



Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Strategic Planning: Changing our Culture and Improving *HOW* We Function

Fiscal and Management Control Board

June 15, 2020

Lynsey Heffernan, Deputy Director of Policy and Strategic Planning

Changing Culture: Why?

- A positive workplace culture attracts talent, drives employee engagement in our mission, impacts happiness, and affects performance.
- How we collaborate, communicate, and make decisions on a day-to-day basis impacts not just our riders and the public, but also our workforce and the service they deliver.
- Organizational culture contributes to a unique social and psychological environment at the MBTA.
- For the MBTA to deliver a safe, modernized, and robust transit to the region, we must focus on our workforce and improving our culture.



MBTA Culture: 2019 Safety Panel Quotes

- “The Panel also found that a current culture of blame and retaliation impede the T’s ability to achieve a greater level of risk management and safety assurance. Perceived or real, employees in general do not trust their leadership and therefore, do not share with leadership what is happening in the field for fear of heavy-handed discipline.”
- “The workforce does not feel supported by management and are clearly frustrated with the management’s lack of responsiveness to their needs.”
- “The lack of upward and downward communication within the agency is also at the core of many of the T’s safety issues....there is a total lack of routine upward or downward communication within the agency.”



Our Process Was Intentional

Fall 2019-Winter 2020

Engaged in facilitated deep dialogue and leadership development, focused on *how* we function

110 Senior Managers

Chosen to represent the diversity of roles at the MBTA

Working Sessions

Over 6,000 staff hours committed to aligning our efforts in improving our culture

Our Process Was Employee Led

- **Employee input** was needed and appreciated.
- **Problems** were identified and analyzed.
- **Relationships** were formed, **trust** was built, and **consensus** was achieved.



Collaboratively Refined Our Message

Building on the Vision and Mission from the **2017 Strategic Plan**, and shortening the statements to bring clarity to the message, the group refined our Vision and Mission statements.

- **Vision:** We envision a thriving region enabled by a best-in-class transit system.
- **Mission:** We serve the public by providing safe, reliable, and accessible transportation.



Core Values

The values of the organization reflect *how* we do our work. The staff deliberated and discussed our core values over many sessions. The below reflects our best thinking on the MBTA's values, including how we specifically define each value.

Values

- **Safety:** We put safety at the forefront of our decision-making.
- **Service:** We endeavor to deliver superior service, connecting people and communities.
- **Equity:** We strive to treat all customers and employees fairly and to consult diverse voices and perspectives in decision-making.
- **Sustainability:** We invest resources wisely in solutions for our team, our communities, and our environment.



Next Steps: Continuing the Change

Internal Priorities

Workforce
Investment

Communication,
Collaboration,
and Culture

Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion

Resulting Strategies

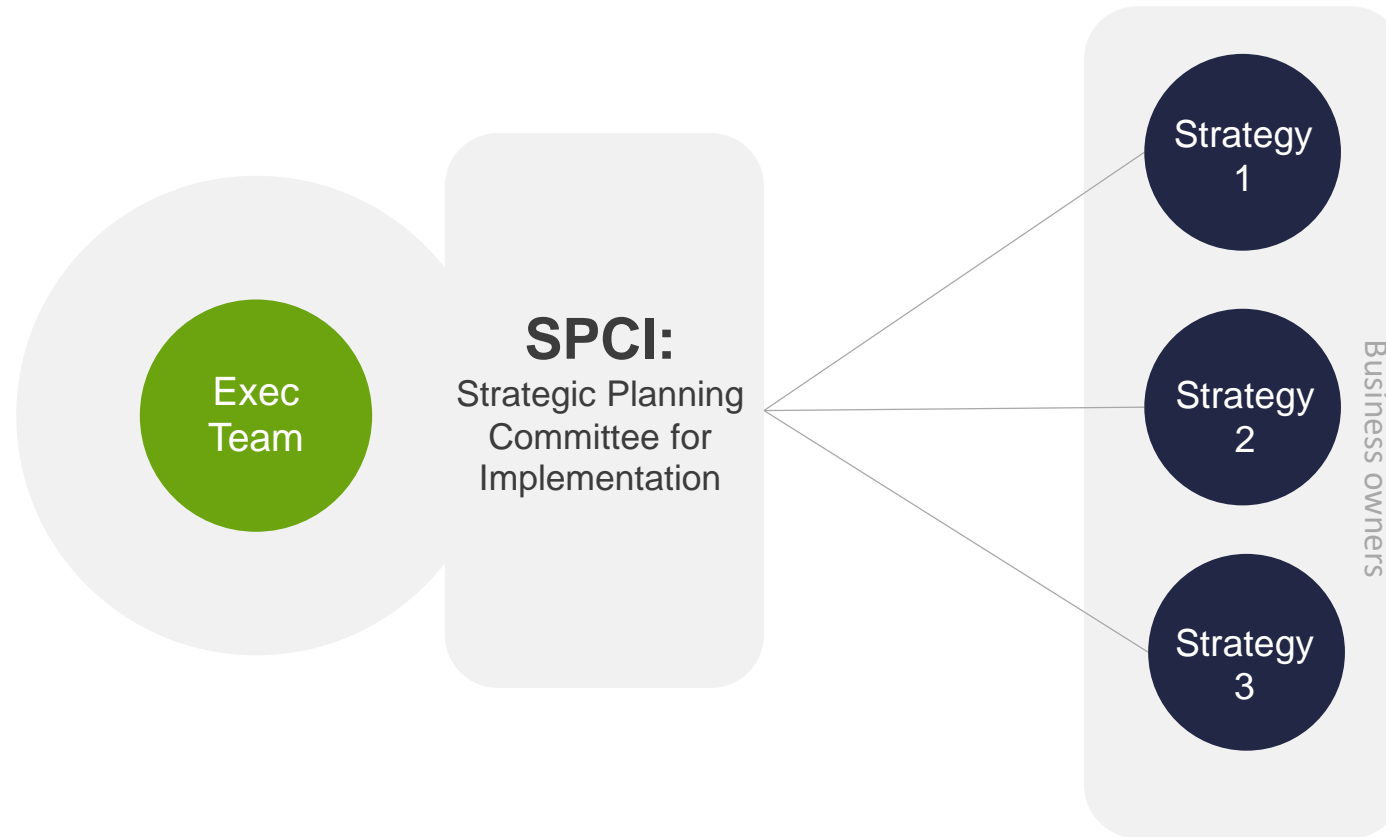
Recognize the
diverse talent that
we have and
develop it

Improve internal
communications

Invest in a more
diverse, inclusive
and equitable
organization



Next Steps: Accountability



A new standing group, the **Strategic Planning Committee for Implementation**, which will meet regularly with the Executive Team, has responsibility to support the Strategic Plan goals and work with staff to implement identified changes.



Building the Foundation

- A strong organization must have a solid foundation. For the MBTA, that foundation is made up of 6,400 employees who must feel valued and supported by their employer.
- Implementing the key strategies and reforms identified will improve employee engagement.
- A more engaged and supported workforce will deliver a higher-quality service to our riders and the public.



Appendix



Our Process Built Relationships



Cohort Meetings were held across the region and Authority properties:

- GLX site in Somerville
- 45 High Street, Operations Control Center
- Boston Public Schools
- City Year Headquarters



Our Process Was Collaborative

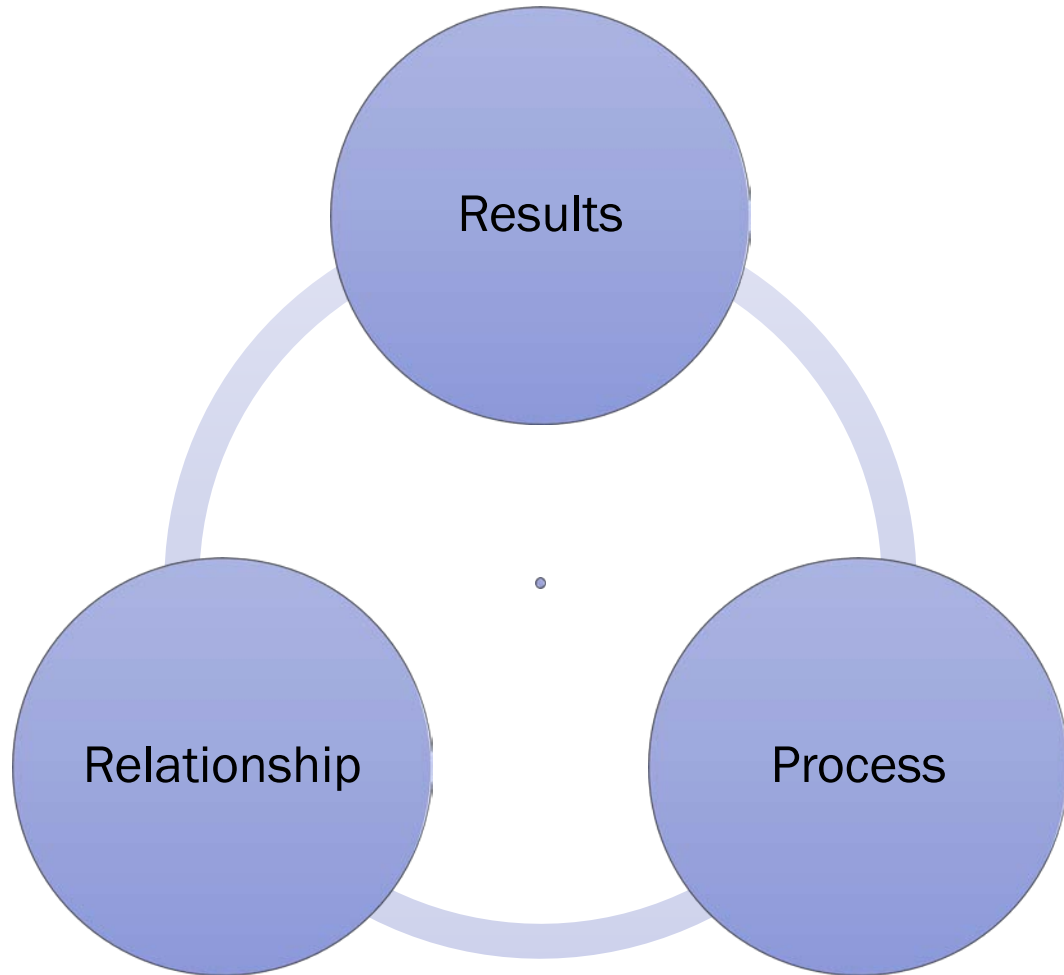


Three teams:

- Executive Teams (15)
- Strategic Planning Committee (12)
- Strategic Staff (+110) divided in three working Cohorts: Red, Orange, and Blue



Our Process Was Designed to Promote Change



- Change does not just happen. We have to choose it.
- Organizations are made of people; this process is designed to harness the incredible “people power” of the MBTA.
- This is a chance to look at how we operate and where we can improve.
- We met the goal of creating 110+ ambassadors for change.



Early Results from Staff

- Demonstrations of practicing safety-over-service
- Improved cross-functional collaboration and breaking down of silos
- Greater feeling of team and cohesion
- Open-mindedness to new ideas
- Increased hope, optimism, and receptivity to changes
- More friendly faces and relationships built, which enhance productivity and cooperation
- Improved communication - both listening and sharing with other departments
- Empowered staff speaking out more

(Taken from facilitator notes from Phase One celebration on March 4, 2020)

