

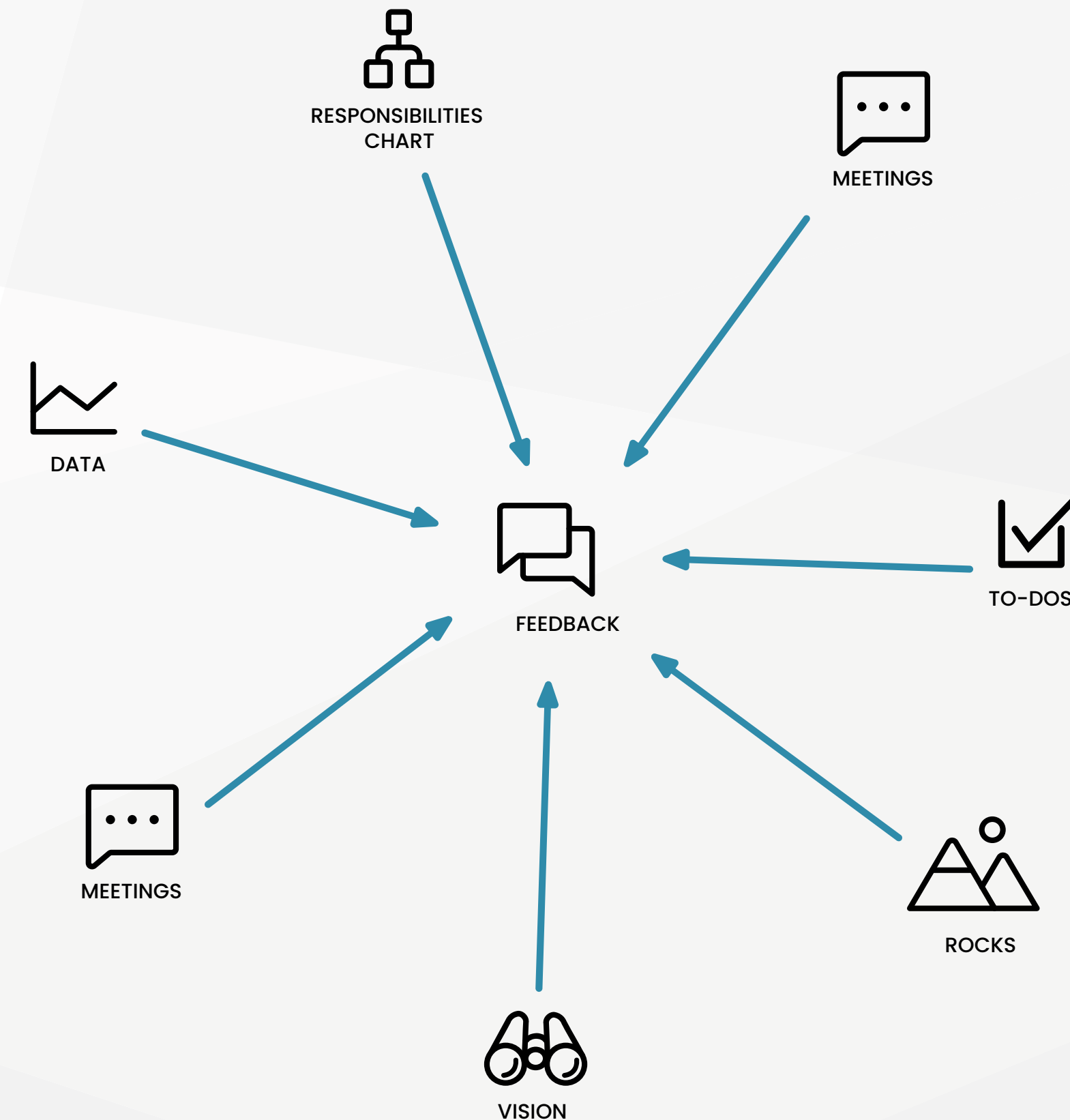
Lead → Agree ← Coach

Building your business into a great company requires high-trust relationships with all the stakeholders in the business. This starts with its employees, organized in teams. Beginning at the Senior Leadership level, every department head must acquire, develop, and practice highly effective ways of leading and coaching their team members.

The head of a team owns the responsibility for leading and coaching people. We call this Lead, Agree, Coach (LAC). People in these seats are wise to constantly refine the skills and specifics associated with their LAC responsibilities. The effectiveness, efficiency, and health of the team depend to a large degree on the team leader's mastery of LAC skills.

Leading the team and coaching each team member results in clear, effective, and measurable agreements among team members, between the team leader and the other team members, and between the organization as a whole and the team.

As we move away from the era of managing people, with its limitations and temptations toward micro-management, we move into the era of coaching people.



Leading vs. Coaching

While the team leader assumes the responsibilities of both leader and coach, there is a sharp distinction between them. Leading is all about the team. Leaders have a vision and lead teams toward a series of destinations. In contrast, coaching is all about each team member as a person. Coaches inspire team members to perform, grow, and become better and better versions of the best version of themselves.

To further distinguish between leading and coaching:

- Leading is:
 - » Guiding followers toward a destination, a [Compelling and Audacious Goal \(CAG\)](#) for the team.
 - » About the Why (“Why are we going to that CAG?”), the Where (“Where is that destination?”), the What (“What milestones are we set to achieve?”), and the When (“When do we want to reach our CAG?”).
 - » About working *on* how their team matters.
- Coaching is:
 - » Inspiring each team member to grow, perform, accomplish, and increase their impact.
 - » About the Who (“Who is that person?” and “Who is the ideal person for that function in the team?”) and the How (“How must that person act to fulfill the responsibilities of their Seat?”).
 - » About working *with* and *for* each person in that team.

In any well-run company, each team leader is accountable as both a leader and a coach in the following ways:

- Leaders are accountable for defining and communicating the company’s:
 - » Purpose, Passion, and/or Just Cause
 - » Industry and Niche
 - » Products or Services
 - » [Ideal Customer](#)
 - » Unique Value Proposition
 - » [Core Values](#)
 - » Structure
 - » Compelling and Audacious Goal(s)
- Coaches are accountable for:
 - » Hiring and retaining Ideal Team Members
 - » Clarifying each team member’s required Competencies
 - » Discovering each team member’s career aspirations
 - » Creating each team member’s experiences as part of the team
 - » Creating the necessary communications with each team member
 - » Enhancing the team’s health





Agree

At the intersection of leading a team and coaching each person in the team are the [agreements](#) set between the leader/coach and the team, between the leader/coach and each person in the team, and among all members of the team. These agreements are arrangements that are accepted by all team members, turning into commitments that are made by all team members and used as Focus Filters for daily decisions.

In addition to turning the above accountabilities as leaders/coaches into agreements, there are essential agreements on:

- 3-Year Goals
- 1-Year Goals
- Quarterly [Rocks](#)
- Financial and Non-Financial KPIs
- [To-Dos](#)
- [Issues](#)

Core Disciplines of Leading

As a leader, you make the following commitments to your followers, the team you lead:

- **I have a compelling Vision for my team.** I know where we're going. I know why we're going there. I have aligned my vision for my team with my peers. I know what goals and milestones my team and I must

accomplish to get to the destination I envisioned. I know what types of challenges we'll be facing along the way.

- **I provide the necessary resources to my team.** I ensure that the team has the required people, tools, technology, and training to achieve its goals. I ensure that the team has or develops the required [processes](#) and has enough time to reach its goals.
- **I focus on the who and the what, not the how.** I ensure that the team is structured for the highest performance and that the right people are in the right Seats and doing the right things. I allow and support each team member to use their unique abilities and do their work in their own way.
- **I honor the organization's Vision and Focus Filters.** Whether I lead or coach the Senior Leadership Team, a department, or any other team within a company, I fully adhere to the company's Vision. I follow my leader when I must follow and fully commit to decisions even when I may disagree.
- **I lead by example. I walk the talk.** I commit to being responsible for my actions, centered as a way of being thoughtful and clear in my communications, focused on the goals I agreed to, confident in my abilities to lead and coach my team, competent in performing my tasks, and disciplined in my execution.
- **I am open, honest, and transparent.** I am open to hearing from my team members what's working and what isn't. I am open to receiving feedback. I am honest and transparent in my actions, with no hidden agendas.

Core Disciplines of Coaching

As a coach, you and each one of your team members must make the following commitments to each other:

- **We turn expectations into agreements.** We explicitly agree on what's important, what matters. We honor what we agreed upon with respect to our [Roles and Responsibilities](#), our quarterly Rocks, our Core Values, and our KPIs and their associated targets.
- **We communicate well.** We consistently strive to understand what's on each other's minds and what's in each other's hearts by asking and answering appropriate questions. We don't avoid tough conversations, telling the truth even when it's uncomfortable. We carry all conversations in a truthful, specific, and positive way. We trust each other's intentions.
- **We meet with the right cadence.** We meet weekly with our team as a whole. We hold [1-on-1 meetings](#) when necessary to deal with novelty, challenges, and changes. We meet quarterly to review the progress we've made, where we missed, and to establish new quarterly Rocks and KPIs and targets if appropriate. We extend our [Quarterly](#) into an [Annual Planning Meeting](#) once a year to challenge and revisit our Vision and set new 1-Year Goals.
- **We talk about how we are doing.** We talk about how we're fulfilling our Roles and Responsibilities, performing alongside our KPIs, and completing our Rocks. We also talk about how well we're fitting into the company's [culture](#), how well we're embracing its Core Values, and how well we're fitting into our respective Seats.

- **We work together to help people grow.** We explore each team member's career aspirations and where they are on their journey. We talk about where the team member is and what they need to grow and become more valuable to the team and to the company as a whole.
- **We appreciate each other.** We provide each other with timely feedback and positive feedforward. Each team member feels appropriately rewarded and compensated, appreciated and valued. We ensure that each team member matters and feels so.

Takeaway

As the leader/coach of a team, one leads the team and coaches each team member. Leading is about the team: having a compelling vision and guiding the team toward a series of destinations. Coaching is about the people: inspiring them to grow, perform, and accomplish.

Leading and coaching both rely and focus on a number of essential agreements. Strong leaders make six commitments to their teams. Strong coaches enter into six commitments with each of their team members. Leading is a choice. Coaching is a choice. Both are honors. Mastering the art and science of both leading and coaching is an essential endeavor for those who want to build great companies.

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