

C-SUITE INTELLIGENCE

Game Changers Need Leadership Champions—and the Right Kind of Shared Ambition



Dr. Christian Marcolli  December 11, 2025



Most companies have some top individuals with the potential for the extraordinary. These potential Game Changers are ready and willing to make a difference. But too often, left alone instead of guided and supported, they stagnate. It is a false belief to say, “Great talents prevail anyway.” Having faith in that approach can stand in the way of your excellence as a leader and cost your company.

To make it worse, Game Changers may be assigned tasks or projects where they can only make some minimal contributions, or get locked up in internal processes or bureaucracy.

Without opportunities to stretch and show what they are capable of, and without the leadership that matches their potential, Game Changers will – over time – very likely be disappointed, demoralized, and frustrated. At some point, they become impatient and disillusioned, and may seek a different position in another company, with different leadership that better matches their vision, passion, and talent.

From a company's perspective, this is a big loss – devastating, disruptive, and a visible example of missed opportunities and untapped potential. It's also entirely avoidable.

The best do not prevail no matter what – and the last thing leaders should be doing is leaving their best people alone, assuming that their passion for excellence will be enough to produce the extraordinary.

In most cases, it won't.

Game Changers need a Leadership Champion – a trusted partner that brings the right kind of leadership capabilities and the right kind of ambition to the partnership – to achieve the extraordinary.

Ambitious for Overarching Success

Leadership Champions want to build something important and lasting that is bigger than just personal recognition. Therefore, they commit themselves completely to the achievement of their company's purpose and overarching goals. Most importantly, they keep their personal goals secondary.

This is what is necessary to successfully match with the motivation of the individuals with game-changer potential. It is fundamental for what I call a Winning Match – which is the most productive partnership between a Leadership Champion and their Game Changers.

A Winning Match exists because both participants do not outdo each other with their individual interests, and instead aim to achieve together what is best for the whole – for the customer, clients, the company, the shareholders, and anyone positively impacted by their success.

Therefore, to act as a true Leadership Champion, you first must build and possess a strong and evolved ambition that focuses on the overarching collective goals first. Because Game Changers have developed the highest level of passion for excellence, they seek out leaders who share this strong, collectively oriented ambition.

Leading Through Collective Ambition

As a Leadership Champion, consistently putting the importance of your own goals behind the overarching success of the company sends far-reaching positive signals across the organization. The message you send is: “What we are doing here and what we strive for together is by far more important than what I could personally benefit from.”

Here are five key actions for you to take as a Leadership Champion that will express what your collectively oriented ambition looks like in real time for overall success:

- **Provide and over-communicate clarity** about the direction and overarching targets of the organization, the purpose and strategy of the company, and how your team’s areas connect and contribute to the larger whole.
- Be a role model for **cross-functional collaboration**. Offer to handover resources to other divisions, departments and teams of the company when they are urgently needed to achieve an overarching goal.
- Ensure **excellent hiring and optimal positioning** of your team members’ roles and functions toward the collective, overarching success.
- **Relinquish resources for the betterment of the company**. This includes supporting changes that increase sustainable overall success, even if it impacts your own area or function.
- **Inspire others** with your motivation to contribute to the overarching success. Openly connect your personal drive to the organization’s long-term vision, and empower teams across regions to collaborate on shared goals rather than competing for resources.

Collectively oriented ambition is absolutely foundational to elevate your Game Changers, as you need to match their motivational levels with your own. And that means you – as the leader – need to personally go through a transition whereby you value and prioritize collective success more than personal success. Only when this happens can you forge that powerful Winning Match with your Game-Changers that yields extraordinary results.

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