

Azzarello Group Article

Are you leading your business On Purpose?

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Your leadership behaviors have a big impact on the success of your business. Are your leadership communications and behaviors enhancing the performance of your business or degrading it? Do you know?

It is so important to be intentional about your role as a leader in your business.

Everything you do (and don't do) speaks volumes to your employees and customers.

Effective leadership is also how you get your employees committed to your cause, and get them to do what you need them to do to deliver the right experience to your customers.

This article discusses two of the most important aspects of leadership, and what you need to start doing on purpose: brand and communication.

How you live your brand.

In prior articles I talked about [building and living your brand](#) to keep your customers loyal. **Your brand is also your most powerful tool for motivating your employees** to do what you need them to do.

There is nothing more motivating to an employee than the combination of a strong brand platform and a winning game plan. **This becomes a mission that is worth getting excited about.**

Here's how it works. Once you have defined your brand, you can use it to make your employees really care about the work they do for your company and your customers.

Instead of just explaining their job duties, sit down with each employee or new-hire and **have a discussion about what your business means to you**. Why do you do this? What are your personal aspirations for it? What does your business give to your customers and the world at large? Why does it matter?

Explain what it means to have them be a part of your business. Discuss your expectations for how they will contribute to its success and personally deliver on its brand values.

As you review your brand values with them, highlight the processes and behaviors you have in place to show these brand values to your customers.

Walk them through specifically **how their role impacts the brand** and invite them to

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think of ways to do their job which enhances the brand values.

As an example if you run a small hotel and you have brand values around making customers feel safe, and happy, you would have **specific brand processes** for how guests are to be greeted, shown to their room, and how the room should be set up.

By discussing with your staff WHY this is important, you are giving them that magic combination.

"These processes allow us to deliver these values to our customers", (strong brand platform). "This keeps customers coming back and recommending us because we make them feel safe and happy" (winning game plan).

See how this approach is much more motivating (and instructive) than a dry review of the task at hand?

Most employees don't get the chance to have this conversation with the owner of the business.

It has an impact.

They will "get" that they are working in a special place. They will feel the burden and the excitement of having a responsibility to deliver not just products and services, but a set of values.

Inviting them to participate in creating brand-able processes and behaviors will go a long way to getting them to act how you hope they will, when they represent your business to your prospects and customers.

Then foremost, **YOU must lead by living your brand values in highly visible way**, and set the tone for employees with your behaviors.

How you communicate

Another big part of great leadership is effective and regular communication. Many times small businesses think that explicit communication processes are unnecessary because everyone knows what is happening.

There are a few reasons why not having a committed communication process is bad for your business.

1. **People don't actually know what's happening.** You take for granted a lot of the things that you know, what has happened in the week, new suppliers, new customers, new ideas you had for the business, something you saw a competitor do. Your people want to know what you know. Tell them. And do it every week.
2. **Reinforce processes.** A regular communication plan can also help you reinforce processes which are key to your business. You can review each process and have a discussion on how you are all doing at delivering them. What can be improved?

The discussion will let them know you are serious about it. And it will help them remember to do it, and give them an opportunity to come up with ideas to make it even better.

3. **Reinforce brand values.** Regular communications help you keep focus on your

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brand values. It's good to discuss customer feedback, and customer interactions for that week. How did we do living our brand? What worked well? What could we improve? What new cool idea could we implement to give our customers even more of our brand values?

4. **Show acknowledgement and appreciation.** Finally, regular communications are a good place to thank employees for specific accomplishments and contributions. It motivates everyone.

Have a weekly staff meeting, or at least a weekly update via phone or email. I have found that committing to a regular "drumbeat" of communication from the top makes you a much more effective leader in the eyes of your team. **This is one practice I recommend for leaders above almost anything else.**

Small business owners have the daunting task of keeping the revenue coming in which feeds everything and everyone, and putting the necessary processes and plans in place for growing the business.

It's easy to not get to these basic leadership practices. But if you do, you will find that you will be **making time and energy for yourself**, as well as inspiring your customers to keep doing more and more business with you.

Patty Azzarello was the youngest person to become a general manager at Hewlett Packard at the age of 33. She ran a \$1B global software business at the age of 35, and became a CEO for the first time at the age of 38. A few of her roles were the VP and General Manager of HP OpenView, CEO of Euclid Software, and Chief Marketing Officer for Siebel Systems.

Patty is the CEO of Azzarello Group, www.AzzarelloGroup.com a unique services organization focused on helping business leaders actually get done what they want to do, and get a bigger payoff from their hard work. Azzarello Group delivers practical, experience-based tools to business leaders, through products and services including articles, e-books, mentoring programs, executive coaching, public speaking, small business retreats, and business execution workshops.

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