

## *The Golden Circle (WHY) Exercise*

Instead of asking the question “What do I want to do with the rest of my life?” you should ask yourself “Why am I doing the work that I am doing?” This is a common question that often goes overlooked by individuals as they are caught up with just having a job in order to pay the bills. Would you like to have a career where the why matters more than just a paycheck? Many successful people and organizations reflect upon why they are doing what they are doing. In *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* Simon Sinek explains how The Golden Circle helps people understand why they do what they do. “It provides compelling evidence of how much more we can achieve if we remind ourselves to start everything we do by first asking why.”

To design The Golden Circle draw a small circle and write the word WHY in it; then draw a larger circle around that and write the word HOW in it; and finally draw a third circle around the other two and write the word WHAT in it. WHY is at the center of The Golden Circle. Sinek observed that all companies and people know what they do; some understand how they do what they do; but only a select few have examined why they do what they do. The Great Fire of London in 1666 provides an historical illustration in the value of asking why.

## The Golden Circle

### WHAT

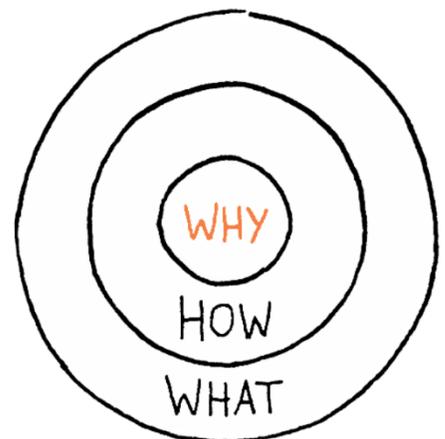
Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services

### HOW

Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

### WHY

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. WHY is a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.



After the Great Fire, Sir Christopher Michael Wren, one of the most highly acclaimed English architects in history, had the responsibility for rebuilding 52 churches, including his masterpiece, St. Paul's Cathedral. The cathedral was built in a relative short time span: its first stone was laid on June 21, 1675 and the building was completed in 1711. Legend has it that Wren would often visit the construction site. During one of his visits Wren came across three stonecutters. Each was busy cutting a block of stone.

Interested to find out what they were working on, he asked the first stonecutter what he was doing. "I am cutting a stone!" Still no wiser Wren turned to the second stonecutter and asked him what he was doing. "I am cutting this block of stone to make sure that it is square, and its dimensions are uniform, so that it will fit exactly in its place in a wall." A bit closer to finding out what the stonecutters were working on but still unclear, Wren turned to the third stonecutter. He seemed to be the happiest of the three and when asked what he was doing replied: "I am helping to build a great cathedral."

Questions:

- The third stone mason clearly understood why he was doing what he was doing. Do you?
- When is the last time you thought about why you were doing what you were doing?
- If Wren asked you the same question he asked the stone masons how would you answer?
- Do you work for an organization that understands why it does what it does?