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The 3C model to analyse the team and the organisation

In business, we often make strategy more complicated than it needs to be.

We create long documents, detailed plans, complex structures and endless discussions around what needs to change. While there is certainly a place for detailed strategy work, sometimes what an organisation really needs is a simple, honest way to look inward and ask: **where are we right now?**

One of the most useful tools I have come across for doing this is a concept called **The Three Cs**.

The Three Cs model was developed in the early 2000s by **Cas de Wet** in Amsterdam and has since been used in many organisations around the world. More recently, I have seen people use it very effectively as part of their strategy process, particularly when they want to create an internal view of the business and better understand what may be helping or holding the organisation back.

What makes the model so useful is its simplicity. It can be used by a leadership team, a department, a project team, a small business, or even across an entire organisation. It gives people a common language for discussing where the organisation is strong, where there are gaps, and what needs to be done next.

The Three Cs are:

Clarity. Commitment. Competencies.

Together, these three areas give us a very practical way of understanding the health, alignment and readiness of an organisation.

1. Clarity: Do We Know Where We Are Going?

The first C is **Clarity**.

Clarity is about direction. It asks whether people understand where the organisation is going and why.

This includes things like strategy, vision, purpose, structure and priorities. It is about whether the leadership team is clear, whether the wider organisation is clear, and whether people understand the direction well enough to align their own work to it.

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Some of the questions to ask around clarity are:

- Do we know where we are going?
- Are we in agreement about the direction?
- Do others in the organisation know where we are going?
- Is the vision clear?
- Is the purpose clear?
- Do people understand the structure of the organisation?
- Do people understand what is expected of them?

Very often, leaders may feel that the direction is clear because they have discussed it many times at leadership level. But that does not always mean the rest of the organisation has the same level of understanding.

- There may be a strategy, but has it been communicated properly?
- There may be a vision, but do people feel connected to it?
- There may be goals, but do teams understand how their work contributes to those goals?

Clarity is therefore not only about having a strategy. It is about whether that strategy is understood. If there is low clarity in an organisation, people may work hard but pull in different directions. They may be busy, but not necessarily aligned. They may be committed, but unsure what they are committing to.

That is why clarity is such an important starting point.

2. Commitment: Do People Feel Connected to the Direction?

The second C is **Commitment**.

Commitment is about morale, values, passion, culture and emotional connection. It looks at whether people believe in the direction and whether they are willing to contribute meaningfully toward it.

This is the human side of the organisation.

It is about whether people feel part of the organisation's DNA. It considers whether there is energy, trust, shared belief and a willingness to move forward together.

Some of the questions to ask around commitment are:

- Are people motivated?

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- Do they believe in where the organisation is going?
- Is there passion for the work?
- Do people feel connected to the values?
- Is the culture helping or hindering progress?
- Are people engaged?
- Are they willing to contribute beyond the minimum required?

It is possible for an organisation to have clarity without commitment. People may understand the direction, but not feel emotionally invested in it. They may know what the strategy says, but they may not believe it, trust it, or feel part of it.

This is why commitment matters.

A strategy that is understood but not supported will struggle to gain momentum. People need to feel that they are part of something. They need to understand not only where the organisation is going, but why it matters and how they fit into it.

When commitment is strong, people bring energy. They take ownership. They contribute ideas. They care about the outcome.

When commitment is weak, strategy becomes something that sits on paper rather than something that lives in the organisation.

3. Competencies: Do We Have What We Need to Deliver?

The third C is **Competencies**.

When people hear the word competencies, they often think only of skills. Skills are certainly part of it, but in this model, competencies are broader than that.

Competencies include the people skills and leadership capabilities within the organisation, but they also include the processes, systems, resources, tools and structures required to deliver effectively.

In other words, competencies ask: **do we have what we need to do what we need to do?**

Some of the questions to ask are:

- Do we have the right skills?
- Do our leaders have the capabilities needed?

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- Do our teams have the tools required?
- Are our systems supporting us?
- Are our processes effective?
- Do we have the resources needed to execute the strategy?
- Are there gaps that are preventing performance?

An organisation may have strong clarity and high commitment, but if it does not have the competencies required to execute, progress will still be limited.

People may know where they are going and feel passionate about getting there, but without the right tools, systems, processes, resources or skills, they will become frustrated.

This is why competencies must be viewed practically. It is not only about training people. It may be about improving systems, strengthening processes, investing in better tools, building leadership capability, clarifying roles, or ensuring that teams have the resources they need.

Competence is what enables execution.

How to Use the Three Cs Model

The way to use the Three Cs model is very simple.

For each of the three areas — clarity, commitment and competencies — you give the organisation a percentage score between 0 and 100.

- Zero means the area is extremely weak.
- One hundred means it is very strong.

For example, you may feel that clarity is at 50%, commitment is at 70%, and competencies are at 40%.

These scores are not scientific measurements. They are not based on a formal audit or detailed data analysis. They are based on gut feel, observation and honest discussion.

That is part of what makes the model so useful.

It creates a starting point for conversation.

Ideally, this should not be done by one person alone. If you have a leadership team, ask each person to complete the exercise independently first. Let each person score clarity, commitment and competencies from their own perspective.

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Once everyone has done that, come together and compare the results.
This is where the real value begins.

One person may score clarity at 80%, while another scores it at 40%. That difference is important. It opens up a conversation.

- Why does one person feel the direction is clear, while another feels it is not?
- What is being communicated well?
- What is not being understood?
- Where are the gaps?
- What are people seeing from different parts of the organisation?

The purpose is not to prove who is right or wrong. The purpose is to create open, collaborative discussion and eventually agree on a collective view.

That collective view becomes the basis for action.

Turning the Scores Into Action

Once the scores have been discussed and agreed, the next step is to ask: **what do we need to do to improve?**
If clarity is sitting at 50%, what would help move it closer to 70% or 80%?

Perhaps the vision needs to be communicated more clearly. Perhaps the strategy needs to be simplified. Perhaps the leadership team needs to align first before communicating more widely. Perhaps people do not understand the structure or their role in the organisation's direction.

If commitment is low, what needs to happen?

Perhaps there are morale issues. Perhaps people do not feel heard. Perhaps the culture needs attention. Perhaps there is a lack of trust, recognition or shared ownership. Perhaps people understand the direction, but do not yet feel connected to it.

If competencies are weak, what needs to be put in place?

Perhaps people need training. Perhaps the organisation needs better systems. Perhaps there are process issues. Perhaps the team does not have the tools or resources required. Perhaps leadership capability needs to be strengthened.

For each area, write down the practical actions that could help improve the score.

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This does not need to be complicated. The value lies in identifying the most important things that need to change. From there, the organisation can begin to build a more focused action plan.

Why the Three Cs Are So Useful

The Three Cs model is powerful because it is simple, practical and easy to understand.

It helps organisations avoid vague conversations and instead focus on three core questions:

- **Are we clear?**
- **Are we committed?**
- **Are we competent?**

These three questions can reveal a great deal.

If an organisation lacks clarity, people may not know where they are going.

If it lacks commitment, people may not feel motivated to get there.

If it lacks competencies, people may not have what they need to deliver.

The model also helps leaders see that organisational performance is not dependent on one thing alone. You need all three.

- Clarity without commitment can feel mechanical.
- Commitment without clarity can become unfocused energy.
- Clarity and commitment without competencies can lead to frustration.
- Competencies without clarity can result in efficient activity in the wrong direction.
- The strength of the organisation comes from understanding the relationship between all three.

A Tool for Strategy, Alignment and Conversation

The Three Cs can be used as part of a formal strategy planning process, but it can also be used more informally to help people engage with the organisation's current reality.

It can be used with a board, a management team, a department or a project team. It can be used when an organisation is growing, changing direction, experiencing internal tension, or simply wanting to improve alignment. Most importantly, it gives people a way to participate.

Rather than strategy being something handed down from leadership, the Three Cs create space for conversation. People can share how they see the organisation. They can discuss what is clear and what is not. They can identify what is working, where there are gaps, and what support is needed.

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That conversation alone can be valuable.

Final Thought

The Three Cs is a wonderfully simple tool.

It asks us to pause and look honestly at our organisation through three lenses: clarity, commitment and competencies.

- Where are we strong?
- Where are we weak?
- Where do we need to improve?

What practical steps can we take to move forward?

Whether you are putting together a strategic plan or simply wanting your people to engage more meaningfully with where the business is going, this model gives you a clear and useful starting point.

Sometimes the best tools are not the most complicated ones.

Sometimes the best place to begin is with three simple questions:

- **Do we know where we are going?**
- **Do we believe in it?**
- **Do we have what we need to get there?**

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