



Living the Vision

A lot of time, effort, and money have been spent over the years within companies and organizations in creating mission statements, vision statements, and values. It's easy to spot the organizations that took the activity seriously. It's as if those statements become the 'third party' in a meeting or a discussion. They become the references, the reminders. These statements, along with annual results and balance sheets, are also the benchmarks organizations use to measure success. But we need to be smart with them. This month we take a look at the pitfalls to avoid when creating and adopting mission, vision, and value statements.



Values, Mission Statements and Wallpaper

By David Colman

Visit any company website, any corporate office, or any shop floor in North America and you are likely to be exposed to those organizations' Values and Mission Statements along with a variety of motivational slogans. You know the stuff I mean: Through a motivated and dedicated workforce, wow our customers like they've never been wowed before, all the while providing an outstanding return for our shareholders.

As I visit clients' sites, I come across these posters all the time. I always take a moment to read them. Then, as part of the process of learning about the customer, I constantly compare what I see and hear on the ground to what I've read on their walls. You might be surprised at what I find. I'm sure you've seen a lot of the same motivational posters that I have: one promoting teamwork with a rowing team slicing its way through the water; another, a soaring eagle telling you that you can reach new heights, and so on. Powerful stuff some may say.

I've gone so far as to ask groups if they could tell me what their company's mission statement or values are. At best, results are

mixed: some groups can recite a version of the values, for example, while others have no idea what they are, even though they may well be on a poster on the wall behind them. As leaders, we need to ask ourselves a few questions:

- How did we arrive at these values, mission statements and motivational slogans?
- Did we involve our employees in their creation?
- Why did we create them in the first place?
- Are they a part of our everyday work lives? If not, why not, and how can we change that?
- Collectively, are they changed and adjusted as time passes?

I remember once, during a presentation to an organization, showing a slide with a generic version of its own mission statement. After reading it to them, I asked the group what they thought of it. One person stood up and

said 'It'll never work around here'. After a very long pause he said, 'Don't tell me that's ours'.

I'm a strong advocate of keeping everyone focused upon the company's goals through such things as mission and value statements. But just hanging them on a wall or posting them on a website is not enough. They need to become part of the daily culture. If they don't, they become nothing more than wallpaper.

TriOpus Group has helped many organizations through the process of creating their Mission, Vision and Values. From there, through the encouragement of supportive leadership, inclusive practices, adult learning fundamentals and some great teamwork, many of these companies are now strong examples of the vision and values they represent.

If your team is struggling to achieve a common goal or if your goals are not clear to everyone, give us a call, and we can help you move beyond the wallpaper...

“If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else. YOGI BERRA

This a monthly publication intended for clients and associates of TriOpus Group. We welcome any comments, suggestions or questions you may have. Please contact us at 1-800-864-2721 or email Tamara Kerr, Partner at tamara@trishopusgroup.com



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