

## Alignment Requires Convergence

Have you ever experienced a rush hour nightmare? Even if you have, chances are it paled in comparison to the traffic jam illustrated below of the G4 Beijing-Hong Kong-Macau Expressway in China.

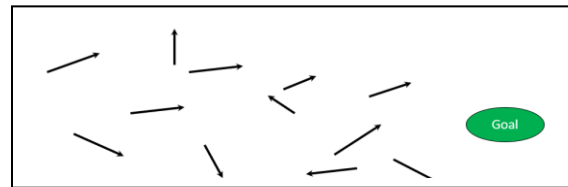
This picture shows 50 lanes of traffic coming to a narrow passageway where approximately 12 cars are able to pass together. There are no lines in the road, no road signs or traffic lights – everyone simply gives and takes a little to converge into the narrow passage.



If you have been part of an organizational strategy exercise to develop key components of vision, mission and goals, you may be familiar with the give and take concept illustrated above. Baldrige Excellent Framework outlines strategy as its number

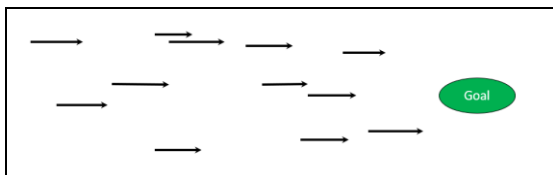
two category stressing that your organization's long-term organizational success and competitive environment are key strategic issues that need to be integral parts of your overall planning. The Shingo Model demonstrates strategic alignment as one of the four categories a successful organization. And on a personal development aspect, Steven Covey tells us in habit #2 "To begin with the end in mind."

These world-class operational excellence/performance management references demonstrate the importance of organizational alignment, strategy and getting our workforce to "give and take a little" to achieve a desired goal. If you were to assess your employees alignment goal, what might it look like? Would there be a clear direction? Or would a visual representation look something like multiple arrows heading in random directions?



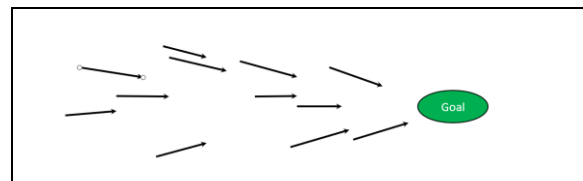
result or to a

Effective leaders recognize the variation in employee alignment to goals, seek a solution and diligently work to get everyone aligned. Much like 50 lanes of traffic, it's necessary to get everyone heading in the same direction.



Although the workforce is now "aligned", the difficulty becomes managing **convergence** on the same goal. It's fine when employees have their own personal goals to achieve and they come up with individual action plans to get there, but how effective is it if every employee develops their own strategy? Is it possible to achieve a unified goal for the company under those circumstances?

Convergence implies going in the same direction to meet certain point. It requires give and take by all participants to come together; adding knowledge and giving a little and in some cases not getting your way for benefit of the whole. If we expect to always get what we convergence becomes an impossibility and achieving a bigger goal will become a fraction of what it could have been.



at a input, the want,

As you assess your "Organizational Alignment," think of the behavioral principles that are necessary to allow for convergence. Allow your employees to have input to your strategies to achieve a goal but be clear about the expectation that they come together and agree on a single method to achieve that goal – one which they all are willing to support. Not only will you be on your way to achieving alignment and convergence, you'll likely experience improved employee morale because they will feel more involved, valued and engaged.