



On 9 Core Competencies

GUIDING COMPANY GROWTH

By Mark Abbott, Mike Frascolla, and Tommy Mains | © Ninety





A Message from the CEO

Every organization runs on some kind of system. As a business grows and evolves into a company, and a company evolves into a great company, so should its operating system.

At Ninety, we understand the challenges of building, running, and scaling organizations. Our mission is to make that work easier by providing you with a cloud-based platform that contains every one of the essential concepts, tools, and disciplines you need to upgrade your operating system.

We believe we're moving into [a new age of work](#) — the Age of Understanding, or Work 8.0. The coming of this age was inevitable, but the pandemic accelerated its arrival by about ten years as so many organizations transitioned to remote or hybrid models.

With access to a wider array of opportunities than ever before, people don't just want to punch a time clock — they want to find value and purpose in their lives through Work they love doing (which we refer to as [Work with a capital W](#)).

Each of our guides is all about how to master a particular concept, tool, or discipline needed to build a great company in this new age of Work.

Great organizations know who they are, what they are, where they are, where they want to go, and what it's going to take to get there.

Our relentless focus is to simplify the hard work of aligning and focusing teams so organizations and their employees can thrive. We're glad you're joining us on this journey. If you have questions or want to learn more, reach out to helpful@ninety.io — we'd love to hear from you.

Gratefully,

Mark Abbott
Founder + CEO, Ninety

Purpose

This guide offers an overview of the **9 Core Competencies**, our time-tested lens for assessing the strength of your company-building capabilities.

Along with the [Stages of Development](#), the 9 Core Competencies framework makes it simple for leaders to measure the overall strength of their BOS.

As a business leader, you can use the materials and resources in the individual Core Competency guides we reference to identify and address critical areas of need and opportunity. We also encourage you to take advantage of the [free assessments](#) we've created to help you measure your strength in the 9 Core Competencies and your readiness to upgrade your BOS.

Finally, we highly recommend enlisting a [business coach](#) to help you on this journey for even better results. If you don't have a coach and would like to learn more about the various coaching communities, we're here to help.

We're happy to share our content and contacts because delivering free high-impact company-building information is part of our mission to help organizations focus, align, and thrive.

LET'S DIVE IN.

- **Read it**

- » We've designed this guide to make it easy to quickly absorb the information. Skim for highlights, glance for big ideas, or dive in for a deeper understanding.

- **Save it**

- » Continue to use this guide as a high-value reference. Highlight, underline, or circle what's most useful. We've even left space for notes.

- **Share it**

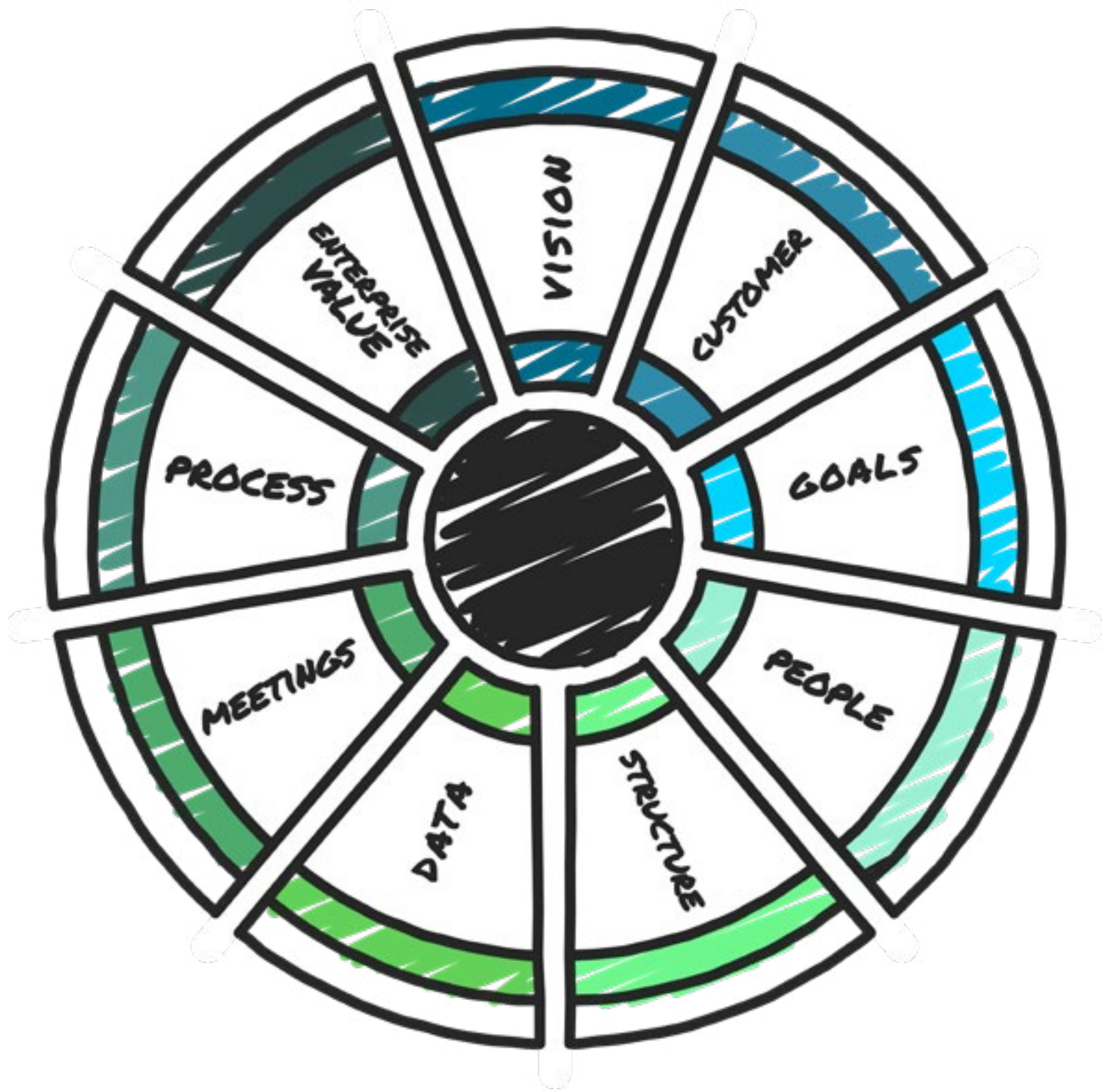
- » The information and advice on these pages should be shared. We deeply believe that useful resources should be accessible to all.

Table of Contents

The 9 Core Competencies	5
The Stages of Development	6
Vision	7
Customer	10
Goals	12
Structure	14
People	16
Data	19
Meetings	20
Process	22
Enterprise Value	23
Takeaway	24
Key Terms	25

The 9 Core Competencies

The **9 Core Competencies** are the essential skills and disciplines leaders must master to build great companies. They're clear, essential, time-tested, and effective.



1	VISION Our ability to define our organization's highest aims and the extent to which all our people work to turn the Vision into reality.
2	CUSTOMER Our ability to know who our Ideal Customers are and to serve them consistently at the highest level.
3	GOALS Our ability to establish, track, and achieve short-term, medium-range, and long-term Goals .
4	PEOPLE Our ability to support our people by codifying, promoting, and maintaining a healthy, thriving culture centered around Core Values.
5	STRUCTURE Our ability to clearly define organizational structure around Core Functions and getting the Right People in the Right Seats.
6	DATA Our ability to define, align to, and track metrics that give us an actionable pulse on the business.
7	MEETINGS Our ability to conduct effective, efficient meetings that help us thrive.
8	PROCESS Our ability to identify, document, and follow the processes that define how we do business.
9	E-VALUE Our ability to recognize, communicate, and substantially increase the enterprise value of our business.

The Stages of Development

Our framework measuring an organization’s progress toward becoming a great company, the [Stages of Development](#), complements the 9 Core Competencies. Every business leader knows there’s more to organizational success than a balance sheet. Countless factors, some obvious and others less so, contribute to a company’s long-term well-being. We use the Stages of Development to identify the core factors, assess an organization’s status, and build a great company.

HOW IT WORKS

The Stages of Development framework makes it easy to understand and navigate an organization’s developmental journey. Businesses find it much simpler to scale each stage once they begin to master the 9 Core Competencies. As a business grows comprehensively, it becomes more and more likely to turn its Vision into reality.

Think of the Stages of Development as a map and the 9 Core Competencies as a compass. Together, they offer necessary orientation, specific direction, and key steps for a business to get where it wants to go. We’ve developed these concepts through decades of company-building experience and data. Now, we’re sharing these best practices with you.



Vision

Vision is a company's definition of itself and the expression of its highest aims. It defines how the company's people work to make the Vision a reality. That's why it comes first.

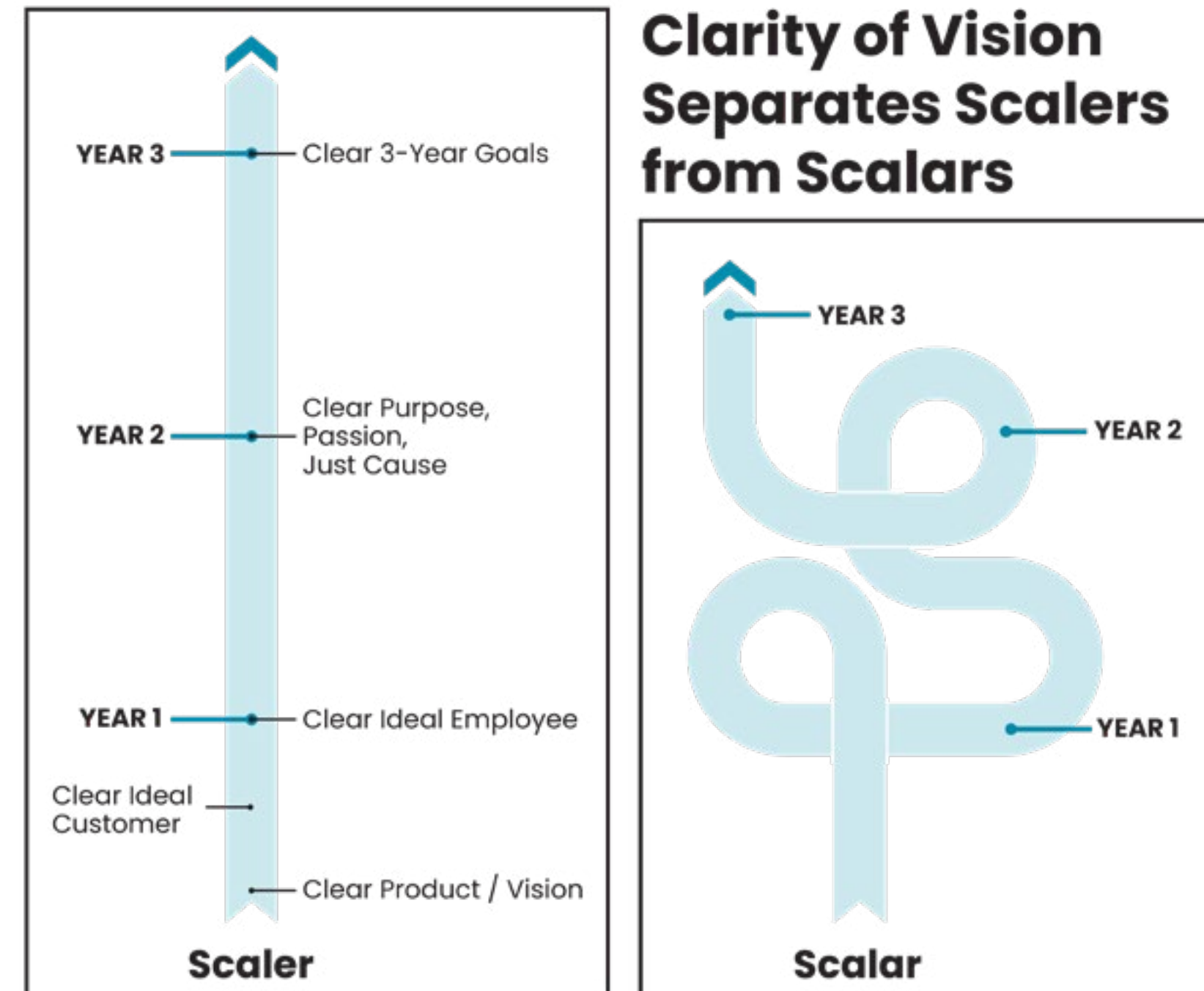
We divide companies into two categories. The first group is inspired and looking to scale their organization — we call them **Scalers**. The second group is distracted and struggles with long-term goals — we call them **Scalars** (borrowed from the physics term for a quantity with magnitude but no direction, like mass or calories). One reason businesses struggle is a lack of focus and long-term goals that continuously remind them of who they are and where they want to go. **To scale, a clear and compelling Vision is required.**

MASTERED: INSPIRED SCALERS

A great company has created a compelling Vision that answers its most vital questions. It knows what it is, what it does, why it does it, and who it serves. It also knows where it's heading and what it must do to go from here to there. The Vision is promoted and known across the company.

IN PROGRESS: DISTRACTED SCALARS

A struggling business may have goals and dreams that led to its founding in the first place, but it struggles because it lacks the depth, specificity, and coherence of a clear and compelling Vision. Often, the business is too focused on doing whatever it takes to survive. As a result, it can be easily distracted — leading to less commitment from its people.



ELEMENTS OF A CLEAR AND COMPELLING VISION

Ninety's [Vision tool](#) allows you to store your Vision's components. A clear and compelling Vision includes an array of filters that make decision-making more efficient. We call these **Focus Filters**.

Establishing and agreeing on your organization's Focus Filters is the primary objective of the [Vision Setting Session](#) that we recommend every organization go through.

The primary Focus Filters are:

1. Purpose/Passion/Just Cause
2. Industry and Niche
3. Ideal Customer
4. Unique Value Proposition
5. Core Values
6. Goals

These [Focus Filters](#) provide clarity to leaders about the heart of the organization — what it does, why it matters, and how it makes the world a better place.

Companies are complex adaptive systems. Great leaders consistently share and promote their Vision. Every 90 days, they bring everyone in the organization together and talk about what's been done and is going to be done to turn the Vision into reality.

INDUSTRY AND NICHE

To establish your Focus Filters, you must first agree on your "Whats." The initial step is determining what industry your company is in and what you provide. Defining your niche in that industry helps the organization avoid chasing distractions you may want to pursue but that don't fall within your current scope.

IDEAL CUSTOMER

Leaders should recognize the value of filtering prospects and customers. While it's tempting to cast a wide net for less-than-ideal customers, the short-term gain in revenue is rarely worth the long-term consequences. Instead, build for the future by identifying, attracting, and retaining your [Ideal Customers](#) — your favorite kind of customers to work with. Since Customer is one of the 9 Core Competencies, we'll speak more about this later.

UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

The [Unique Value Proposition](#) (UVP) is your promise to your customers. It's why people choose to buy from you. We've added to the work of Michael Treacy and Fred Wiersema in their book *The Discipline of Market Leaders* to outline four main UVPs:

1. Having the lowest **cost** — you save customers money.
2. Offering **Innovation** — you find a new way to make life better.
3. Providing extraordinary **customer service** — you make it easy to get what they want or need.
4. Appealing to the buyer's need for **status** — you make them feel special.

In our experience, great companies have a primary and a secondary UVP. Integrating a third or fourth, however, will likely spread your focus too wide. Nobody's great at everything.

PURPOSE/PASSION/JUST CAUSE

We genuinely believe we're in business to do more than make money. It's good to remind ourselves often that we're making money because our customers value what we do. Finding your Purpose/Passion/Just Cause is essentially finding your "Why."

Your Why is the rationale for the company's founding and ongoing existence. What value are you adding that the rest of your marketplace isn't providing? A great Why never expires.

We break apart an organization's Why into three categories:

1. **Purpose** — The reason for which something is done, created, or exists.
2. **Passion** — Strong and barely controllable emotion.
3. **Just Cause** — A future state so appealing that people are willing to sacrifice to reach it.

Your Just Cause is the horizon line. It will likely be forever beyond your grasp, but your Passion for wanting a world like that to exist fuels you — becoming your Purpose for driving your organization to become better and better.

CORE VALUES

Your organization's [Core Values](#) are the behaviors you want your team members to exemplify. Not only do Core Values promote a positive culture, but they also act as a standard for hiring, reviewing, rewarding, and firing.

GOALS

We'll talk more about goals in a later section. For now, it's essential to recognize that your loftiest goals — we call them [Compelling and Audacious Goals \(CAGs\)](#) — should be so challenging and exciting that they inspire your organization to work toward them.

Once you've established your CAGs, begin crafting 3-Year Goals, 1-Year Goals, and 90-day Rocks, with their collective success being contingent on accomplishing your Compelling and Audacious Goals.

[Learn more about Vision in the 90u Library](#)



Customer

As a Core Competency, **Customer** reflects how thoroughly a company has identified and markets to its Ideal Customer, and how much its Unique Value Proposition resonates with them.

MASTERED: FULLY DETAILED PERSONAS

A great company has a clear picture of its [Ideal Customer](#) based on geographic, demographic, and psychographic characteristics. The company tailors its marketing such that the customer base increasingly reflects the ideal, and the product's reputation sells itself. This pursuit should yield a customer base that is at least 90% ideal.

IN PROGRESS: FUZZY FEATURES

A struggling business often fails to identify its Ideal Customer — largely because of its lack of confidence in having nailed the definition of its Ideal Customer. It's consequently focused on selling to any customer just to drive revenue. The result is a muddled customer base, conflicting product feedback, and everyone trying to be all things to all people.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG CUSTOMER COMPETENCY

Identifying and pursuing Ideal Customers improves outcomes for all stakeholders. Ideal Customers are more likely to recur their subscription or purchase from you again. Tailoring your marketing efforts to a specific audience simplifies the path to having 90% or more of your customers be ideal.

UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

The relationship with our customers often begins with our [Unique Value Proposition](#) (UVP), our value creation promise to our customers. There are four main UVPs: lowest cost, innovation, customer service, and status. Embracing the strength of a UVP helps turn Ideal Customers into enthusiastic fans of our organization. Enthusiastic fans recommend us to their networks, engage with our marketing efforts, and return for repeat business — making our UVP a critical component of our overall success.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Our relationship with customers doesn't end when they decide to purchase from us. By creating a map for our prospects and customers, we can better understand how they react to various touchpoints throughout the journey.

We integrate our [Customer Journey](#) with product tours, explainer videos, product demos, and case studies to show how our offered solutions will improve our customers' lives. Many companies also use hands-on experiences like free trials or freemium models to help show, rather than tell, a prospective buyer how their products or services provide solutions.

[Learn more about Customers in the 90u Library](#)

Goals represent a company's compelling and aligned set of long-term (10-year), medium-term (3-year), and shorter-term (1-year, 90-day) objectives. A company's goals should inspire, focus, align, and drive the organization.

MASTERED: GOAL-ORIENTED

Great companies set clear goals, then work to complete them. We recommend crafting one to three incredibly bold 10-year goals that clarify the desired destination — we call these [Compelling and Audacious Goals \(CAGs\)](#). Nested below the expansive CAGs should be a series of goals at different intervals vital to the company's long-term success. Leadership team coaches commonly recommend the use of 3-Year Goals to establish the map, 1-Year Goals to steer the course, and 90-Day Goals ([Rocks](#)) to mark the journey's progress. Publicizing and reviewing these goals often helps ensure everyone is focused and aligned so the company can thrive.

IN PROGRESS: ADRIFT

A struggling business may not have stated goals yet. At its most basic level, its goal is survival. This kind of business typically does not take an organized approach to creating, promoting, and following up with its stated goals. Usually, goals are forgotten or neglected in favor of "more pressing" needs or opportunities.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG GOALS COMPETENCY

Goals portray where we're taking the organization. They show our people our values and how we'll distribute available resources over the next several years.

GOALS AS A FOCUS FILTER

When we're committed to our goals, they act as a powerful filter when we're faced with a decision. Does pursuing this action help us move toward our goals? If so, allocate resources accordingly. If not, create a [Long-term Issue](#) for later consideration.



MAKE YOUR ROCKS SMART

Rocks — quarterly or 90-Day Goals — are the foundation of our goals system. We embrace the [SMART methodology](#) to ensure that our Rocks are focused on and aligned with our long-term goals. When goals are SMART, it's clear when they're achieved or missed. This level of precision increases the accuracy of departmental reviews, planning, and alignment.

Ninety's [Rocks tool](#) makes it easy to break down these 90-Day Goals into various Milestones, or manageable chunks. Milestones can be assigned to team members who may not own the Rock but contribute to its completion. Scheduling Milestones at regular intervals of two to four weeks can also help organize the march of progress for the Rock.

100% COMPLETION IS NOT THE IDEAL

Research from the journal *Nature Communications* confirms what we've seen in our decades of coaching and company building — people benefit when they miss up to 15% of their goals. Our goals should be challenging enough that success is not a guarantee. When determining the targets for your goals, ensure you're likely to complete at least 80% of them. Leaving enough room for possible failure raises engagement because it requires us to stretch to achieve our objectives.

[Learn more about Goals in the 90u Library](#)

SPECIFIC

In the next 90 days, we will increase our monthly recurring revenue (MRR) by 10%. Our CFO owns this goal and is responsible for delegating necessary Milestones to meet our target.

MEASURABLE

Department heads will monitor our number of clients, churn percentage, and MRR weekly.

ACHIEVABLE

Historically, we've increased MRR by 5–12% every quarter, but we want 10% to become the norm after a new marketing campaign, consistent product improvements, and expanded customer success practices.

RELEVANT

Increasing our MRR by 10% this quarter immediately fits into our 1-year finance and 3-year goals.

TIME-BOUND

Every 4 weeks, we should see a 3% or higher increase in MRR.

The **Structure** Competency measures to what degree a company employs expert workers in highly focused, function-defined, empowered Seats. It also gauges how well an organization has constructed its Core Functions, departments, and teams.

MASTERED: PERFECT FIT

For a great company, everything starts with [Core Values](#). These values inform what makes a team member a solid cultural fit. In addition, the business creates well-defined, function-focused roles that appeal to the ideal candidates — leading to excellent team members who love their work.

IN PROGRESS: MAKE IT WORK

When it comes to staffing, a struggling business can rarely be choosy. It may not be able to afford top talent, and even if it can, it may not recognize a worker's true skill set and value. What's more, a struggling business may not fully grasp what it needs from its team members. The company's roles lack definition — resulting in a lack of purpose among the people filling those Seats.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG STRUCTURE COMPETENCY

Structure involves creating clear and efficient hierarchies for a growing organization. Setting the foundation with the right structure allows you to place qualified people in each Seat. Many facets of the Ninety platform support the Structure Competency.

ORG CHART

Mastering the Structure Competency starts with understanding how to create and implement an [Org Chart](#). Each Seat on an effective Org Chart lists specific roles, accountabilities, and responsibilities (RARs).

Org Charts naturally form Strata, horizontal rows representing levels of leadership responsibilities and similar Time Spans of Responsibility (TSR) — how long the most complex tasks associated with a Seat take to execute. As your organization grows, you'll add more horizontal Strata and vertical Core Functions.

CORE FUNCTIONS

The vertical sections of the Org Chart represent the Core Functions your organization needs operating to be successful.

As an example, it's common for early-stage businesses to have three Core Functions accountable to the Founder:

1. Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success (Get)
2. Operations (Do)
3. Accounting and Administration (Manage)

Understanding your Core Functions helps you know which Seats to fill and which to hire for in the next 6–12 months.

STRATA AND LEVELS OF WORK

Each horizontal layer of the Org Chart represents a Stratum. Team members in Stratum 1 typically have work with a TSR of 1–3 months. Their Seat's RARs include the day-to-day work that keeps your organization functioning.

For example, Chat Support Specialists help your customers in real time. They lead themselves, and most of their work is completed in the near-term — meaning they do not often have multi-quarter projects to work on in addition to their RARs.

[Learn more about Structure in the 90u Library](#)



The **People** competency reflects the quality and coherence of a company's organizational values, norms, and atmosphere. In our [Culture Brief](#), we outline five levels of culture based on the book *Tribal Leadership*. We can't achieve all our goals alone. Setting the foundation for a positive culture provides our team members with opportunities for growth, a view of the company's future, and a trusting environment.

MASTERED: HIGH-TRUST COMPANY

The culture of a great company is often characterized by high-trust relationships, effective collaboration, universal buy-in, and positive energy — all of which embody and reinforce the company's Vision. People work well together and get more done when free of the dysfunction that might otherwise slow them down. High-trust relationships synchronize individuals and teams.

IN PROGRESS: POTENTIALLY FLAMMABLE

Low-stage, and at times toxic, culture can be seen and felt by all members of a struggling business. The team members in this kind of organization often distrust each other and the business itself. Interpersonal drama seeps into routine work. Progress is slow, the days are long, there's little commitment, and many see the business as a means to an end — a paycheck.

We've often heard that leadership teams have difficulty defining a positive work culture, but they know it when they see it. That may be true, but there are ways to diagnose an organization's culture. Companies, after all, are like people. They have strengths and weaknesses, good days and bad days — they have personalities.

IDEAL TEAM MEMBERS

When we refer to [Right Person, Right Seat](#), we're talking about finding an Ideal Team Member who embodies your Core Values. In addition, this person believes in your Purpose/Passion/Just Cause and has expertise in the roles and responsibilities associated with their Seat. Taking the time and resources to find Ideal Team Members reduces employee turnover and increases the number of team members who believe in what you're doing.

CORE VALUES

When coaching our clients to define their Core Values, we have them start by considering 10–15 team members they love working with the most and some past or current team members with whom it's challenging to work. We list the attributes associated with these examples and find patterns of positive traits and their antithetical opposites.

As we combine similar characteristics, we also pay close attention to the behaviors that are not only great but where their antithetical is a real problem. Finally, we determine whether our Core Value candidates are important, relevant, and enduring. The remaining contenders should be clear, authentic, and easily remembered.

TRIBAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

STAGE	RELATIONSHIP	BEHAVIOR	% OF ORGS
5: Life is great	Team	Innocent Wonderment — Language revolves around infinite potential and group making history — compete with what’s possible, not with another tribe.	2%
4: We’re great	Stable Partnership	Tribal Pride — People are fully themselves, and everyone is confident, inspired, and genuine. Their culture emphasizes shared Core Values, unique capabilities, and independent strategies. The tribe has an adversary — the bigger the foe, the more powerful the tribe.	22%
3: I’m great, and you’re not	Personal Domination	Lone Warrior — Knowledge is power, so people hoard it. They have to win, and winning is personal. The mood is one of wanting to help and support, yet being continually disappointed that others don’t have the ambition or skill.	49%
2: My life sucks	Separate	Apathetic Victim — People are passive and antagonistic. They’ve seen it all before and watched it fail. They’re sarcastic and resigned — always judging, yet never interested enough to spark any passion.	25%
1: Life sucks	Alienated	Understanding — People are despairingly hostile, banding together to get ahead in a violent and unfair world.	2%

IDEAL TEAM MEMBERS

Great [1-on-1 meetings](#) are conversations — not interviews or performance reviews. Both parties should share equal time and strive to be truthful, specific, and positive (TSP). Leaders should offer feedforward by embracing their responsibility to help their direct reports grow.

We use the forms from our [1-on-1 feedback](#) tool to determine a team member's demonstration of our Core Values; discuss whether they have the Competency, Commitment, and Capacity (CCC) for their roles, accountabilities, and responsibilities; assess the data associated with their performance; and have them review their team leader's leadership and coaching capabilities.

[Learn more about People in the 90u Library](#)



Modern businesses have more access to relevant information than ever before. **Data** measures how well a company collects, analyzes, and leverages quality data to monitor progress toward its organizational objectives. Using [data](#) to analyze past decisions, inform current priorities, and more confidently predict future performance is critical for sustained long-term success.

MASTERED: DATA-INFORMED

A great company treasures data. It gathers information at every opportunity and then interprets it in context. Quality data informs decision-making and leads to better processes, far more so than individual preference or intuition. Data offers usable insight into the present, but it's just as vital for paving the way to the future.

IN PROGRESS: ALL GUTS, NO GLORY

Struggling businesses tend to only establish a few procedures. Lackluster processes, unpredictable sales, inexperienced workers — there's no shortage of challenging factors for businesses to navigate. Data can be a helpful lifeline, illuminating what actually works and stabilizing the operation. Still, a low-stage business is often too busy to collect it and too novice to parse it.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG DATA COMPETENCY

Data becomes a superpower when organizations and their teams create [agreements-based](#) metrics and set up data [Scorecards](#) that predict trends and spot issues.

KPIS AND THE DATA TOOL

We recommend a two-pronged approach to get the most out of your data. First, have the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) build their Scorecard using our [Data tool](#). Then, by assigning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to team members across the organization, we track quantifiable metrics that feed into the Scorecard to be reviewed during [Weekly Team Meetings](#).

Ideally, each department has its own Scorecard, and every Seat in the organization owns three to five KPIs. Each KPI should have a **target** — an agreed-upon threshold that helps us determine when there's an Issue. The data being collected and the targets to meet are agreed upon after the team discusses available options.

Targets make it easier for us to minimize micromanagement. We're intentional about using issue-centric rather than goal-centric targets: outcomes that fall above or below target are considered an Issue and often warrant discussion to find a solution, especially if there's an obvious and negative trend.

[Learn more about Data in the 90u Library](#)

Time is a finite resource that should be invested wisely. This Core Competency measures the qualitative value of an organization's **Meetings**, focusing on frequency, efficiency, and effectiveness. At great companies, most (if not all) meetings are treasured rituals.

MASTERED: ENERGIZED ASSEMBLY

A quality meeting is time well spent and a sign of a great company. What exactly does it look like? Scheduled, focused, and solutions-oriented, with assigned tasks and clear To-Dos for following up. The result is completed objectives and an aligned, invigorated, and highly productive team.

IN PROGRESS: FRUITLESS GATHERING

Bad meetings are the worst. Struggling companies often have trouble executing effective meetings because the business needs more consistency and focus. Marked by endless discussion, marginal issues, sandbagging, soapboxing, and a lack of follow-through, unproductive meetings result in frustration.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG MEETINGS COMPETENCY

When team members dread an organization's meetings, something's gone wrong. Maybe meetings come too often, they're not focused on solving Issues, or open conversation is discouraged. If the general feeling is "This could have been an email," it's time to change. Companies with a strong Meetings Competency appreciate the value of [Weekly Team Meetings](#), [Quarterly Planning Meetings](#), and [Annual Planning Meetings](#) to keep the organization focused, aligned, and thriving.

CADENCE

Establishing and sticking to a meeting cadence starts with the Weekly Team Meeting (WTM). When our WTMs are on the same day, at the same time, for the same duration, with the same agenda, and start and end on time, we clear up time during the rest of our week by allowing everyone to plan ahead. We're able to make the meeting meaningful by saving discussing and solving critical Issues for the WTM.

Beyond meeting each week, each team should also plan for Quarterly and Annual Planning Meetings (QPMs and APMs). These less frequent huddles provide an opportunity for long-term planning, improving team health, and reviewing team performance.

AGENDA

Having a set agenda stabilizes our meetings and establishes expectations that we rate on a scale of 1–10 at the end of every meeting. The agenda is set based on the kind of meeting being held (WTM, Quarterly Discussion, APM, Monthly standup, and so on), and each department can add supplemental segments to its meeting (such as a project management tool overview).

Again, the foundational meeting is the WTM. At Ninety, we use the [Meetings tool's](#) default agenda:

- **Segue** — Maintain a [human connection](#) by sharing a piece of personal and professional good news.
- **Scorecard** — Analyze the team's KPIs using our [Data tool](#).
- **Rocks** — Share whether each [Rock](#) is on track or off track. If the latter, make it an Issue.
- **Headlines** — Cover [news or announcements](#) that don't require discussion from your team or others.
- **To-Dos** — Check the [To-Do](#) list to see if anything is off track.
- **RDR Issues** — [Raise, Discuss, and Resolve](#) items from the Short-Term Issues List.
- **Conclude** — Review what was covered, summarize the To-Dos created, and rate the meeting.

ISSUES

Every organization faces challenges, whether they're obstacles to overcome or opportunities to embrace. At Ninety, we call them Issues. Our proven framework to tackle Issues is called RDR — Raise, Discuss, and Resolve.

Prior to weekly, quarterly, and annual meetings, team members can add items for discussion to the appropriate Issues list. During the meeting, checking Headlines, Rocks, To-Dos, or the Scorecard can also bring up an Issue that needs to be addressed. Simply add the Issue to the list using Ninety's *Create* button or by right-clicking the item.

The RDR process works like this:

- **Raise** — A team member, the Issue's owner, chooses to raise an Issue to one or more team members. The Issue's owner explains what they need to feel solved.
- **Discuss** — It's vital to hear from those closest to the facts or directly impacted by the Issue. Speakers should focus questions and comments on what matters most to the Issue. Discussion should continue until the Issue has a solution — even if that includes transferring it to another team or moving it to the Long-Term Issues list.
- **Resolve** — Issues have a resolution when there's a clear path forward and the owner feels solved. If follow-up is needed, we create To-Dos as required.

Learn more about Meetings in the 90u Library

Sustained greatness rarely happens by accident. As a Core Competency, **Process** measures the extent to which proven and scalable [processes](#) are documented, implemented, and followed by the whole company.

When everyone in the organization can easily access and follow proven processes, everyone benefits: leaders have more power to focus on big-picture planning, team members have more confidence when taking ownership of new tasks, and shared accountability promotes a high-trust culture.

MASTERED: INTENTIONAL TACTICS

Like a master artisan, a great company understands the value of performing often-repeated tasks efficiently and effectively every time. Once identified, record proven processes so anyone can repeat them independently and accomplish the desired result. Everything from output to worker satisfaction improves.

IN PROGRESS: INADVERTENT CHAOS

A struggling business has few processes, proven or not, mainly because everything is constantly changing. If it does have set ways of doing things, they often only exist in the minds of vital workers. The business is likely too preoccupied with its survival to pause, document, and train. The impact is loss of knowledge and time.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG PROCESS COMPETENCY

We create space for innovation and creativity by systematizing predictable steps in our processes. For example, a proven HR recruiting process involving searching for, finding, and hiring prospects allows our recruiters to allocate more time to learning more about candidates and finding the Right People for the Right Seats.

COMMIT TO CORE PROCESSES

Many processes involve more than one department. Once the Senior Leadership Team agrees to a process, the next step is to inspire team members to commit to them. If one person falls short on their step, they affect other areas of the process.

EXAMPLE ONBOARDING

Once the Right People are put in place, we need to bring them up to speed with our organization. Onboarding is a necessary and crucial process, making it an essential starting point for growing companies establishing effective processes. The onboarding process often includes completing HR paperwork, meeting other team members, connecting with a mentor, learning the company's history, and granting access to necessary resources for the position. Streamlining this experience for new hires helps them, their teams, and the entire organization benefit from their addition faster.

[Read more about Process in the 90u Library](#)

Enterprise Value (EV) is the calculation of a company's value based on the total value of its equity and debt minus cash. To increase its Enterprise Value, a company must have a clearly defined and understood EV creation model that is supported by its systems and processes. Mastering the EV Competency isn't just about the company's equity holders; it benefits all of the company's stakeholders

MASTERED: INVALUABLE UNDERSTANDING

A great company consistently delivers on its promises, and that includes providing its investors with a strong risk-adjusted return on their capital. Prospective lenders and investors are drawn to companies that always strive to improve their Enterprise Value.

IN PROGRESS: UNKNOWN VARIABLES

A struggling business doesn't understand how to increase EV. Its Enterprise Value creation model lacks definition. In this position, the business needs to clearly articulate its ability to create Enterprise Value and be equipped to build systems and processes that support it.

"We don't make money because we want to make money; we make money because people value what we do."

— Mark Abbott, Ninety's Founder + CEO

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG ENTERPRISE VALUE COMPETENCY

Building a company that can endure for the long haul requires a firm understanding of how the organization creates EV. Companies that master the EV Competency are clear on how they create value for all of their stakeholders.

PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

We make money because people value what we do. The primary stakeholders are our customers, team members, Senior Leadership Team, vendors, strategic partners, investors, and society. [High-Trust Companies](#) demonstrate high-trust relationships with at least 90% of their stakeholders.

One of the ways we continue to earn that trust is through healthy, long-term growth of our Enterprise Value. Increasing our mastery of this competency also helps us pursue personal freedom, accomplish dreams, achieve financial stability, establish a legacy, fulfill passions, or any combination of these.

[Read more about Enterprise Value in the 90u Library](#)

Takeaway

The **9 Core Competencies** are the areas an organization must master to confidently and efficiently progress through the five **Stages of Development** associated with building a great and enduring company. The concepts, tools, and disciplines associated with the 9 Core Competencies are time-tested, essential, and effective. Along with the Stages of Development, the 9 Core Competencies are foundational to the system we have taught thousands of successful small and midsize businesses. As a leader, take the [Baseline Assessment](#) to map a starting point, then use the materials and resources in our guides and briefs about each of the 9 Core Competencies to address critical areas of opportunity for your organization.



Key Terms

- **9 Core Competencies** — The fundamental aspects of business that an organization must master to grow and develop. The 9 Core Competencies are Vision, Goals, Customer, People, Structure, Data, Meetings, Process, and Enterprise Value.
- **Annual Planning Meeting (APM)** — A meeting that occurs once a year, usually over two full days, to conduct longer-term strategic work, a review of the company's Vision, and an update of 3-Year and 1-Year Goals.
- **Compelling and Audacious Goal (CAG)** — A company's challenging and inspiring long-term (usually 10-year) goal.
- **Focus Filters** — The essential elements of a company Vision: Core Values, Purpose/Passion/Just Cause, Go-to-Market Strategy (Industry and Niche, Ideal Customer, and UVP), and Goals. Each decision a team member makes should be aligned with these organizational commitments.
- **Ideal Customer** — A customer who has a combination of geographic, demographic, and psychographic characteristics that makes them the perfect fit for our brand and offerings.
- **Quarterly Planning Meeting (QPM)** — A meeting that occurs once per quarter, usually over a full or half day, with the intent to plan for the next quarter.
- **Rocks** — The primary organizational priorities that should be accomplished in the next 90 days.
- **Scalar** — A business stuck in survival mode with no sense of its long-term goals or purpose.
- **Scaler** — A company that has created a compelling Vision and plans to adapt and grow to meet its goals.
- **Stages of Development** — The five stages an organization must go through to become a great company.
- **Weekly Team Meeting (WTM)** — A meeting that occurs once a week so teams can solve problems, prioritize tasks, and ensure To-Dos and Rocks are on track.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Thank you for taking the time to explore this guide. Now that you know how these concepts and their related tools advance a company's vision, you may be eager to implement them in your organization. We're here to help! Find more company-building information in the [90u Library](#) or [try Ninety today](#).