Orienting to Results

Groundbreaking discoveries and research, educated students, successful alumni, quality clinical care, better community - these are the results of fulfilling the University's mission of research, teaching and outreach. The steps described in this guide will allow you approach the work you supervise in a way that most meaningfully contributes to the University's mission.

Why is orienting to results important?

Orienting to results allows you to prioritize and focus on the most impactful work. As a supervisor, it also helps you to:

- Define and clarify the purpose of your team
- Align the work to support the unit/college strategic priorities
- Find new ways to innovate by challenging the status quo
- Keep your team engaged by developing their skills and capacity

How do I orient to results?

Orienting to results involves challenging your assumptions about your day-to-day work through reflection and conversations with your manager and your employees.

Define Your Team's Purpose

What is your team trying to accomplish for the University?

Identifying how your team meaningfully contributes to the University is the key to clarifying your team's purpose. Consider and discuss with your manager and your colleagues:

- What part of your team's work is critical enough to require extra effort?
- What part of your work provides the most benefit to the University?

Turn purpose into challenge goals

Given the purpose of your team, what does success look like when that purpose is achieved? What is different? What is better? Setting broad, challenging goals* will give your team focus and clarity around what they need to be working towards:

- What matters most right now in contributing to the purpose? (E.g., areas of work, skills of employees, etc.)
- What will matter the most in the future? (E.g., cooperation between teams and departments, talent and capacity development of employees, etc.)

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Assess how you spend your time

Having clarity about how you are spending your time and resources will help you decide what needs to improve, what needs to stay the same, and what needs to go away. To assess how you spend your time, track your time for a week, and consider:

What is your team spending their time on?
Are you spending time on things that align with your team's purpose, priorities, and goals?

What are you spending your time on that is less meaningfully contributing to your team's purpose, priorities, and goals compared to other work?

Are you spending more time on what's urgent, instead of what's important? Why are those things urgent?

> ### The "Urgency Effect"
> People often struggle with spending time and resources on what's urgent versus what's important. Urgent "fire drills" often get our attention because we feel the need to drop everything and solve them immediately. Higher-impact, more important work tends to be more difficult and abstract, with unclear, fluid or far-away deadlines. This may result in people prioritizing urgency and delaying or neglecting important work, which causes more urgency in the future

Question your assumptions

Understanding what you and your team are spending time on is one thing, but you'll need the courage to change what's not working. Take a look at how your team is spending time and consider:

What needs to be done really well or nearly perfectly? What can be done "well-enough"?

What can you say "no" to? What work can you eliminate?
What low-impact work can you de-prioritize or re-assign?

• What team or departmental norms or processes can you improve or eliminate?

Orient To Results Set High Standards:

Setting high standards around performance and impact drives employee motivation and improves work outcomes. To establish clear expectations and set high standards, both for the team, and individuals, consider:

• What are the specific outcomes for the high-priority work?

• How do you expect your employees' contributions to impact high-priority results? What does that look like?

• What are the specific skills, knowledge and abilities that employees need to achieve these key results?

• What are the expectations of how the team works together to achieve the key results?

Communicate your standards and expectations to your employees in team meetings or individual one-on-one check-ins.

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Foster urgency around priorities

Fostering a sense of urgency around critical priorities helps motivate and engage your team to drive results.

It's tempting to focus on attending to day-to-day requests that demand immediate attention because the consequences for not addressing them are usually immediate. However, this may result in a constant "firefighting" mode, where immediate issues take up your time even if they are not critical, and you fail to focus on longer-term priorities that might not seem urgent now. To foster the sense of urgency around critical priorities, consider:

- How will you set the tone about the work and explain "why" it is a priority now?
- How will you address roadblocks and potential pushback?
- How will you explain how your employees can contribute?
- How will you create accountability on your team to make sure results are achieved?