THE PURPOSE CODE

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CONCENTRATED PURPOSE

SELFLESS DISCERNMENT

PURPOSE CODE

CONSCIOUS INSPIRATION

11 Tough Questions
For Executives

Teams are hitting goals, but outcomes feel disconnected

Internal wins don't translate to customer improvements

Incentives reward local performance, not shared success

"Purpose" shows up in all-hands — but not in decisions

Success is defined differently across functions

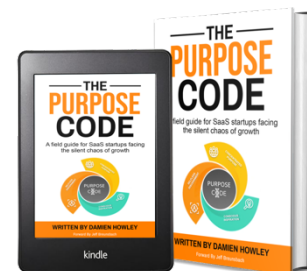**A leadership gut check for SaaS companies facing alignment drift.**

As companies scale, complexity increases — and clarity quietly fades. This asset gives executive teams 11 hard, honest questions to surface misalignment, diagnose cultural drift, and rebuild around what actually matters: customer value, purpose, and shared outcomes.

Damien Howley

Damien Howley is a SaaS operator, advisor, and two-time author who has spent more than 20 years helping high-growth companies scale with purpose.

Damien@ThePurposeCode.com

THE PURPOSE CODE
A field guide for SaaS startups facing the silent chaos of growth

WRITTEN BY DAMIEN HOWLEY

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11 Tough Questions for Executives

If these questions make you squirm — that's the point.
The Purpose Code shows what to do next.

1. Do our wins make things better for the customer?

SaaS companies often hit revenue goals or ship big features, but if you ask, "What did this actually change for our users?" the room gets quiet. Internal wins feel good, but without a link to external impact, they're just movement. Can every team draw a clear line between their work and a better customer outcome?

2. Which of our KPIs reflect activity but not actual customer value?

If we stopped reporting on internal metrics like MQLs generated, tickets closed, or NPS survey response rates, would it change anything for the customer? Or are we tracking performance just because it's visible and easy? Purpose-driven companies measure what matters even when it's harder to quantify.

3. Are we hitting all our internal targets and still failing the customer?

If Product ships on time and CS hits retention goals, but users see no real progress, are we actually succeeding? Internal success without external impact isn't success — it's a symptom of misalignment.

4. Where are teams winning locally but failing the company globally?

Maybe Sales is crushing quota — but selling poor-fit customers that churn six months later. Maybe Engineering is shipping fast — but nobody's using the features. Success in silos can hide systemic failure. Where are our "wins" actually masking friction for others?

Purpose Born   **Illusive Growth**   **Equilibrium**

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5. When was the last time our leadership team directly validated customer value?

Dashboards and surveys aren't enough. Real customer context requires leaders to have direct exposure — listening to users, watching onboarding sessions, hearing the pain points firsthand. If it's been more than a quarter, you're not leading with clarity, you're managing from a distance.

6. Are we designing incentives that pull teams apart?

Look at your comp plans, KPIs, and recognition programs. If Sales gets paid on revenue, CS on retention, Product on delivery speed, and none of them align, you're building a system that breeds internal bias by design. What behaviors are we rewarding that disconnect teams from each other and the customer?

7. Do we all agree on what "Customer Success" means?

Ask five teams how they define customer success — you might get five different answers. That's a red flag. Until there's shared agreement across functions, "customer success" is just a buzzword used to justify misaligned efforts.

8. How often do we talk about purpose — outside of all-hands and onboarding slides?

If purpose only shows up on your mission statement or welcome packet, it's not real. Real purpose shows up in prioritization meetings, roadmap debates, hiring decisions, and incentive structures. When's the last time someone said, "That doesn't align with our purpose," and the decision actually changed?

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9. What part of our culture is lived and what part is just branding?

Company values are often aspirational. But values are only real if they're felt at every level of the org — in how decisions are made, how performance is reviewed, and how people are treated under pressure. If you removed your values from the website, would your culture change?

10. Where have we accepted friction as normal?

"We've always done it this way" is the death of alignment. Maybe it's Sales not looping in CS. Or Product never reading support tickets. Or Engineering making roadmap calls without PM input. The longer you tolerate these seams, the more purpose erodes from the inside out.

11. Are we operating on assumption that were true before — but aren't anymore?

Growth-stage SaaS companies change fast. Metrics, ICPs, team structures, and customer needs all evolve — but leadership habits often don't. What are we still optimizing for that's no longer relevant? What do we believe is true... simply because it used to be?

Why These Questions Matter

You don't need more dashboards — you need clearer conversations. These questions aren't just diagnostic — they're directional. Use them to cut through internal noise, realign your leadership team, and rebuild around what actually matters: clarity, customer value, and shared purpose.

Read **The Purpose Code** — a field guide for SaaS teams facing the silent chaos of growth.

Available now on Amazon.