

What it is

A model that describes the stages people in an organization go through to achieve aligned action¹

What it can do

This tool can assist you to:

- o Help leaders understand what it will take to align their people and their actions around new initiatives.
- o Help leaders deal with the frustration of how long it sometimes takes to see their ideas gain traction.
- o Help support people in organizations in going through the steps of aligning their actions with new initiatives.
- o Help diagnose the source of the problem when alignment challenges arise.

When to use it

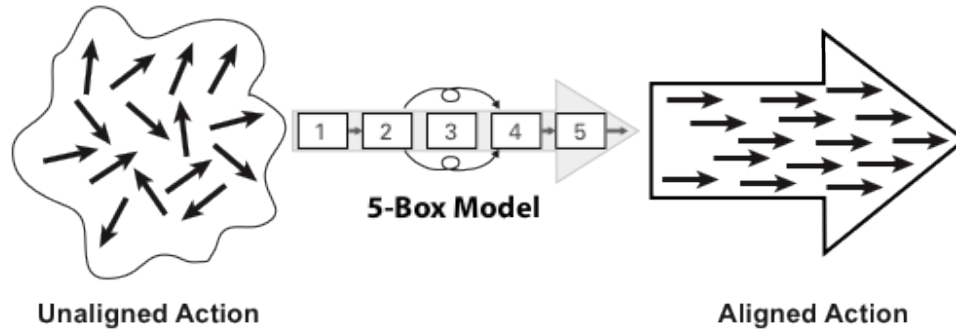
- o When planning any major new initiative which requires new attitudes and behaviors
- o When rolling out new initiatives
- o When alignment problems arise

How it works

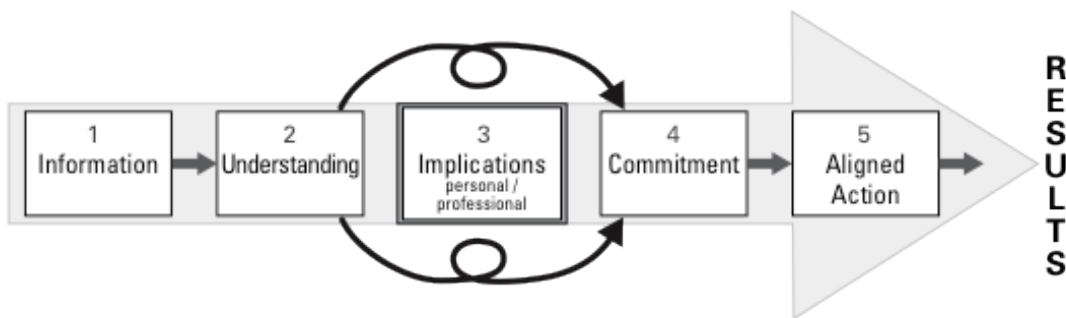
Aligned action is necessary for consistent, sustainable performance and success. It channels, combines, and focuses individual and team efforts to achieve results.

The intent of the Five Box model is to remind us that the distribution of information alone, however accurate and detailed, does not guarantee that the audience will end up taking aligned action.

¹ Thank you to Jose Acevedo, Leslie Jaffe, Randall Alford, and Marc Sarkady for their contributions to this model and text.



Aligned action cannot be imposed. It requires peoples’ understanding and commitment. However, through good leadership, alignment can be facilitated and accelerated. The 5-Box model shows us how.



Stage 1. Information

- It is leadership’s responsibility to establish and preserve channels of information and provide the information their people need.

Stage 2. Understanding

- People often hear things, but don’t necessarily understand what the speaker is trying to communicate. No one can make another understand something. It requires the active engagement and willingness of those to whom we communicate. Helpful in this stage are interactive sessions that encourage questions and dialogue.

Stage 3. Implications

- People need to move beyond intellectual understanding. They must grapple with the personal and professional implications:
 - What does this mean for me?
 - How will it impact me?
 - What are my concerns/fears?
 - What might I lose or gain?
 - How might I be challenged?
 - What opportunities are there?
 - What will I need to do differently?
 - What's needed from me to support the organization?
- Dialogue and coaching are helpful in dealing with the resistance to change that tends to surface in Stage 3.

Stage 4. Commitment

- Alignment requires people to take ownership of the work that needs to be done. Once people successfully engage with the implications, commitment rather than compliance now becomes possible. True commitment can never be forced – only inspired, encouraged and supported.

Stage 5. Aligned action

- Once individuals move through the stages of the model, they can align with others to fully contribute to shared success. The collective power of the group can now be harnessed to drive towards results.