



## Organization Development BHAG Buy-In!

by **Devon Walker**  
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How does an organization get employees to buy-in to a BHAG even if they won't be there to see it accomplished?

When Jeff Prouty asked me that question, I went directly to the article "Building Your Company's Vision" by James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras. Collins and Porras define a BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) as "a clearly articulated goal that is reachable within 10-30 years." They go on to say that "All companies have goals. But there is a difference between merely having a goal and becoming committed to a huge, daunting challenge." The BHAG is that huge, daunting challenge. So huge and daunting, that it may take as long as 30 years to achieve it! Most companies will have achieved 100% turnover several times before a 30 year BHAG is accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

How many of us will get to take a BHAG from start to finish? Not many. Most of us join the cause smack dab in the middle. Therein lies our problem: It's difficult to be continuously inspired by a goal you were not part of creating and will not be around to see

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accomplished. So how does a company get people to buy-in to a "distant future" or (as the case may be) "inherited" BHAG?

Our answer is that you can't "get employees to buy-in" if they are not already bought in. This is because "buy-in" is synonymous with intrinsic motivation and such motivation is closely tied to core values, which rarely change.

You can't force people to buy-in. An individual's motivation for accomplishing any goal is ultimately drawn from a deeply held set of personal values. If the goal does not relate to someone's personal values, then

that person will have weak intrinsic motivation for its completion. It may be possible to incentivize completion by some other means, like compensation, but even in this case, the goal will remain unalterably uninspiring.

The reverse is also true. A goal that is perceived to relate directly to an individual's set of core values will inspire very powerful motivation towards its completion. Thus, if an organization wishes to inspire powerful motivation towards BHAG completion in a critical mass of its employees, then at least two conditions must be in place:

1. The organization's core values and its employees' core personal values must be sufficiently aligned.
2. The BHAG must sufficiently align with the organization's core values.

The challenge is figuring out how your organization creates these two pieces of alignment. Sound difficult? Come gaze at a well-loved quote by Jim Collins emblazoned on the wall of our office: "Building a visionary company requires 1% vision and 99%

alignment." Much of that 99% has to do with aligning values and purpose with people and goals. If our argument is sound, this leaves at least one critical question we can grapple with until the next installment: How do you ensure your organization's core values and your employee's core personal values become sufficiently aligned?

<sup>1</sup> In the United States, the average total non-farm seasonally adjusted monthly turnover rate was 3.3% for the period from December 2000 to November 2008. However rates vary widely when compared over different periods of time or different job sectors. For example, during the period 2001-2006, the annual turnover rate for all industry sectors averaged 39.6% before seasonal adjustments. ("Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey." Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2008.)

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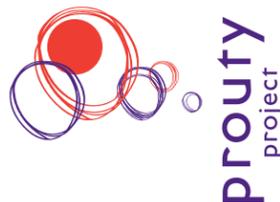
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2014 STRETCH  
Expedition  
Kick-off Meeting:  
October 17

# 104 Meaningful Content Snacks

ISSUE  
4  
2013

**Bethany Schwichtenberg, Martin Williams Advertising**, introduced me to the concept of "meaningful content snacks" in the world of social media. **Briana Cain, Team Prouty**, is working hard to provide you with **104 Meaningful Content Snacks** (two a week) over the next year. Please join us at [www.facebook.com/ProutyProject](http://www.facebook.com/ProutyProject) to share in the feast, and we always appreciate your questions, ideas, quotes, videos, and humor. Keep 'em coming.

I'm excited to introduce you to **Devon Walker**, the newest addition to Team Prouty. Devon is a graduate of Pepperdine University and spent one year as a Regional Director (something I did 33 years ago) for **Sigma Phi Epsilon National Fraternity**. Devon will be working with us for the next two years, in a capacity similar to the "business analysts" at Goldman Sachs, Bain, McKinsey, etc. Welcome aboard Devon!

**Melissa Gennert**, our VP of Client Services, will be leading our 2014 STRETCH Expedition to Morocco, April 25 - May 4,

2014. Our informational kick-off meeting will be **Thursday, October 17, 2013, 6 p.m. (food and drink provided) in our Strategic Leadership Lab**. Please join us for the meeting and RSVP to [jayna.wallace@proutyproject.com](mailto:jayna.wallace@proutyproject.com) to hold a spot.

We've been publishing our quarterly newsletter for 26 years (**this is Newsletter #104**), but we've never done a photo montage highlighting some of the exciting things going on with our clients and friends. Please enjoy the middle panel of this newsletter, and please keep putting the S-T-R-E-T-C-H in your strategy and in your life.

**Here's to a wonderful 4th quarter,**



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### "C" NOTE QUOTE:

*"I learned that there are a million people who will tell you something is impossible, but you can't find out for yourself unless you give it a try."*

### Know the quote?

If you know who said this quote, please send an email to: [briana.cain@proutyproject.com](mailto:briana.cain@proutyproject.com) or call 952.942.2922 by **Monday, November 4**; one guess per individual. If we have more than one correct answer, we throw those names into a hat and draw the winner of a \$100 gift card.

### Last issue's "C" Note Quote winner is...

**Lillian Barlett, SunOpta.**

**Lillian knew that Wangari Maathai, environmental and political activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, said the following:**

**"It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees."**

**Congratulations, Lillian!**

Lillian says, "I plan to use the gift card to spoil

my husband a little. My husband runs his own business but always supports me in my job whenever I am working long hours or traveling. With two children at home, I could not do what I do without his unconditional support."



Lillian Barlett

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## Board and Team Development Sailing the Seven C's

by Peter Bailey  
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This past June, 24 hearty souls challenged the unknown seas and embarked on a once-in-a-lifetime experience: Adventure sailing in the Caribbean on 50-foot sailboats.

Each day we rotated roles between Skipper, Helm, Deck Hand, Engineer, Chef, and Navigator, and every one of us were "stretched" at some point along the six-day regatta route. Our partnering organization, **Offshore Sailing School** ([www.offshoresailing.com](http://www.offshoresailing.com)), provided four expert sailing staff to teach the basics of boat handling and nautical navigation, and to keep us safe by having a seasoned skipper accompany each boat. We found that their professional guidance and experience provided an immensely powerful experience for our trip.

Briefly, here is what I learned sailing the Seven C's: **Courage, Cooperation, Communication, Challenge, Charts, Camaraderie, and Choice.**



**Courage:** Courage is the ability to muster the willingness to try something that you don't think you can do well, but you show up 100% and give it your very best effort. One of my hardest points was when I was at the helm during the night sail down to St. Croix. We left the protection of the islands and felt the rolling ocean waves hit our bow, which continually pushed us off our heading. I fought frustration as I worked hard to keep the boat on track.

**Cooperation:** Cooperation is a critical factor in any team activity, but when you have seven people living in close quarters, it reinforces how important it is to have everyone get along.

**Communication:** Good communication is always important, but even more so on a 50-foot sailboat where you can't yell directions to one another against the wind. I had to think first and ask myself, "How important is what I am about to say?" and "What is the best way for me to communicate my message without tone, innuendo, or sarcasm?"

**Challenge:** Sailing in a torrential Caribbean downpour, steering in seven feet of water with a six foot, six inch draft, night sailing to St. Croix at 4:00 a.m., racing around the Dogs to beat the competition and the clock, and working as a team to get the most out of the wind, the boat, and ourselves.

**Charts:** Navigation takes on a new meaning when charting a course against drift, current, and wind. All of these elements have leadership ramifications and relevance in life as well as on the water. "Charts are on the water, maps are on land." We of the *Elowyn Sage* will never forget it.

**Camaraderie:** A spirit of friendly, good fellowship brought on by shared experience through challenging circumstances, from which self-awareness is gained. We, the crews of the *Zourite*, *Calypso*, *Knot Now*, and *Elowyn Sage* will long remember our fellow sailors and the experiences we shared together.

**Choice:** Viktor Frankl in *Man's Search for Meaning* beseeched us to understand that our attitudes are the only thing over which we have control. If we surrender to choice, we have all the freedom in the world to enjoy our circumstances. Each day on the sailing trip, and in our day-to-day lives, we are reminded of our choices and how we choose our attitude about them.

# A Look Back at 2013



Ann Wellmuth, President of Group Ventures, takes the helm during our 2013 STRETCH Expedition.



Our 2013 STRETCH teams head to Anegada in the British Virgin Islands.



A client steadies himself in preparation for the Quantum Leap 25 feet off of the ground.



At our Big Brothers Big Sisters Night at Raceway Park, Mike presented our donation to Gloria Lewis, CEO, BBBS of the Greater Twin Cities.



Our Prouty #21 car driven by Mike Dickey has a big win and is featured in the Winner's Circle with family, friends, and fans.



This summer, the Think Tank II was a great meeting space for business and fun!



One of our partners, Sugar Lake Lodge, has a beautiful Leadership Center for corporate meetings and retreats.

*Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. – Mark Twain*



## Strategic Planning Prouty Red Teams: An Up-Close and Personal View of the Process

by Mike Felmlee  
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Last quarter, Robyn Waters, one of our premier Red Teamers, shared her thoughts about the Prouty Red Team process. This quarter, I would like to share what an up-close and personal view of the process looks and feels like.

In all honesty, the Red Team can be an intimidating process. For some, it may be the first time they have ever created a formal strategic plan. For others, they may be trying to resolve a very thorny issue. In all cases, you will be showing both your clean and dirty laundry to a group of strangers. Granted, this is not for everyone, but we believe the benefits far exceed any concerns.

First, we assemble a solid team of C-suite executives. Most of them are clients and are well versed in running businesses, dealing with tough issues, and developing and refining strategies. We make sure no Red Team member will be considered a competitor. In fact, many of them have been through the process so they are both sensitive and empathetic.

We have two simple rules:

- Confidentiality is maintained at all times.** Without this, nothing else matters. We have each of the Red Team participants sign a non-disclosure agreement.
- Any question is fair game as long as it is asked in a professional and constructive way.** This has never been a problem.

I had the opportunity to facilitate our 25th Red Team Session in August. Here is the scenario:

- Three years ago we worked with a professional services firm to help them build their strategy. Since then, the special niche they serve in the industry has continued to shrink and they've experienced some early signs of consolidation within their market.
- They asked us to help them validate their market hypothesis and develop an exciting and compelling vision to position them well for the next 10 years.

- We created a three-step process to do this with a subset of their industry peers, the senior leadership team, and a Prouty Red Team.
- Our objective was to look out 15-20 years and determine possible future scenarios that included a continuum from maintaining the status quo and experiencing a slow exit (death) to being a leader in consolidating this industry. We then explored changes to their existing business model to best position them for this future.
- The Red Team was asked to review the senior leadership team's findings and to provide feedback about the approach selected.

Suffice it to say that the three Red Teamers were not unified in their recommendations, and that's the beauty of the process. They don't have to agree.

The good news is that they provided a much broader perspective of the macro-economic issues facing senior leadership and affirmed for them the importance of building on their front-end client relationship core competencies while relentlessly driving down the costs of their back-end systems.

Overall, it was a great session. Did I mention the CEO wants to be a future Red Team member?

If you have a strategic plan you would like to vet or a thorny business issue that you're simply having trouble getting your arms around, try a Prouty Red Team session to help you really STRETCH your thinking!

*If you would like to create Red Team #26, please email [jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com](mailto:jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com)*