

# clarity breeds success

## TIPS ON CREATING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS



Required Reading for Growing Companies

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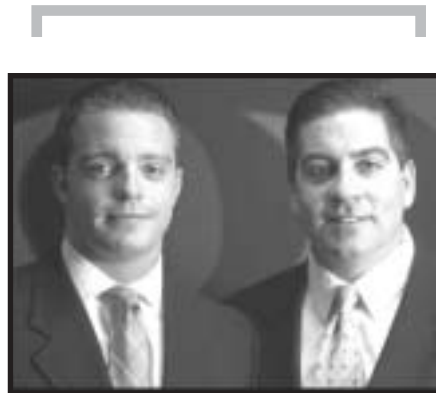
Last month we wrote about the achievement model and how the success of your sales force is centered on mindset. Once you and your company have attained a viable, workable mindset, positive change and success will result. Until that goal is reached, chances are you will experience the symptoms of a negative mindset: salespeople claiming they're not getting right or good leads, the marketing department catching blame for not doing their job, technology becoming a scapegoat because it is outdated. All of these excuses point outward instead of inward.

When considering the achievement model, remember that a common pitfall experienced by CEOs and company officers is trying to effect change by changing the process; for example, replacing or adding a new technology. In reality, true change comes through establishing a culture of accountability that is recognized, adopted, and practiced by every employee on your payroll.

With this mindset now fresh in your head, the next step is to take a long, detailed look at the culture you have created for your business. More specifically, is everyone in your company a salesperson and does everyone in your company view themselves as a salesperson?

Ask your customer service people if they see themselves as playing an integral role in the sales process. An answer like, "Well, we have an impact on the top line, but I'm not a salesperson," is a strong "no." Look to your account managers and ask yourself if they're exploiting every avenue for up-selling and cross-selling – they should be. Answers such as "I'm focusing on nurturing the relationship" or "I'm just trying to stay in front of the customer" don't necessarily point towards a healthy sales mindset. Unfortunately, you have no one to blame but yourself.

Surely these answers are frustrating to you, especially when only 20 percent of your sales force understands the culture you've worked hard to create. They're the employees who are "customer facing." They provide



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excellent customer service throughout the entire sales process. What about the other 80 percent who don't understand the mindset? The answer to correcting this problem doesn't lie in the process, but in the culture of your company.

Culture can be a tricky word to define, and often CEOs and business owners try to implement processes without first defining and building a culture. The result? Turnover in your sales force, loss of morale, negativity, customers not being serviced – in short, losing business.

Corrective measures for this type of problem are usually aimed at the process level: the sales force is turned over; a revised compensation plan with a different incentive package is installed; new technology and tracking procedures are put in place. These measures are costly and time-consuming,

and are doomed to fail unless your company changes its culture.

Take for example a company that up to six months ago was expanding its presence in the computer chip industry. Sales were growing exponentially, accounts were being serviced, industry buzz was making the sales team's job a walk in the park.

However, a sudden shift in the technology sent the research and development team scrambling for new products, while the marketing department was creating a fresh advertising campaign and collateral to support the unveiling of this new product. The company was busy reacting, but the sales department was floundering, blaming their sudden lack of success on product development's shortsightedness and on the marketing department's constant tinkering with the new ad campaign.

The vice president of sales, faced with a sudden downturn in his department's performance, led the charge of placing blame. He and his team were stuck with outdated product and marketing materials, there was nothing to do but wait.

Enter the CEO who is suddenly faced with plummeting sales, unhappy employees, and a shrinking profit margin. He sees the lack of a new product to sell, a marketing campaign that hasn't been unveiled, the unexpected shift in technology as the problems. In reality, these are symptoms; the source of the problem – in this case, the vice president of sales – needed to be addressed. His attitude and demeanor were causing the

problems and impacting the corporate culture. Nothing would progress until the source was identified and fixed.

If you were the CEO of this company, how do you do this? Take one giant step backward and strive to gain clarity on the situation. Clarity is more than a word, clarity is power. Clarity allows you to define your beliefs and values, which become the beliefs and values of your entire company.

The next step is to implement these values and beliefs, and that means living and breathing them every day. Don't get caught in the "affirmation trap" – that happens when people affirm their beliefs and values, but never integrate them into their daily actions.

To make sure your team lives in integrity with the company's values and beliefs, your next move is implementation. Implementation of the appropriate mindset has to become a priority of every single employee in your company. Implementation can run a great deal smoother when the values and beliefs are translated into a set of behaviors that can be applied to every situation. Your employees must know that they'll be judged and held accountable. Remember, a salesperson can be doing landslide business, but if they're ignoring the right behaviors, they're damaging the culture you're working to build. Remember that monitoring these behaviors serves a dual purpose: your employees are constantly reminded of what's expected of them, and so are the managers they work for.

When a culture changes, expect to witness turmoil, but remember that turmoil isn't a negative point as long as it's driving everyone towards a culture that is aligned with the goals of the company. Be ready for turnover, it's a self-correcting phenomenon that will leave in place those employees who are dedicated to the values, beliefs, and behaviors that comprise the culture.

In the next issue, we'll discuss how to determine which beliefs and values are the correct ones to choose for your company and how to properly conduct the clarity process that is so integral to your newfound corporate culture.