



Strategic Messages | Narratives | Stories for Culture and Leadership

What is "the open source way"?

Key Message: The Open Source Way is built on the values of collaboration, meritocracy, transparency and sharing. These values are drawn from the Fedora Open Source Community and they are the foundation on which we act.

Narrative Overview: The Open Source Way is a software development process—and it's also a way of doing business and leading people, through collaboration, meritocracy and transparency. Red Hat uses the open source way to write code and solve some of the world's most complex technology challenges. We also use it engage people and develop leaders.

The evolution of Red Hat's open organization

Key message: The Open Source Way is the way we write code, run our organization and partner to solve problems. It's been our North Star since we began and it continues to point the way for us.

Narrative Overview: What started as a very different way of developing software has evolved into a successful business model and changed the way software companies go to market. It's moved beyond its origins in technology to be used as an approach for solving problems in healthcare and government, the arts and education.

Being open and operating as an open organization—collaborating, sharing, being meritocratic—generates unique capabilities. And those capabilities enable us to innovate new solutions that help solve some of the world's biggest problems. In fact, as our co-founder Marc Ewing pointed out, it allows us to attract the people who know best how to solve the problems.

Story: In the beginning (The Origin Story).



What is an open org?

Key message: An open org is an approach that helps companies keep pace with the pace of change, by removing barriers to sharing knowledge and ideas.

Narrative Overview: At Red Hat, we believe that an open org is the best model for advancing innovation because an open org rewards meritocracy and encourages collaboration, fostering faster and more intelligent responses to changes in the market.

An open org is shaped by transparency, inclusivity, adaptability, collaboration and community. There are many different degrees of being open—at Red Hat, we default to open first, and then determine what to close.

As an open organization, our vision is:

- To be an inclusive meritocracy, sharing information and encouraging diverse perspectives so that the best ideas will flourish.
- To be community-based, valuing participation.
- To operate transparently, defaulting first to open in the information and decision-making process
- To encourage everyone to be a leader, openly sharing their perspective, and contributing by bringing value to their work, every day

Because we're so passionate about the open organization, we've taken a leadership role in developing a model for open orgs. The first project that has come out of this initiative is the Open Organization Maturity Model (OOMM). The OOMM is a framework within which individuals, teams and organizations can critically examine their organizational practices and chart their progress toward becoming a more open organization (as outlined in the Open Organization Definition).

Story: Military visit.



What is an open leader?

Key message: An Open Leader leads through influence instead of fiat, creating the context that others need to do their best work.

Narrative Overview: Open leadership is inclusive and focuses on equipping people to have their best days. Open Leaders model behaviors that reflect those of the open organization: transparency, collaboration, meritocracy, trust and connection. We call this set of behaviors "The Red Hat Multiplier." When leaders exemplify these behaviors, they successfully create an environment in which their colleagues and teammates can excel.

At Red Hat, open leadership is about expanding influence and impact on other people in the organization. And the more that leaders embody the Red Hat Multiplier, the greater the number of people whom they can impact.

Leaders evolve their influence from a personal level of leadership, through team and organizational levels, to the enterprise level of what our CEO Jim Whitehurst calls being a "catalyst in chief".

At Red Hat, we believe everyone can be a leader because everyone can model these behaviors and influence others.

Story: How we used an open approach to understand what defines a good open leader.



How do open leaders operationalize and scale openness?

Key message: Open doesn't happen by itself—there are certain kinds of leadership, systems and processes required to make it happen. At Red Hat we use the Open Decision Framework and the OPT model to scale openness and develop open leaders.

Narrative Overview: Leading an open org means being transparent in the decision-making process and inviting open exchange and feedback from the community. One of the tools we developed to facilitate this open exchange is the Open Decision Framework (ODF).

The ODF is a flexible framework that helps decision makers and leaders make better decisions by seeking out diverse perspectives and collaborate across teams and geographic regions. Using the ODF, open leaders share information about decisions with those who are affected by the decision; they collaborate purposefully and inclusively with multiple stakeholders, to gather comprehensive feedback; and they balance the tensions among expectations, priorities and relationships, to achieve strategic goals.

The Opportunity Passion Talent Model (OPT) is another process that we use to operationalize openness. It's a strengths-based approach to development that can be used at each of the different stages of leadership.

The idea behind OPT is that when someone is doing work that they love (their passion), and work that they are good at (talent), and that work fills an organization's needs, they will be performing at their best.

Story: How we came to develop the ODF.



What is the Red Hat culture?

Key message: Red Hat grew up out of an open source software community (Linux), so our culture is rooted in practices and values embodied by open source communities. In short, we have an open culture.

Narrative Overview Our open culture defines who we are and how we do what we do. Culture comes first with us because we believe it's the source of our strategic advantage. It plays a key role in how we make decisions; communicate and connect; hire; develop; reward and celebrate.

Our culture is so strong that 50% of our new hires come from internal referrals, so many Red Hatters already know who we are before they start working here, meaning they choose to work here because of our culture.

Our culture is built on the practices of sharing, collaboration, transparency and meritocracy. Though it began as a way of developing software, it's grown into a social movement because our associates believe **they can change the world through open source technology and culture.**

Our culture was formed early on by our founders Marc Ewing and Bob Young and in the 24 years since the company launched, each of our leaders and associates has contributed to the evolution and growth of that culture. True to the Open Source Way, we share that culture via an open website, Open Source dot com.

Story: From early days—perhaps Marc Ewing's advert as seen in "Default to Open", or a story from the early days that exemplifies elements of culture. (in at 10:54; out at 11:02).



How are we scaling our culture?

Key message: We scale our culture through our leadership; by the way we collectively make decisions on a daily basis; and through the relationships we develop with our clients and partners.

Narrative Overview: Organizational culture is the most important factor in a company's ability to produce new innovations—and our own successes reflect that. Our culture has helped fuel 64 consecutive quarters of growth. In addition, we're growing so rapidly that, in two years, many of the people who work for us will be new. And as we continue to accelerate our growth, we want to ensure that the open culture that gave rise to Red Hat remains an integral part of who we are in the future.

Management theorist Paul Zak has written that "an organization's stories contain the DNA of the company," and we're collecting stories from the 10,000+ Red Hat associates around the globe in an effort to map our own DNA. Red Hatters are sending us stories about why they chose Red Hat and what they think Red Hat's purpose is. Dubbed "The Why Project", this culture initiative has already collected more than 2,400 stories in three months.

Externally, we're scaling it through our Open Innovation Labs. The Lab is a collaborative workshop environment where we partner with our clients to develop strategic solutions. But we do more than just build apps in the Lab—we build collaboration among teams, and trust among team members, with the goal of more effectively building change.

Story: One of the sample stories from the Why Project?