

Do We Really Need a Vision and Mission?

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Short answer, yes. The better question is *why*. And the answer is all about connection.

Let's talk about vision first. This statement should reveal why you do what you do and a lofty, pie-in-the-sky pursuit. Famed optimist Simon Sinek explains it best with his Golden Circle on Ted Talk, "Start With Why" (seriously, check it out). It sums up the emotional, logical, fantastical reason why a consumer buys your product or service (they don't buy what you make, they buy why you make it). A vision is not tactical; there's no "how-to," it's just about going someplace special. Someplace that will make a difference. Someplace that feels REALLY GOOD! It's a dream space filled with thirst, stimulus, and nerve. Way back in 1975, Bill Gates' vision was, "A computer on every desk in every home." I actually remember thinking, "yeah, right" as I stared at a blinking white dash on my black screen. Was there a thirst he needed to quench? Something kicking him in the butt to go there? The hutzpah to think it could happen? Well, yeah! And we know the end of that story. Bill Gates wanted the world equipped, and now technology is something we cannot live without, literally.

Then there's the mission, the action statement. If the vision tells us why the mission tells us how. Not a detailed step by step, but a firm statement of what you believe will give your vision legs. Take PayPal for example, their mission is to "To build the Web's most convenient, secure, cost-effective payment solution". Do you think anyone working at PayPal is confused about what to do? Nope. They've got the big picture down pretty well.

The big picture concept is important because it gives each and every employee the opportunity to know why their job matters. Who wants to work at something that doesn't matter? Not me! When you know how the dots connect and why your job contributes, you feel GOOD! You feel important. You feel that you matter. And that makes coming to work every day meaningful. Guess what else? Employees who understand all of this are more productive and loyal. A famous example of this is the janitor who worked at NASA back in the 60's. In short, when JFK toured NASA for the first time, he met a janitor in the hallway and asked him what he did. The janitor replied, "I help put men on the moon." I love this example because it shows how brilliant this janitor was – he knew that if he did his job well, others could do their jobs well, and together they would beat the Russians to the moon!

It is my firm belief that the key to achievement is knowing why you're doing what you're doing and how you're going to get there. And then making that personal connection to it. There's nothing more motivational than knowing what you do makes a difference.

To the moon and back, baby!

Whether you have a vision and mission statement or not, I want to help ensure its working for you in the best possible ways. www.BetterTogetherHR.com