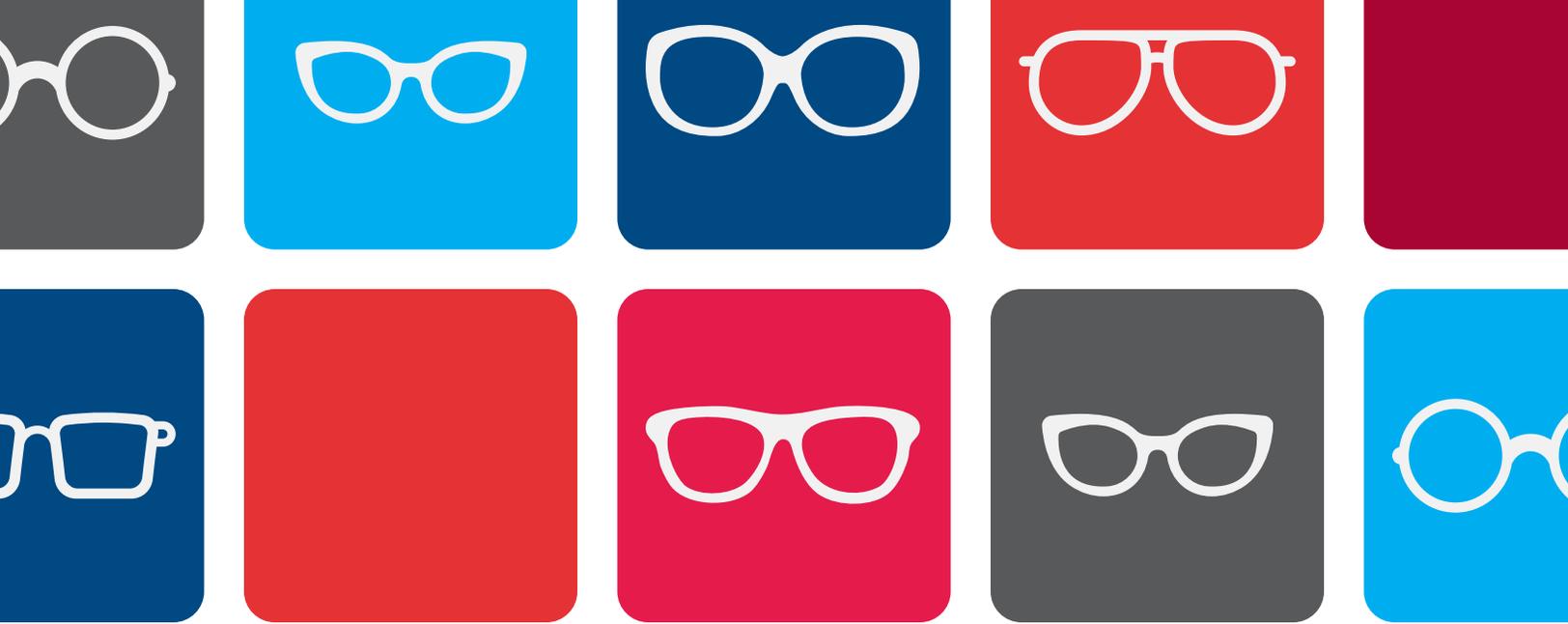


We yearn for content and context so we know what's expected and have a clear "line-of-sight" with our organization's strategic objectives, goals, direction.

We demand Clarity!

As you dive deeply into the findings of this seminal, two-year study undertaken by the Institute for Public Relations Commission on Organizational Communication, prepare to be challenged on a critical question:

Does Organizational Clarity drive organizational success?



Does Organizational Clarity drive organizational success?

Given the market's ever-changing social and digital realities, organizations must maintain relevance to sustain success. To ensure relevance, incorporating strategy is key to keeping employees engaged on a dimensional level—as such strategies may undergo more frequent change due to evolving opportunities and challenges in the market. By aiding employees in drawing a line-of-sight between their individual jobs and the marketplace, against the backdrop of the company's strategy, businesses can achieve Organizational Clarity and, ultimately, organizational success.

While employee engagement as a concept has been well known and practiced by many organizations over the last 20 years, its usefulness as a management technique has been limited due to lack of evidence as it affects the bottom line. While intuitively powerful, employee engagement has been stuck in the 'nice to have' bucket rather than the 'need to have' bucket of management practice.

This gap, and the lack of employee engagement, has become more pronounced as multinational corporations (MNCs) have sought global markets to counteract the slow growth in the U.S. and Europe. As MNCs push into emerging markets, especially the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China),

expected high growth has often not materialized due to employee's lack of clarity about what the organization's strategy is, and how it can best be executed. As MNCs work across different cultures, and in more complex markets than anticipated, the result has been patchy success for even the most powerful organizations over the last decade.

As a means to formally identify and provide leaders with ways to implement and increase Organizational Clarity, which will then in turn drive performance and the bottom line, the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) established a Signature Research project in 2014 to answer the research question: 'Does Organizational Clarity drive

organizational success?’ In 2015, IPR conducted a five-country survey across six economic sectors. What followed is the industry’s first foray into the concept of Organizational Clarity as a significant factor in workforce alignment, business relevance and performance. Further, insights gleaned from

the data offer specific techniques adaptable and applicable to global, international, regional and local businesses dealing with turbulence – including changing technologies, fragmented markets and a distracted, often-disengaged workforce.

Connecting The Dots: The Job, The Market & The Strategy

What Is Organizational Clarity?

Organizational Clarity is the comprehension an employee has about the organization’s vision, purpose, mission, strategy, opportunities, challenges, priorities and competitive reality.

In other words, Organizational Clarity is about employee alignment: the degree to which employees recognize a line-of-sight between their job and the marketplace they operate in, against the backdrop of the company’s strategy. Organizational Clarity is also a key determinant of achieving business success as defined by financial performance, retention, recruitment innovation, learning and productivity.

Model Of Organizational Clarity

While the concept of Organizational Clarity is new, it is distilled from a broad range of research disciplines – including organizational studies, economics, sociology, psychology and management studies. Based on the review of the literature, there are three key dimensions to Organizational Clarity needed to model and measure success:

1. The JOB Dimension

The JOB dimension explores to what degree an employee looks inside his or her organization to understand the organization’s strategy, and how the strategy is applicable within their job. In the JOB dimension, employees should have a clear understanding of the organization’s core purpose, and find that their job and contributions have an impact on their organization’s success. In other words, does the employee understand strategy through the lens of his/her job?

2. The STRATEGY Dimension

The STRATEGY dimension explores to what degree an employee looks inside their organization to understand their organization’s strategy, but also looks outside the organization to ‘reality check’ the strategy against their own perceptions of the marketplace. In the STRATEGY dimension, an employee believes the organization knows what it is doing, and that the organization’s strategy will be successful in the future. Additionally, the employee is confident in the organization’s ability to be strategic. Also, does the employee trust in the organization’s ability to execute the strategy while verifying their knowledge of the marketplace?

3. The MARKET Dimension

The MARKET dimension explores whether an employee looks solely outside their organization to understand their future employment prospects. In other words, does the employee look first to the marketplace to understand his/her future? In the MARKET dimension, an employee feels a connection to their profession more than their current organization and finds their current job as a stepping stone to their next job. Also, the employee thinks that their organization reacts more often to the market than shapes it.

Building on these three key dimensions, a model was constructed where Organizational Clarity is increased when employees understand the marketplace as seen through the lens of the company's strategy. Organizational Clarity can be increased both by the JOB dimension and the STRATEGY dimension. This is referred to as a "clockwise" organization, and one which is expected to outperform its sector.

By contrast, Organizational Clarity is decreased when employees understand their marketplace with little or no reference to their company's strategy. The MARKET dimension is the only dimension that decreases Organizational Clarity. This is referred to as an "anti-clockwise" organization, and one which is expected to underperform its sector.



Survey Approach: A Quantitative And Qualitative Study

After reviewing the literature, the research methodology was designed to answer three questions:

- (i) *How important is Organizational Clarity in terms of its effect on organizational success?*
- (ii) *How are leaders currently attempting to address the issue of Organizational Clarity?*
- (iii) *What works, and what does not work, in terms of organizational success?*

To answer these questions, an online survey of employees across six economic sectors and five countries was conducted from July to September 2015. The survey resulted in 1,509 responses with at least 300 responses per country and 230 per sector. The sample was carefully selected and designed to be representative of each country according to gender, age, annual household income, educational attainment, sector and job role.

The survey was approximately 20 minutes in length and included both open and closed-ended questions. The U.S., U.K. and India surveys were conducted in English, the Brazil survey in Portuguese, and the China survey in Mandarin. Native language analysts developed the questions and then translated the answers to English.

Respondents used a 7-point Likert scale to answer questions regarding the level of agreement on the three dimensions: JOB, STRATEGY, and MARKET. Each dimension had a series of statements to measure each dimension—the sum of the scores formed a scale for each dimension. Each scale was analyzed statistically for both reliability and

validity. Each country was given a “grade” based on their scores. Grades were calculated based on each country’s mean responses to each of the scales of the three dimensions.

A full explanation of the coverage and demographics of the survey is included in the Appendix of this document. In addition, a detailed analysis for each country and sector is available on the [IPR website](#).

Sectors & Countries:

To test the model and to answer research questions, six sectors and five countries were chosen using two criteria.

Sector Criteria:

1. Sectors must represent significant economic interests in all five countries.
2. The sector’s economic performance over the last four years must be available within World Bank data.

The six sectors chosen were: *Automotive/Transportation, Energy, Financial Services, Food/Beverage, Healthcare and Technology.*



Country Criteria:

1. Countries should be in both mature and emerging markets, and be used as baseline cases for a more general index to be built in the future.
2. The country's economic performance over the last four years must be available within World Bank data.

The five countries chosen for the study were:
United States, United Kingdom, India, China and Brazil.

Having collected and run a number of statistical techniques to ensure the robustness of the model's result with sectors and countries, the overall scores for the sectors and countries were computed.



How Can You Use This Research For Your Organization?

Exploring Organizational Clarity

To make this research most useful for leaders, an Organizational Clarity report card was constructed to measure the three dimensions, according to country and sector. This resource allows organizations to see which specific levers need to be pulled to improve Organizational Clarity and drive performance.

To gain insight into an organization's clarity, leaders should evaluate the three dimensions to answer two specific questions:

1. Does your organization have Organizational Clarity?

It is essential for leaders to balance all three elements of Organizational Clarity to achieve future organizational success—a poor result in one element can impact the overall Organizational Clarity of the organization.

2. What specifically can you do to improve your Organizational Clarity?

Leaders can gain insights both from the quantitative and qualitative elements of the surveys. By analyzing the best and worst performing questions in each dimension, leaders can easily judge changes that need to occur to improve the Organizational Clarity.

Investigating Organizational Clarity

Results of Organizational Clarity by Country

Each country was given a grade to rate how well it did in the three dimensions (JOB, STRATEGY, and MARKET). Identifying the gaps among the various dimensions helps direct organizations in those countries to the areas in which they need to improve.

Each country is ordered from best to worst in terms of the Organizational Clarity grades and its three dimensions, JOB, STRATEGY, and MARKET. For a detailed analysis each country, please contact the study's authors or visit the [IPR website](#).

Overall, the best to worst countries in terms of Organizational Clarity were: India, U.S., China, Brazil and the U.K. Among the five countries, the JOB dimension grades ranged between a C for the U.K. to a B for India. India and the U.S. had statistically significant better scores than the U.K., with China and Brazil hovering in the middle. Overall, most employees understood the core purpose and found meaning in their jobs, but were less likely to feel they were rewarded fairly for the job. Additionally, respondents were less likely to notice an impact on their jobs when the organization’s strategy changes, which is a suggested area of improvement.



India scored significantly better than its counterparts on the STRATEGY dimension, with grades for the countries ranging from a B for India to a C for the U.K. and Brazil. China and the U.S. were more closely aligned with average scores on this dimension. There were differences in terms of how successful the organization’s strategy has been over the next three years and will be over the next three years—employees in India and the U.S. were more confident compared to others. Other than India, the countries could work on improving information technology to communicate strategy and to ensure that when initiatives get completed, the results will be reported to employees.

The MARKET dimension has the greatest need for improvement as all countries scored an F, except India, which earned a D. The U.S. fared the worst in the MARKET dimension, followed closely by the U.K. Employees in the U.K. and the U.S. were more likely to feel their respective organizations had too many initiatives going on internally, their work priorities conflicted, and that they were more connected to their profession than the organization. Compared to the other three countries, employees in China and India felt their current jobs were not a stepping-stone to their next job.

India

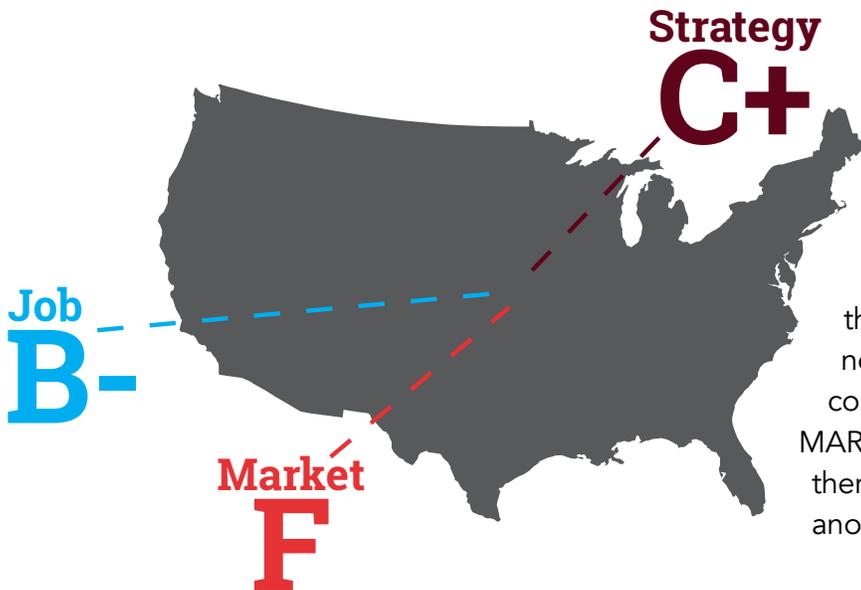
India was the clear leader in terms of Organization Clarity, securing the top spot in all three dimensions. Compared to other countries, India fared better on the MARKET dimension, but the scores were not as robust as the country's scores on the JOB and STRATEGY dimension. While there is room for improvement, employees in India reported their jobs were aligned with the organization's strategy, and the strategy was aligned with the marketplace more so than the other countries. Similarly, employees were more likely to find meaning in their job. Employees in India were confident in the organization's success, and their role in shaping the market. Even though India fared better than other countries in terms of compensation, India could still improve in rewarding their employees fairly. Additionally, Indian organizations need to work harder to ensure employees are not experiencing too much conflict in their work priorities.



United States

While the United States fared better than other countries, there still is much work to be done. Employees in the U.S. appeared to understand their organization's purpose and mission, and that their organization knows what it is doing.

One area of improvement is the communication of strategy—U.S. employees were more likely to say information technology can be better utilized to communicate strategy. Additionally, more than half of U.S. employees said there are too many initiatives going on at the same time, and that the results of completed initiatives do not get reported as often as they should. This contributed to the U.S. faring the worst on the MARKET dimension. Employees also thought there were conflicts in work priorities, which is another area that could be improved.



China

China saw slightly above-average scores on the JOB and STRATEGY dimensions, but failed in the MARKET dimension. Overall, employees in China find meaning in their job, trust in the organization, and are loyal to their employers. Additionally, employees agree the organization delivers on its promises and shapes its market through superior products and services. On the other hand, organizations in China need to work on ensuring employees have a clear understanding of the organization's purpose, but that the organization reacts more to the market than shapes the market. Another gap is in the communication of the strategy – organizations in China need to improve on employees understanding the organizational strategy.



Brazil

Brazil and China scored similarly on the JOB and MARKET dimension. However, employees in Brazil were less confident on the STRATEGY dimension, doubting the ability of the organization to deliver on its promises, and to deliver its strategy effectively in the future. This could be due in part to the country slipping into recession in Q2 2015. Overall, compensation is an issue for Brazilian employees; compared to other countries, Brazil scored the lowest in terms of their employees feeling that they were being rewarded fairly for the job they do. This was also reflected in the MARKET dimension in that nearly half of employees reported the organization's behavior made little sense, and that their respective organizations react more to the market than to shape the market. Brazil has an opportunity to effectively communicate a clear strategy to its employees to help boost their confidence in the organization's ability to be successful. Additionally, Brazil needs to work on building trust, as their employees were least likely to agree that their organization delivers on its promises.



U.K.

The U.K. secured the lowest grades in the JOB and STRATEGY dimension, and the second lowest score in the MARKET dimension. This indicates that there is much work to be done to strengthen employee alignment and clarity in comparison to other countries. While U.K. respondents appeared to understand the core purpose of the organization, there was a disconnect in that U.K. employees were less likely to find meaning in their job. Employees also said compensation was an issue. Additionally, employees were less likely to be confident in their organization's strategy and their organization's ability to communicate that strategy. Too many initiatives also plagued organizations in the U.K., per the employees, and employees felt more committed to their profession than to the organization. The U.K also had the highest number of employees who said their current job was a stepping-stone to their next job. Overall, a significant lack of Organizational Clarity exists with much opportunity for improvement.



Organizational Clarity by Sector

In addition to the country, Organizational Clarity was analyzed within the six sectors: Automotive/Transportation, Healthcare, Food/Beverage, Technology, Financial Services and Energy. The six sectors chosen were required to represent significant economic interests in all five of the aforementioned countries.

Overall the JOB dimension earned a C+ score. All sectors earned a C+ score, except for Technology, which earned a B-. Differences among the sectors were not statistically significant. Most respondents across sectors understood the core purpose of the organization, and said they found meaning in their job. On the other hand, compensation appeared to be an issue as less than three-quarters of

respondents across sectors thought they were rewarded fairly.

On the STRATEGY dimension, the grades ranged from a B- to a C. Even though the scores were not statistically significant from one another, Healthcare, Energy, and Auto/Transportation scored a C, Food/Beverage and Financial Services

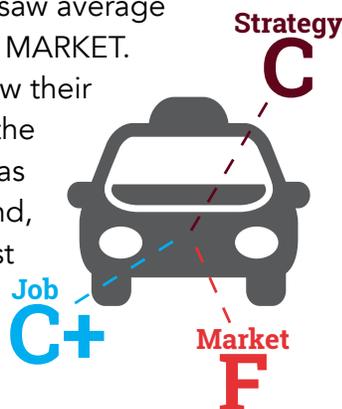
scored C+, and Technology scored a B-. While respondents were confident the organization knows what it's doing, they were less likely to report that initiatives get reported to employees when completed. Organizations need to help bridge the gap because, in terms of strategy, fewer employees believe their organization thinks first and then acts. Additionally, organizations need to leverage their Information Technology infrastructure to help better communicate their strategy.

On the MARKET dimension, all sectors fared poorly, earning grades of F. Scores among sectors were not statistically significant. Across sectors, organizations can improve on the communication of the reason behind their actions, and to ensure work priorities do not conflict. Overall, even though some employees felt this way, many felt they were more connected to their current organization than the profession, and that their current job was not a stepping-stone to the next job.

The section below will discuss and offer insight for each sector, given in alphabetical order. For a detailed analysis of each country, please contact the study's authors or visit the [IPR website](#).

Automotive/Transportation

Employees in the automotive sector saw average grades across all dimensions, except MARKET. While automotive employees saw how their job has an impact on the success of the organization, they also saw their job as a stepping-stone to their next job, and, compared to other sectors, were least likely to find meaning in their work. The Automotive sector also needs to work on communicating strategy



to their employees. Auto employees were most likely to feel that there are too many work priorities that conflict with each other.

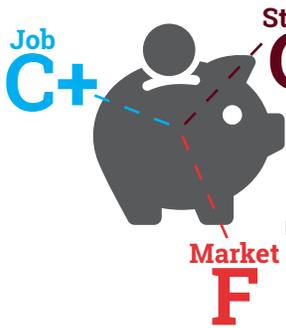
Energy Sector

While the Energy sector scored mid-range on the JOB dimension, they performed less well on the STRATEGY and MARKET DIMENSION. Energy employees seemed to have less confidence that the organization knows what it is doing, that it has a clear understanding of the organization's core purpose, and that it delivers on its promises – this in turn affects confidence in the organization's strategy over the next three years. On the other hand, Energy employees were more likely to say that their work priorities do not conflict with each other.



Financial Services

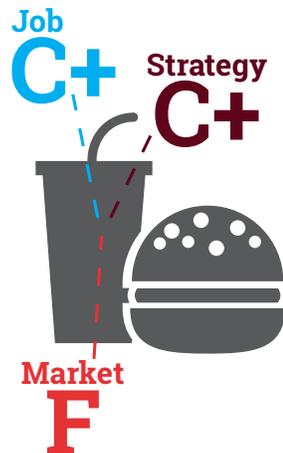
Financial Services performed second best in the JOB and STRATEGY dimensions, and best in MARKET. Employees appeared to understand the purpose and strategy, had confidence in the organization's past and present strategy, and were most likely to report that their organization delivers on its promises, compared to other sectors. However, the Financial Services sector needs to



work on improving their connection with employees, because they were most likely to say their job is a stepping-stone to their next job, and, compared to other sectors, they did not feel that they were rewarded fairly.

Food and Beverage

While many in the Food/Beverage sector had a clear understanding of the organization's purpose in the JOB dimension, organizations need to do a better job of communicating the organization's strategy, managing the number of initiatives they are communicating to employees, and improving how information technology is used. Compensation was also an issue as less than two-thirds of respondents said they were rewarded fairly in their jobs. Additionally, compared to other sectors, Food/Beverage employees were more likely to report there were too many initiatives going on at the same time in their respective organizations.



Strategy

C

Market

F

Job
C+

Healthcare

Across the three dimensions, Healthcare scored in the mid-range.

While most employees found meaning in their jobs, they did not feel they were rewarded as fairly compared to other sectors. This may also indicate why more respondents (other than Financial Services) said their current job was a stepping-stone to their next job. Healthcare employees were also less likely to think their organization shapes the market, and had the fewest number of employees who agreed that they understood the impact their job has on the success of the organization. However, nearly all employees do find their jobs to be meaningful. Overall, healthcare organizations need to work on connecting their employees to the organization, and better communicate results of completed initiatives.

Technology

Technology fared well in the STRATEGY and JOB dimension, but fell in terms of the MARKET dimension.

While employees appeared to understand the core purpose of the organization, and were confident in the organization's ability to shape the market, only two-thirds thought they were compensated appropriately. Compared to the other sectors, most employees felt more connected to their organization than connected to the overall profession, and did not feel that their organization had too many initiatives going on at the same time. As would be expected for the sector, Technology employees thought IT helped communicate their strategy.

Strategy

B-

Market

F

Job
B-

Country Report Card

	Job	Strategy	Market
Brazil	C+	C	F
China	C+	C+	F
India	B	B	D
United Kingdom	C	C	F
United States	B-	C+	F

Sector Report Card

	Job	Strategy	Market
Automotive/Transportation	C+	C	F
Energy	C+	C	F
Financial Services	C+	C+	F
Food and Beverage	C+	C+	F
Healthcare	C+	C	F
Technology	B-	B-	F

For insight as to why Organizational Clarity is important to organizations, how Organizational Clarity is currently addressed, and what does and does not work to drive organizational success for a specific country and sector, it is important to consider the answers to the study's three research questions, as well as the below findings derived from the research.

(i) How important is Organizational Clarity in terms of its effect on organizational success?

Overall, Organizational Clarity appears to be strongly correlated with performance and can act as a leading indicator of future performance.

(ii) How are leaders currently attempting to address the issue of Organizational Clarity?

The communications tactics of leaders (the how, how often, who, when and what of communicating organizational strategy) tend to vary according to the organization's sector and location.

(iii) What works and what does not work in terms of organizational success?

Variation in leaders' communication tactics had an impact on the levels of Organizational Clarity measured. For example, strategy should be communicated by senior leadership in the U.S. and India but by managers in the U.K., Brazil and China.



Case-In-Point

To highlight the unique mindset and methods deployed by global organizations to ensure clarity around strategy and in the process increase employee knowledge, we reviewed two organizations both global in nature and in the same industry. Both organizations are facing a shift in strategic direction. Both start the process of clarity from very different vantage points. Company A starts with a belief that the workforce is a homogeneous entity. Company B views its employee base as a mixture of different backgrounds, beliefs, and worldviews. This one act begins the rest of the effort to discern exactly the right mix of content, cadence, frequency, and context necessary to achieve clarity.

Company A takes what best can be described as a “Sell” approach, spending time and resources to promote the strategy attempting to convince and motivate people to action.

Company A

(Homogeneous audience)

- Brochure produced
- Theme approved
- Coffee mugs, mouse pads, posters
- CEO e-mail to all employees
- Article on portal announcing new strategy via theme
- Town hall meeting at headquarters
- Subsequent content on internal channels from leaders reinforcing the theme and strategy
- Tone: positive; “cheerleading”
- Information “packets” given to all managers telling them what to say
- Cascading of information begins

Company B

(Segmented target audiences – who needs to know what, when)

- First priority: management comprehension – hold strategy development sessions with managers detailing marketplace realities, competitive issues, etc.
- Created a narrative describing the strategy in story form
- Tone: provocative
- Established an employee worldview based on current feedback from cultural survey on employee attitudes, issues, behaviors factored into planning
- Raised the volume on key inputs of the strategy – customers, competition, products, delivery, societal concerns
- Synchronized leadership’s messaging across all divisions and BUs

Company B employs a “Discover” approach engaging leaders, managers, and employees at all levels in learning, sharing, challenging, and arriving at a common understanding of the situation. Organizational communications are positioned as a driver of behavior by catalyzing attitudes across the enterprise to better listen, react, and link to the business reality.

In the Company B example, communications are being handled in a multi-directional manner, whereby people at all levels are participating in the effort, which raises credibility and places the task of communicating across the business.

In the end, the model implemented by Company A is designed to achieve awareness of the strategy, not the clarity necessary for people to actually make a difference in the outcome.

Clarity can only exist when employees themselves can make the arguments around strategy, direction, decision-making, investments, etc.



Setting Organizational Clarity Into Motion

Takeaways and Suggested Actions to Improve Organizational Clarity and Drive Performance

1. **Comprehending workforce interests, archetypes, perceptions, and bias are the foundation for establishing and sustaining Organizational Clarity.**

A disconcerting reality from the research is that some organizations do not have a solid understanding of the workforce as it exists today. One reason for this failing is the lack of integration and alignment among C-Suite, HR, and Communications functions within the workplace.

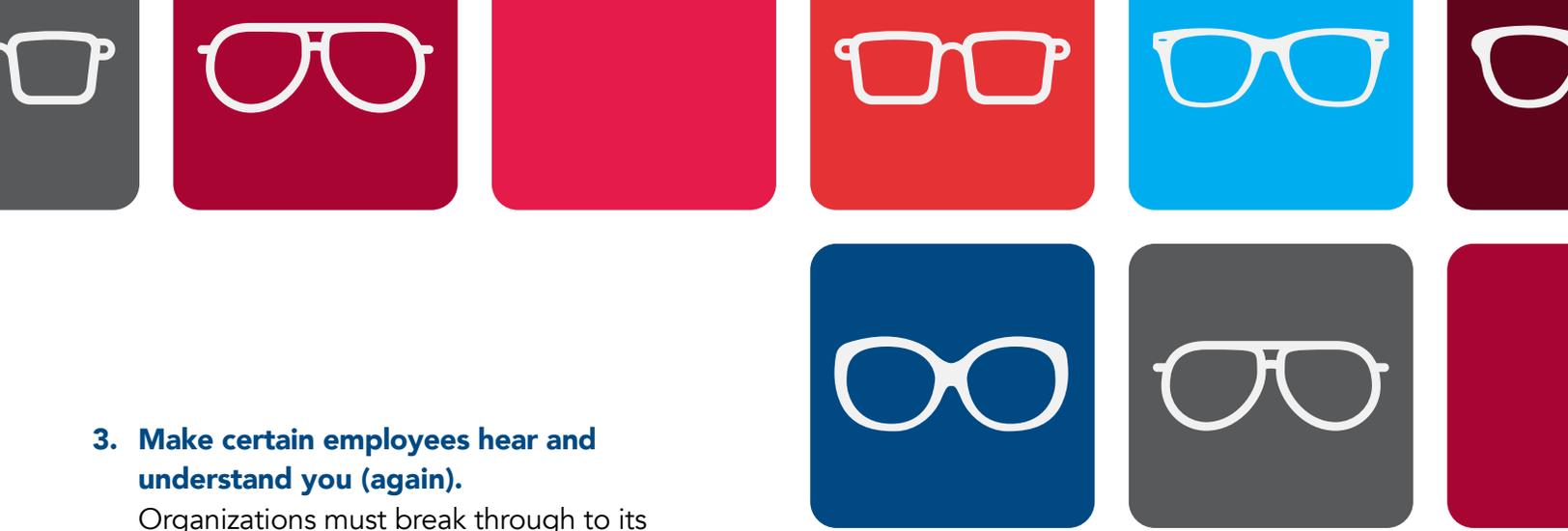
The lack of real-time knowledge about employees is a significant barrier to Organizational Clarity. The ability to study the dynamics of organizational behavior provide a new and critical means to truly identify employee information patterns and behavioral trends, test language and word choice, discover networks of interest, and become smarter about the relationship among managerial behavior, rhetoric, performance, and credibility.

2. **Employees are diverse, and Internal Communications should not be treated as a one-size-fits-all proposition.**

Organizational Clarity comes down to one thing, relevance. From a communication and engagement standpoint, relevance can be explained by the following:

- **Context** > What is the uber catalyst of the information or news?
(ex. Why is our product portfolio changing?
vs. What consists of our product portfolio?)
- **Importance** > Do I value the information?
- **Variety and Access** > Are there multiple angles and types of content I can easily retrieve?
- **Connectivity** > Is the strategy and the resulting communications connected to my job, role, and responsibilities?
- **Lifestyle** > Does the information, including channel, cadence, and frequency, fit into how I relate to it as an employee?
- **Meaning** > Is the content something I can relate to both personally and professionally?

The days of treating employees as a homogenous group are in the past, and based on the data, the six areas described above are the most important elements to design an internal communication's plan to cater to a diverse workforce and to create Organizational Clarity.



3. **Make certain employees hear and understand you (again).**

Organizations must break through to its workforce in a manner signifying something is different this time. Research shows three areas as opportunities for leaders and corporate communications to ensure Organizational Clarity around strategy and direction is achieved:

1. *Let employees see you in a different place*
Initiate more in-person or real-time encounters where leaders, managers, and employees can discuss and debate topics and issues.
2. *Let employees hear you in a different place*
Change your “voice” from one of telling to one of “facilitating” where the conversation forms to learn, engage, and query.

Sophisticated organizations are moving employees to better discover business strategy through new pathways like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Purpose/Cause efforts.

3. *Make sure the strategy and content connects to employee realities*
With a diverse workforce and with multi-faceted interests, information must also cater to different needs.

4. **Create continual conversations with your employees.**

Technology allows more frequent and dimensional internal discussions. As a result, it is necessary to design communications efforts to allow for continual conversations – moving employees closer to the business strategy in real-time.

5. **Start recognizing strategic alignment and performance.**

An underlying tendency that detracts from achieving clarity inside companies is measuring effectiveness of internal communications in the absence of the larger goal – alignment and performance. Instead of probing what information or channels employees “state” they need or want, it is much more informative to study patterns of discussion and behavior set against strategic goals. Doing so will shine a light on what is working and what is getting in the way of people doing their jobs in the manner necessary for the company to succeed, and their work to be recognized and rewarded.

6. **Get the angle right and the language will follow.**

Research indicates employing the right angle when describing or reporting on strategy – one that directly brings in the customer and marketplace or ties in another brand experience – is the first step to recasting language and word choice. This encourages employees to listen and learn.

7. **Strategy alignment and clarity starts at the top, and disconnect must be eliminated among leaders.**

The data indicates Organizational Clarity must start with leaders who align and agree on the

strategy, and then communicate via a consistent and iterative story design. To promote such alignment, creating a monthly or even quarterly corporate narrative, which describes the current business situation in a non-promotional manner. Cite facts and anecdotes, which is a necessary tool in today's fast-moving social/digital world. The narrative is meant for leaders and key managers to individually grasp the current state as a means to shape their behaviors, actions, and communications with staff.

8. Strategy and clarity come together when employees calibrate action, behavior.

People are inundated with information today and often work with the volume off, so to speak, relying on organizational behavior and action to connect the dots for them on vision, strategy and direction.

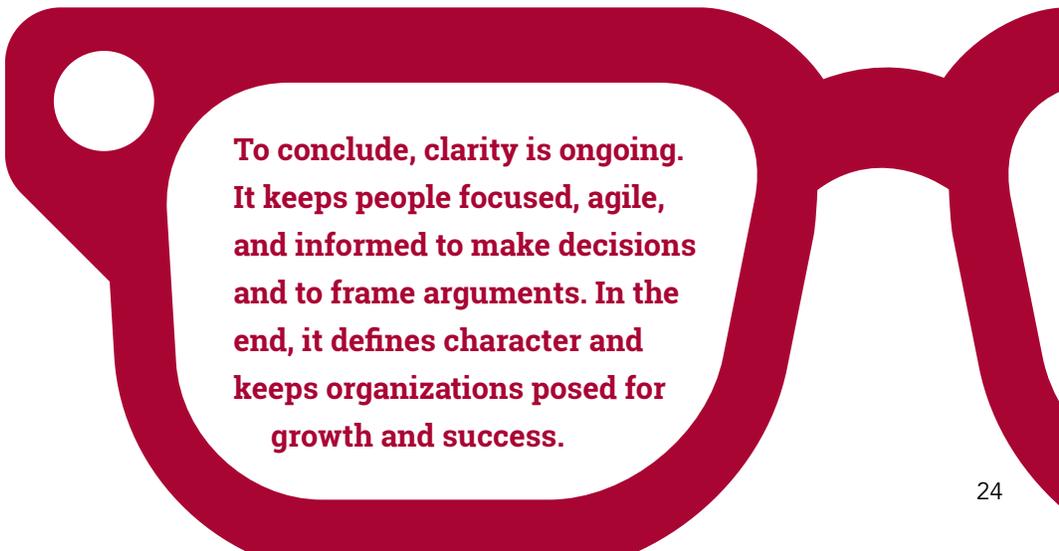
9. How smart do you want your employees to be?

This is not a trick nor a trite question. How provocative and deep do you engage people in the marketplace? How well do people know customers? The competition? Key issues? Vulnerabilities? Without a dialogue on such things, people are limited in seeing the business through a very small aperture.

10. Place employees at the business strategy apex.

If employees do not understand the marketplace they will not be interested in the company's direction and their role. The key takeaway is to place employees at the apex of business strategy. How?

- Start with the marketplace.
- Infuse the organization with information data, and stories on the competition, customer preferences, trends, issues, characterizations, and best and worst examples of your products, services, and experience.
- Make it visual, interesting, and inclusive.
- Weave in the company point-of-view.
- Solicit feedback and encourage discussion among employees to discern belief and confidence.
- The data states clearly the organization's "voice" must evolve with the customer's reality to be heard.



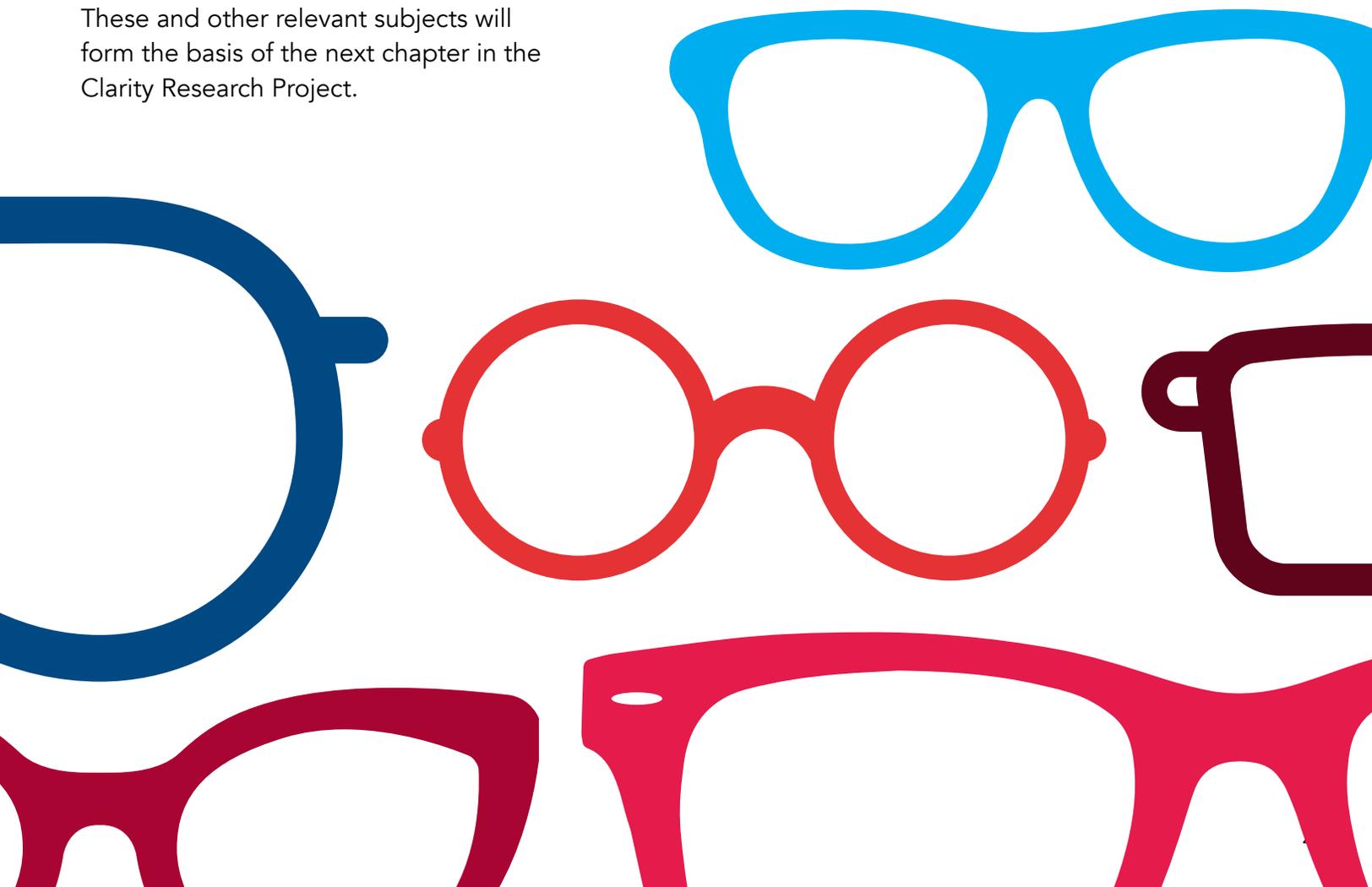
To conclude, clarity is ongoing. It keeps people focused, agile, and informed to make decisions and to frame arguments. In the end, it defines character and keeps organizations poised for growth and success.

Thinking Ahead

The IPR Organizational Clarity Study is the first of its kind in the profession with regard to identifying the elements for breaking through the clutter of today's modern corporation and having a mechanism – dimensions, scorecard, market difference, techniques – focused on clarity to measure progress in real-time.

This first iteration of research on Organizational Clarity begins a journey to explore organizational behavior in deeper and more dimensional ways. The next phases of research in this area include how various people, processes, and environments influence success, delving into the new archetypes of employees being formed by multi-generational entrants, the competitive impact of corporate culture, the relational aspects of a modern working environment, the role of clarity in increasing velocity asset optimization, and how structure is linked to strategy execution excellence.

These and other relevant subjects will form the basis of the next chapter in the Clarity Research Project.



Appendix

Which country do you work in most of the time?

Base = total sample	1527
United States	20%
United Kingdom	20%
India	20%
China	20%
Brazil	20%

Which sector do you work in?

Base = total sample	1527
Energy	16%
Technology	17%
Food/beverage	17%
Automotive/transportation	17%
Financial Services	17%
Healthcare	17%

Thinking about how your organization's strategy is communicated to you... how is it communicated? (Choose all that apply)

Base = total sample	2663
Verbally	29%
By email	30%
Via the internet	21%
In written publications	18%
The strategy is not communicated to me	3%

Thinking about how your organization's strategy is communicated to you...how often is it communicated? (choose all that apply)

Base = total sample	1530
Every month	49%
Quarterly	27%
Twice a year	12%
Once a year	9%
Never	3%

Thinking about how your organization's strategy is communicated to you... who communicates it? (choose all that apply)

Base = total sample	1724
Senior leadership	39%
My manager	41%
Human Resources	14%
Other	7%

Thinking about how your organization's strategy, when is it communicated during the financial year?

Base = total sample	1530
Beginning of the year	23%
During the year	31%
End of the year	12%
Randomly	26%
I do not know	9%



How regularly does your organization share relevant information with its employees?

Base = total sample	2663
Very regularly	17%
Regularly	32%
Somewhat regularly	26%
Somewhat irregularly	14%
Irregularly	8%
Very irregularly	3%

Do you feel that you know what's going on at your organization?

Base = total sample	1530
Most of the time	56%
Some of the time	40%
None of the time	3%

Are you...?

Base = total sample	1530
Male	61%
Female	39%

How old are you?

Base = total sample	1530
18-24	8%
25-34	32%
35-44	31%
45-54	18%
55+	10%

What is the highest qualification you have received?

Base = total sample	1530
Standard X diploma / secondary school certificate	6%
Standard XII diploma	14%
Basic diploma or advanced diploma	17%
Under-graduate degree	20%
Post-graduate degree	38%
I do not have any qualifications	6%

Do you work in the private, public, or non-profit sector?

Base = total sample	1530
Private	69%
State (public)	29%
Third (not-for-profit, charity)	2%

How would you describe your job role?

Base = total sample	1530
Senior Executive	11%
Executive	12%
Manager	22%
Professional	29%
Administrative / Support personnel	27%

