



Grainger Shares Strategic Vision with Perfect Clarity



A Grainger employee humorously – and very effectively – summarized the company's strategic vision in a short video produced by Sheffield. Coupling the narrative with simple, impactful visuals made the story more vivid and memorable.

Grainger had an opportunity to communicate its strategic vision to 4,000 employees – and equip those employees to spread the message throughout the entire organization. Sheffield helped Grainger:

- * Craft a narrative that clearly and logically articulated Grainger's five-year strategic vision
- * Effectively communicate that strategic vision to employees across the entire organization

Issue:

For W. W. Grainger's executive team, communicating the company's five-year strategic vision internally was a big deal. With 18,000 employees and more than \$7 billion in annual revenue, they needed a clear, memorable and easily repeatable way to articulate the vision across the company. Anything less would risk jeopardizing the organization's ability to move toward a clearly defined goal. They turned to Sheffield to craft a story that would stick.

Approach:

Sheffield worked closely with Grainger's executive committee during a half-day session to capture the company's vision in a succinct and compelling narrative. Bringing together disparate voices and perspectives, the session clearly identified the core strategic objective – become the customer's first choice – and then detailed the necessary steps to achieve that end. Most importantly, the resulting narrative was logical and easy to tell – more of a conversation than a presentation.

With a strong narrative and buy-in from the top of the organization, Sheffield and Grainger worked together to bring the story to life and make it visually impactful. This was accomplished through the creation of a series of simple support images that could be quickly drawn by executives as they told the organization's story, making it even easier to remember and repeat in a deliberate sequence.

The impact was tremendous. During a pilot session, the executive committee presented the strategic vision for 60 minutes without notes or slides to 200 company leaders. They struck a conversational tone and fleshed out each part

Case Study



To explore Grainger's strategic goal, Sheffield developed a video series highlighting the stories of several Grainger employees. One employee shared his love of both Grainger and pinball.



The video series brought to life the story of Grainger's strategic vision in a way that resonates with other employees.

of the story with personal anecdotes and insights. As they spoke, they drew images to help keep the audience engaged. At the conclusion of the presentation, a volunteer from the audience – who had never heard the story before – recalled from memory the core narrative and the accompanying images in just five minutes. She received a standing ovation from her colleagues. It was clear that the story was easy to share.

The executives were ready to unveil the strategic vision to 4,000 members of the broader organization at the annual meeting in Orlando. But they also wanted to be sure that the story would make its way through the entire company, reaching those who did not attend the meeting. To address this need, Sheffield conceived and produced a brief video that captured the strategic narrative in an engaging manner. A Grainger employee with comedy experience was selected as the on-camera personality and in a matter of minutes he delivered the story in a light-hearted manner. The narrative drawings were integrated into the video to reinforce the message and make it more memorable.

Results:

The event in Orlando exceeded expectations as the executives presented the vision with perfect clarity without a single PowerPoint slide. Following the meeting, the summary video was placed on Grainger's internal blog and quickly received more than 8,000 views – the most of any Grainger post in history. Today, the narrative has become a cornerstone of new employee training and every Grainger employee, from the executive suite to the loading dock, can clearly tell the Grainger story.