

During the 1992 Presidential campaign James Carville, political strategist for Bill Clinton, created what was intended to be an internal reminder but turned into one of the biggest statements of the year: "It's the economy, stupid." The original version was reportedly one of three points tacked to the door of then candidate Bill Clinton as "the economy, stupid" to remind Clinton to challenge President George H.W. Bush on his domestic policy. History shows, that primarily on that point of the economy, the election went to Clinton and the Carville sound bite lives on to this day as a pop-culture catch-phrase.

The story reminds us that a strategically placed, succinct message can change history. Carville is rightly credited with seeing through the fog of political warfare and understanding the essence of what the population desired and the power of a properly placed simple message. Carville to this day continues to be a master of the sound bite. As a leader, it is important to master this very important component of communication.

Sound bites distill the millions of moving parts that a strategy may carry and gives those seeking direction an easy to understand and remember sentence or two from which they can draw inspiration and guidance. These strategy summary statements keenly identify what is most important in the strategy and links it with a message that serves as a daily compass for teams to follow.

Well structured sound bites of strategy serve as the lighthouse for organizational progress. They are far more than slogans or gimmicks set to rhyme. Sound bites can be the verbal calling card that the leader leaves behind each time they interact with the team.

If you do not have a strategic sound bite for your organization, give if some deep, focused thought. As Clinton found, they really can change the direction of history.