

INTRODUCTION—WHY ALIGNMENT MATTERS

Alignment

/ə'liːnmənt/

Noun: arrangement in a straight line or in correct or appropriate relative positions¹. In business, alignment means the essential parts of your organization are working in the same direction toward what truly matters.

The Hidden Struggles of Business Owners

Most small business owners I meet aren't struggling because they're not working hard enough. If anything, they're doing too much, juggling operations, putting out fires, and jumping from one urgent task to the next.

At some point, many begin to believe:

“If I just get better at juggling...work smarter...hire better...or find the right system, things will finally feel under control.”

But what if the issue isn't how well you're juggling?

What if you're juggling the wrong things or shouldn't be juggling at all?

Most owners try to solve this by improving execution: better systems, better hires, better time management.

And those things can help for a while.

But they may not solve the underlying problem. In some cases, they might make it worse.

Because if the business itself is not aligned around what matters, better execution just helps you run faster in the wrong direction.

The real challenge isn't just working harder or executing better.

It's alignment.

FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS

When your time, talent, and resources are pulled in too many directions, even your best efforts can lead to overwhelm, burnout, and constant reactivity. You stay busy but progress feels harder than it should.

Misalignment isn't always obvious, but you feel it. It can show up when decisions keep coming back to you, priorities keep shifting, and your team is busy, but not always moving in the same direction.

When your business is aligned around what truly matters, everything begins to change. You make clearer decisions. Your team takes real ownership. The business no longer depends on you to hold everything together. And the results go beyond the bottom line. They improve your quality of life.

That's why we developed the **7P Business Alignment Model™**—a practical purpose-driven framework to help you focus on what matters and align your business around it. It addresses seven core dimensions: **Purpose, Prioritization, People, Pipeline, Product, Process, and Profit.**

When these areas work in sync, your organization operates with greater clarity, unity, and shared direction. When that happens, growth becomes more meaningful, sustainable, and fulfilling.

A Rowboat Metaphor for Your Business

Running a business is a lot like rowing a boat. Each oar must be positioned correctly and move together to generate forward momentum. Imagine each oar represents a different dimension of your business. No matter how strong your team is, if they're not rowing in sync and in the same direction, you end up wasting energy, drifting sideways, or worse, spinning in circles.

In practice, this is how we support owners who are carrying too much of the business on their own and want leadership and execution support without taking on the overhead of a full-time executive team so they can focus on what matters most.

When one part of the business is weak, overloaded, or hindering progress whether it's people, process, pipeline, product, or financial discipline, we bring in right-sized fractional expertise to strengthen that specific "oar". And just as importantly, we help leadership stay in rhythm and aligned on what truly matters through ongoing alignment

advising and reflection so the organization rows in sync toward the purpose that matters most.

Defining Success and Getting in Sync

Before getting on the water, the crew must agree on the destination. Success isn't just about staying afloat. It could mean arriving safely, winning a race, or simply enjoying a nice day on the lake. If each rower has a different goal, the boat will struggle to move cohesively.

Similarly, a business without a clear mission, vision, and values may have employees who disagree on the proper course of action. For example, a product development team may prioritize quality and craftsmanship, while the marketing department pushes for rapid product launches to meet quarterly sales targets. If these teams don't align on what success looks like, conflict will arise, resulting from competing priorities.

Even highly skilled teams can find themselves expending enormous effort while making very little progress. A shared purpose and leadership rhythm keep everyone aligned and focused so that effort turns into progress.

Role of the Leader (Coxswain)



Once goals are set, a rowboat needs a leader, the coxswain. This person steers the boat, calls the race plan, motivates the rowers, and makes necessary adjustments.

In business, this leader is often the owner, founder, president, CEO, and/or senior leadership team. In smaller companies, the owner may take on multiple roles, much like a single two-oar boat where one person plans, rows, steers, and adapts. The leader ensures the boat moves in the right direction at the right speed, with every oar hitting the water at the right time. As businesses grow and mature, the business owners, like the coxswain, may not necessarily row themselves. Still, they know the ins and outs of each role and can step in to keep the team moving forward when needed.

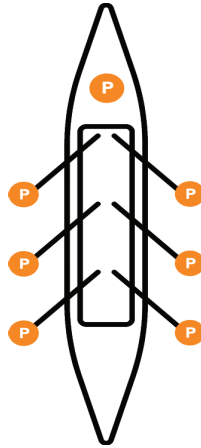
The 7P Business Alignment Rowboat Metaphor

Just as a coxswain's role is crucial to a rowing team, a leader's ability to align the organization's efforts is vital for business success. Enter the 7P Business Alignment Model™ (BAM)—a framework that brings clarity and cohesion to your business, much like the synchronized rowing of a well-coordinated crew.

The model consists of seven key dimensions of your business: Purpose, Prioritization, People, Pipeline, Product, Process, and Profit. Six of these Ps are analogous to oars in a rowboat, with Purpose representing the destination and the reason you are rowing the boat in the first place. It is also the underlying source of strength and cohesion required to direct and power the rowboat's six oars effectively. Understanding how to coordinate these metaphorical "oars" in a unified manner will help you coach, steer, and motivate your organization to success.

However, just as a rowing team becomes inefficient when oars are out of sync, misalignment in any of these dimensions can greatly hinder the progress of your business.

- **Purpose:** Without a clear purpose, the crew won't agree on the direction, leading to confusion.
- **Prioritization:** Without clarity of priorities, the company may be pulled in too many directions, hindering its performance.
- **People:** Misaligned employees increase turnover and negatively impact the company culture.
- **Pipeline:** A misaligned pipeline can result in insufficient customers or ones who are not the right fit.
- **Product:** Misaligned products may fail to meet customer needs, not be profitable or make the most of company strengths.
- **Process:** Inefficiencies like oars dragging in the water lead to higher costs and reduced profitability.
- **Profit:** Declining profit can eventually sink the business.



Staying in Sync Across the Business

Implementing the 7P Business Alignment Model™ helps create balanced execution, keeps the business boat afloat, and ensures it's moving in the right direction at a sustainable speed. Each member of a department may have their own goals in mind, sometimes “outperforming” their peers, but this is the equivalent of a single rower trying to make the boat go faster by themselves.

Each department may have its own goals, but focusing too much on one area can lead to imbalances. For example, if one side of the boat speeds up without the other side knowing, the boat veers off-course or in circles. A timely reminder from the leader ensures each rower is rowing in sync with the others, enabling them to keep the boat on course.

How to Use This Book

This book is designed to help you align your business with its purpose and stay on course by implementing the purpose-driven frameworks within the **7P Business Alignment Model™** (BAM). Much like the McKinsey 7S Framework², which emphasizes organizational alignment across seven interconnected elements such as strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, style, and staff—the 7Ps provide a holistic and integrative way to view and guide your business. The book is organized into nine sections:

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- **Sections 1–7:** Each section is dedicated to one of the 7Ps, offering in-depth insights, practical strategies, and actionable tools to help you align each P with your purpose.
- **Section 8:** Explores purpose-driven renewal and re-alignment with what matters most while also delving into leaving a meaningful legacy through succession planning or a successful exit.
- **Section 9:** Focuses on 7P Business Alignment Model™ implementation best practices, overcoming obstacles and challenges, and understanding the levels of support available to you.

Each section contains four chapters, for a total of 36 chapters. You can begin anywhere that aligns with your current priorities or pain points. That said, starting with Section 1: Purpose will provide greater clarity around your “end in mind” destination and help answer the foundational question: *Why are you rowing this boat in the first place?*

Section 1 – 1st “P” Purpose

Section 2 – 2nd “P” Prioritization

Section 3 – 3rd “P” People

Section 4 – 4th “P” Pipeline (Sales/Marketing)

Section 5 – 5th “P” Product/Service

Section 6 – 6th “P” Process

Section 7 – 7th “P” Profit

Section 8 – Renewal

Section 9 – Implementation

We encourage you to read and review each chapter. In our experience, every client has different missing pieces in their unique puzzle—and we never know in advance which chapter will contain the critical insight that creates a breakthrough for you and your business.

Continuous Improvement and Learning

While this book brings together our accumulated learnings, best practices, tools, and methodologies, we continue to learn, refine, and apply the 7P Business Alignment Model™—both for our clients and within our own organization. It is a living framework shaped by years of

working with business owners across industries to address real-world challenges and improve how their businesses operate and grow.

In that same spirit, this book was also created through the very principles it teaches. By applying the 7P Business Alignment Model™ across our work and within our own business, this work reflects how new ways of creating value emerge when a business is aligned around on what truly matters.

Customized Practical Application

You don't have to implement everything at once. Start with the chapters that speak directly to your current needs. We've found applying even one critical insight at the right time can make a meaningful difference in how your business runs or how you lead.

As clients adopt and implement the 7P Business Alignment Model™ (7P BAM), they develop a shared understanding and language for their organization's improvement efforts³—promoting a more collaborative and effective approach to tackling challenges.

The purpose-driven frameworks in this book are designed to help you better focus on what matters so you can become, do, and have more of what matters—and less of what doesn't.

From Insight to Action

Knowledge alone is not enough. The key lies in applying that knowledge with consistent, focused action. As Peter Drucker advised, “Don't tell me you had a good meeting; tell me what you're going to do on Monday that's different.”⁴

In the spirit of Drucker's advice, this book isn't just about information—it's about facilitating transformation in how you lead, how your team works, and how your business grows. You'll see more clearly, act with greater purpose, and achieve the outcomes that matter most. Together, we'll cultivate what I call, “Your Company Way”⁵ of solving problems, seizing opportunities, and aligning with your purpose so you can experience the relief and satisfaction of simplifying, executing, and accomplishing more of what truly matters.

Key Takeaways: Introduction to the 7P Business Alignment Model

Alignment Drives Results: Like rowing a boat, every part of your organization must move in sync toward a shared goal and what matters most. Misalignment slows progress, wastes effort and causes you to drift off course.

Purpose as the Guiding Star: Purpose sets the course and guides the decisions that move the business forward.

The Leader's Role: The leader acts as the coxswain—setting direction, calling the plan, and keeping the team aligned.

The 7P Business Alignment Model™: A practical purpose-driven framework that aligns your business across seven key dimensions:

- **Purpose:** Why the business exists
- **Prioritization:** Deciding and focusing on matters most
- **People:** Building and aligning the team
- **Pipeline:** Attracting and retaining customers
- **Product:** Delivering value profitably
- **Process:** Running operations efficiently
- **Profit:** Sustaining financial health

Misalignment Has a Cost: When any of the 7Ps are out of sync—unclear goals, shifting priorities, or inefficient processes—growth slows and frustration increases.

Flexible and Practical: Start with the dimension that matters most to your current challenge.

Built to Evolve: The 7P BAM is shaped by real-world application and continuous improvement.

Execution Matters: Insight alone isn't enough: what matters is what changes. As Peter Drucker put it:

“Don't tell me you had a good meeting, tell me what you're going to do differently on Monday.”