



A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTING JIM COLLINS' TEACHINGS

How Rhythm Helps Companies Go From Good to Great

by Chris Cosper & Jessica Wishart



GO FROM GOOD TO *GREAT* WITH RHYTHM

**When It Comes to Breakthrough Execution
We Wrote the Book and Built the Software!**



As you are reading this guide, you may consider the Rhythm Platform to help you achieve airtight execution and implement some of Jim Collins' teachings.

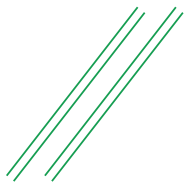
The Rhythm Platform includes:

- **Cloud-based software for your executive and departmental teams**
 - **Step-by-Step tools to do strategy and planning sessions**
 - **Rhythm Experts that will help you every step of the way**

Our book *Rhythm: How to Achieve Breakthrough Execution and Accelerate Growth* recently hit #3 on Amazon Kindle.

Learn more: RhythmSystems.com or call 704-209-7290.





5 Ways to Use Rhythm to Implement Jim Collins' Teachings

In this guide,
we'll share some
of Jim Collins'
concepts and how to
implement them
using Rhythm.

For over 20 years, Jim Collins has been inspiring business leaders to break through the trap of mediocrity and strive for greatness in their businesses. He has introduced us to terms and phrases we use everyday, like “BHAG,” “20 Mile March,” “Getting the Right People on the Bus” and “Fire Bullets, Then Cannonballs.”

The basic framework he outlines in his bestselling book *Good To Great* requires “Disciplined People,” “Disciplined Thought” and “Disciplined Action.” Rhythm software, step-by-step tools and expert coaches provide companies who have passion and respect for Jim Collins’ work a simple way to implement his teachings in their businesses.

In this guide, we'll share some of Jim Collins' concepts and how to implement them using Rhythm.

1. Get the Right People on the Bus

First who, then what. The fact is that our world is ever changing. As the world changes, companies need to adjust their strategy. If you hire A Players who are aligned with your Core Purpose & Values and who are excited and motivated by being on the same bus with other A Players as opposed to hiring people who are committed to a specific strategy, it will be much easier to make the necessary adjustments when the environment changes. As Collins points out that the best vision in the world without the right people to execute it will not get you very far.

Here is how Rhythm can help you get, keep and grow the right people:

- **Create Dashboards with Personal KPIs and Clear Success Criteria:** Use the Dashboard Tool in Rhythm to document and communicate the result you expect from each person. Each person can have their own personal dashboard that provides abundant clarity around their ultimate responsibility.
- **Use Core Values to Attract The Right People:** Rhythm provides an area to document your company's core values on the Job Scorecard. The right people will be aligned with your Core Values and passionate about your company and its work. In your interview process, you should be able to determine whether this person will be passionate about your work and whether he or she will

Building a culture of
accountability and
creating an atmosphere
where it is safe to
make mistakes is the
foundation
of our Rhythm
methodology.

be someone that you enjoy coming to work with everyday. In the potential candidate's work history, listen for stories about how they already naturally demonstrate alignment with your core values. If they don't, then yours might be the wrong bus for them.

- **Connect Your Execution to Your Core Values:** Help drive your operations and execution by making your core values come alive for your employees' daily work. Rhythm helps you choose a core value as a main focus and keep that front and center for the whole quarter.
- **Use KPIs to Help Your Team Get Better Every Week:** If you communicate to each person on your team what their number one result is for their current role, they can record it on their Rhythm dashboard as a KPI, status it weekly, and make decisions that support that result. Using Rhythm software to keep your team accountable for your quarterly priorities and KPIs will shine a spotlight on people who may be stuck and need your help to get unstuck or develop a new skill. Rhythm creates the opportunity for managers to look for opportunities to grow their team every week.
- **Create a Culture of Accountability:** Collins says that the right people follow through and do what they say they will do, and they give credit to others when things go well and shoulder blame when things do not go well. Rhythm dashboards are perfect vehicles to determine if your team keeps commitments and follows through with the strategic and execution plans you make for your company. Everyone has a priority or two that goes red from time to time; we all occasionally misjudge our capabilities or are influenced by events outside of our control. However, you can easily identify when failure to deliver on commitments becomes a pattern and you actually have a people problem. Building a culture of accountability and creating an atmosphere where it is safe to make mistakes is the foundation of our Rhythm methodology. We find that A Players thrive in an environment where Rhythm provides visibility into performance and high expectations for all. In fact, many times we have seen B and C Players self-select and leave the company in this new, high performance environment.
- **Visualize Your Future Organization Now:** Our Rhythm expert coaches go beyond helping clients get the right people in the right seats for today; they also help clients plan for their future organizations by figuring out the right roles and who should fill those seats in the future. As your company grows, you need to plan for your future people needs. Collins points out that companies can only grow as fast as they can hire the right people to support that growth, so thinking through how you can help your team grow into the seats your future company will need and which seats you may need to hire for will help you continue to accelerate your growth.

Rhythm Software

provides step-by-

step tools to help you

navigate the process

to get and keep the

right people on the bus.

Rhythm Expert Coaches

are available to help you

every step of the way.

2. BHAG – Big Hairy Audacious Goal

Collins and Porras first coined the term BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) in *Built to Last*. They describe a visionary BHAG as a 10-25 year, compelling goal that stretches your company to achieve greatness. It should be a huge, daunting task, like climbing Mount Everest, which at first glance, no one in the company knows how on earth you will achieve. It should have what we call a “gulp factor” meaning that when people hear it for the first time, they must swallow hard to take it all in.

A great BHAG will cause your team to stretch beyond the obvious and beyond the status quo. Just like stretching a rubber band creates energy, stretching your team also creates energy. Committing to a goal that you don't know how you will achieve creates an environment of innovation. In addition to energy and innovation, a great BHAG will also provide inspiration. It gives people a vision of what the future might look like if everyone pulls together and gives their individual best to the collective effort. Combine your BHAG with a noble Core Purpose, and your people will embark on a crusade to achieve greatness.

Here's how Rhythm can help you achieve your BHAG

- **Develop Your BHAG with a Step-By-Step Process:** A BHAG is not developed overnight. Rhythm provides a step-by-step process to help your team work on and discuss your BHAG, document ideas, collaborate and add attachments right in the software. You can also record your BHAG Actions right in the screen for everyone on the team to see and refer back to.
- **Connect Your BHAG to Execution:** Achieving your BHAG can only be done if you put energy behind it on a regular basis. Allow your BHAG to be a driving influence in setting your 3-5 year plans and Annual plans. Every year, every milestone and every key initiative should have a direct correlation to your BHAG, and Quarterly Planning is the linchpin that connects your BHAG and your long-term strategy to execution. Rhythm Software enables you to focus annual and quarterly priorities to your BHAG so you can see what activities support your BHAG and if they are on track.

3. Fire Bullets, Then Cannonballs

In *Great by Choice*, Jim Collins introduces us to the principle “Fire Bullets, then Cannonballs.” The example comes from the military analogy of finding yourself at sea with a limited amount of gunpowder. If you fire a cannonball and use all of your gunpowder and miss, you deplete your stockpile and die. If you fire bullets and make the necessary adjustments to hit your target, then fire the cannonball, you succeed. The same idea holds true in business, rather than using all of your resources on one

Rhythm can help you
develop a 20 Mile March
and a reliable Rhythm of
Execution.

Rhythm Expert Coaches
are available to help you
every step of the way.

new idea, test in small increments to learn and make adjustments until you have the right strategy for success.

Here's how Rhythm can help you fire bullets before cannonballs

Determine Your Winning Moves: In order to know which direction to start firing bullets, you need to identify the opportunities you want to advance on. Our Rhythm process suggests you identify 2-3 Winning Moves, specific strategies that you believe have the potential to double your business in the next 3-5 years.

- **Test Your Winning Moves by Firing Bullets:** Once you have identified the Winning Moves you want to include in your plan, you need a process to help you advance those moves in a way that doesn't deplete your resources or distract you from your core business. In our book *Rhythm: How to Achieve Breakthrough Execution and Accelerate Growth*, Patrick Thean outlines a 5 step process to advance your Winning Moves. With the instructions in Rhythm University, help from our expert coaches and specific screens in Rhythm software designed to support you as you move through the process, you'll be able to fire bullets by testing your assumptions. Fine tune your strategy before firing a cannonball.

4. The 20 Mile March

In *Great by Choice*, Collins shares that one big difference between great companies and average ones is that great companies commit to a steady and disciplined growth path and consciously avoid having unpredictable swings in growth. This discipline is supported by a consistent Rhythm of Execution that builds the habit for teams to consistently win despite the circumstances surrounding them.

Here's how Rhythm can help you develop a 20 Mile March and a reliable Rhythm of Execution

- **Establish Reliable Execution with a Think-Plan-Do Rhythm:** In our book, *Rhythm: How to Achieve Breakthrough Execution and Accelerate Growth*, Patrick Thean shares a tested process for teams to establish effective focus and execution. A healthy rhythm of Strategic Thinking, Execution Planning and Doing the Work will create an environment where you are continuously evaluating your performance, identifying bright spots and opportunities, and learning from mistakes and failures. This constant cycle of evaluating and adjusting is the habit teams need to stay committed to disciplined growth.

Rhythm Dashboards
with comments allows
the person(s) closest to
the situation to share
root cause details before
the weekly meeting.

It puts them in the control seat rather than having to react to circumstances surrounding them.

- **Control Your Future with a Think Rhythm:** Getting into a rhythm of thinking about your business strategies will give you the discipline to pick your head up on a regular basis and think about what's happening in the marketplace and in the world that could potentially impact your business. A Think Rhythm is key to maintaining an awareness of the competitive, economic and political landscape that could impact the future of your business.
- **Get Focused with a Plan Rhythm:** Our Plan Rhythm helps you remain focused on your top 3-5 most important priorities every quarter that are aligned with your strategic goals so that you are not overreaching or trying to do too much and grow too fast.
- **Keep Your Plan on Track with a Do Rhythm:** Weekly meetings done wrong can be boring, time consuming and yield very little value. The purpose of a weekly meeting is to keep your short and long term plan on track – that means your weekly priorities, quarterly priorities and your long-term strategy.
 - » **Connect Strategy to Execution Every Week:** Once you have determined your 20 Mile March, Rhythm Expert Coaches will help you figure out the right priorities, KPIs and dashboards you need to drive your march forward. Help your team recognize the impact their day to day work will have on the long-term success of the company. When reviewing Rhythm Dashboards at weekly meetings, simply press the Rhythm Strategy Connector button to make sure everyone understands how their individual priority is connected to Quarterly Priorities, Annual Key Initiatives, Winning Moves and the company's ultimate long-term strategy. This helps to create the habit for your teams to think strategically every week and stay committed to your 20 Mile March.
 - » **Identify and Fix the Root Cause of Problems Weekly:** It is inevitable that problems will arise. Dashboards will alert you that there is a problem, but that is table stakes. You need human insight to understand why you are off track so you can fix the root cause. Once this is understood, the team can identify a solid action plan. Rhythm Dashboards with Comments allows the person(s) closest to the situation to share the root cause details before the weekly meeting so the team can spend their valuable time together solving the problem but that is table stakes. You need human insight to understand why you are off track so you can fix the root cause. Once this is understood, the team can identify a solid action plan. Rhythm Dashboards with Comments allows the person(s) closest to the situation to share the root cause details before the weekly meeting so the team can spend their valuable time together solving the problem.

Keep your team focused
on the things that matter
by identifying Stops in
every planning meeting.

5. Face the Brutal Facts

Companies that went from good to great demonstrated what Collins termed the “Stockdale Paradox,” meaning they faced the reality of the brutal facts without minimizing or sugar coating them and simultaneously had unwavering faith that they could overcome those obstacles and be successful.

In order to face the brutal facts, you must consistently seek out information about your current situation in the marketplace with your customers and regarding future industry changes. Companies that went from good to great refused to stick their heads in the sand and instead made necessary and sometimes drastic changes in light of those facts.

Here is how using Rhythm can help you face the brutal facts in your company

→ **Gather Start-Stop-Keep Thoughts Before Annual and Quarterly Planning:**

At both the Company level and the Departmental level, ask your team to provide input into activities that you should consider starting, stopping and keeping. It’s always easy to think of new activities to Start, but unless you balance these with activities to Stop, it’s possible to become overwhelmed with activities, many of which may no longer add any value. Keep your team focused on the things that matter by identifying Stops in every planning meeting.

In *Good to Great*, Collins challenges each of us to have a “Stop Doing” List (pages 139 - 141). He reminds us that great companies make as much use of “Stop Doing” lists as “To Do” lists. Rhythm software provides specific tools to help you navigate this process, organize team ideas and identify items for your “Stop Doing” List.

→ **Discuss Employee and Customer Feedback Annually, Quarterly and Weekly:**

In our Quarterly Planning agenda, we have time set aside specifically to discuss results from the previous quarter, what went well (bright spots) and what lessons the team learned from the things that did not go as planned in adding to Start-Stop-Keeps. Quarterly and Weekly Rhythm provides the ability to capture and share customer and employee feedback. This habit allows you and your team to recognize patterns (positive or negative) related to your products, services and culture, sooner rather than later.

→ **Review Brutal Facts and Take Action Weekly:**

Turn your quarterly plan into a 13 week race and use weekly dashboards to track progress and provide visibility into how well your team is executing the plan. One of Collins’ suggestions in *Good to Great* for facing the brutal facts is to build “red flag” mechanisms. These are mechanisms that force you to stop so that you cannot ignore information you have. On a weekly basis, Rhythm dashboards will help your team raise a red flag when there are brutal facts to face. This will trigger team discussion to determine what adjustment actions need to be made. With Rhythm, you can record any action item the team agreed upon and review them weekly to make sure they get done.

Need Help Going From Good to Great?

The Rhythm Consulting Team has helped create over 3000 growth plans for our mid-market clients. They have run companies or have executive experience so they are quick to understand your needs and bring immediate value to your organization.



Use The Rhythm Software System to stay on track all year long.



See what Rhythm can do for you.

Contact us to book a Demo.

Visit RhythmSystems.com

Call Us // 704-209-7290

