

# Symphonic *Perspectives*<sup>TM</sup>

## Finding Your Voice Series



## Finding Your Voice in 2009—Part I

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**KEY INSIGHT:** In the midst of turmoil and uncertainty, don't panic. Instead, focus and find your voice. The clearer your organization is about its purpose, the easier it will be to inspire people and to maintain course even in the face of uncertainty and challenge. Organizations that know their purpose and are authentic have a better chance of inspiring, persuading and shaping others. Like good musicians, good leaders can craft an emotional connection between what they believe and what they do, making it more likely that people will recognize and respond positively to that connection. This improves the organization's chances of impacting and shaping its environment...or moving the crowd.

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## FINDING YOUR VOICE IN 2009—PART 1



### How do you move the crowd? How do you inspire people to feel something and to act?

Great musicians know something about moving crowds and inspiring people. They recognize that people want to see and to hear something that is authentic—something that is original.

The same can be said for others who lead with inspiration—from politicians, and athletes, to teachers and parents. The same needs to be said of YOU if you are to be an effective leader of your organization.

#### Seeing the Impossible

2009 will likely be remembered as a year that began with great global economic uncertainty. In such an environment filled with challenges, it is easy and understandable to see the

proverbial glass as half empty, rather than half full.

Perhaps you lead or work in an organization that has laid people off, or is dealing with tighter budgets, or is unsure how to proceed in a challenging economic environment. If so, you may feel stressed, worried, or even panicked, and those emotions can shape how you approach and cope with those challenges. However, at Symphonic Strategies, we believe this is precisely the time to act not out of panic, but from a renewed sense of purpose.

Good leaders understand that challenging environments may be a constant; what can

change or adapt is how the leader responds to those challenges.

We suggest responding from a place that reaffirms what the organization is about and adjusts the organization's strategy to meet its goals despite external challenges.

This assumes that the organization and its leaders are clear on its purpose.

Are you?

When you face a challenge in your organization—or, for that matter, in your life—how do you respond to it? Do you yield to it, or do you seek to shape or change it?

Some of the most successful leaders have been visionary and aspirational—visionary in that they could see possibilities where others saw roadblocks, and aspirational in that they were determined to push against the odds to bring their visions to life.

Take the example of Martin Luther King. His "I Have a Dream" speech has inspired so many people for decades because it painted the picture of a future that, at the time, seemed far from being realized. Yet the very hope embedded in the speech helped move crowds large and small to work towards realizing that vision. He had a purpose, and that purpose helped him see the impossible and inspire others.

The clearer an organization is about its purpose, the easier it will be to inspire people and to

maintain course even in the face of uncertainties and challenges.

### Playing from Your Soul

To see the impossible and inspire others requires sharing something private and personal: your soul.

By soul, we mean that part of you that is most real and most reflects your passions, your convictions and your beliefs.

Part of what can be so compelling about watching good musicians perform their music is trying to see what connects the musician with their instrument and allows the musician to produce their music. Whatever it is, we

recognize that something real is going on, and we can hear it.

People respond to authenticity in many areas. For example, it could be an authentic interest in their problems. Or, it could be an authentic curiosity that leads you to ask the tough questions no-one else will.

An organization with a clear purpose can use that purpose to help structure everything the organization does. If so, people will recognize the connection between an organization's goals and its actions. The more these align, the more authentic that organization will appear to be for those who are interested in the problems the organization seeks to address.

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## Moving the Crowd

Organizations that know their purpose and are authentic have a better chance of inspiring, persuading and shaping others.

Like good musicians, good leaders can craft an emotional connection between what they believe and what they do, making it more likely that people will recognize and respond positively to that connection.

This improves the organization's chances of impacting and shaping its environment...or moving the crowd.

Good leaders can also adapt their own actions—and the strategies of their organizations—to respond to their external environments, the same way that good musicians respond to the people who watch them perform, or good public speakers adjust how they deliver a speech based on the mood of their audience. Good musicians can give their fans what they want and win over new ones on the strength of their performance. Similarly, the best leaders can engage crowds that might initially be unreceptive to their message and win some of them over. This requires a leader to be holistic in their thinking, seeing potential allies where others do not.

## Finding Your Voice

The key to our approach to leadership requires you, as a leader, to know who you are. In short:

Who are you as a leader, or as a team member, or as a citizen?

What do you believe?

What if anything, are you trying to change about the world around you?

There are several tools that have been used by successful businesses and organizations to establish answers to all these questions—tools that have helped these businesses and organizations align their purpose with their strategy and establish compelling brands that distinguish them from others.

*Organizations that know their purpose and are authentic have a better chance of inspiring, persuading and shaping others.*

Future installments of the *Finding Your Voice* series from Symphonic Strategies will discuss many of these tools, providing substantive and inspirational examples of how other leaders and organizations have successfully applied them.

However, none of these tools will work well unless you and your organization have a clear sense of your purpose.

## What will you do to move your crowd?



*Symphonic Perspectives*<sup>™</sup> is a publication of Symphonic Strategies, Inc., a social movement organization.

We help organizations achieve better results by helping their leaders make better decisions.

To achieve our goal of helping leaders lead<sup>™</sup>, we harness our expertise in research and data analysis, strategic planning, training, and strategic marketing and communications.

We will help your organization see the impossible, play from the soul, and move the crowd. To learn more, visit us at [www.symphonicstrategies.com](http://www.symphonicstrategies.com).

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