



Understanding Your Vision

Help Your Staff See Clearly for a More Cohesive Team

How many of your staff would be able to explain your company's vision if asked? According to a 2015 North American workforce report by Achievers, an international employee recognition company, more than 60 percent of employees don't know their company's vision.

No matter if you have three employees who are all family members or if you employ hundreds over several operations, every single person within your organization should be able to articulate your company's vision at any given time. If they can't, then leadership has failed in helping the staff understand why their roles exist.

If your company doesn't have a vision, it's time to create one. See my column in the October 2017 issue of *Paint & Decorating Retailer* for more on developing a mission statement to get started.

Implementing a vision and creating the expectation that everyone knows it and understands it may ruffle

some feathers. That reaction is normal because a new company vision means change, and very few people are happy with change. Even employees who are "good soldiers" and who embrace the company's vision can find change challenging.

Sometimes a new vision warrants bringing new management into the company to change the culture and lead the charge, and sometimes accepting someone new in an established work culture is difficult.

However, if implemented correctly, a new company vision means change for everyone—leadership, staff and customers. In many cases, when there is resistance to change, in my opinion, it's because the new vision is not being implemented in a way that is understandable, empowering and inspirational.

There are three key elements to managing the expectations of staff when a company is experiencing growing pains while adopting a new vision.

Empowerment

By involving your team and bringing your people into the process, you can help them understand the company's new vision.

- **Seek feedback.** Take time to listen to your staff and address the common themes of concern. Consider distributing surveys or holding focus groups to allow people to share their thoughts openly.
- **Support leaders.** Identify ambassadors at every level within the organization to help get buy-in, adoption and implementation across the board.
- **Use facts.** Talk with your staff often about the reasoning behind the new vision and present it in different ways, through stories, data or best practices.

Helping your staff understand your company's vision means making it easy to understand, empowering your staff and motivating them through inspiration.



Living the Vision

Bringing the new vision to life by making sure it permeates every department of your organization every day begins with you.

- **Celebrate milestones.** Share with your team the progress they have made when they exhibit the vision in their everyday responsibilities. Offer congratulations to employees one-on-one, in company meetings, through e-newsletters or other avenues to be sure the message is widespread.
- **Be a team player.** Continue to seek their feedback and make adjustments as needed. Be sure they understand that everyone is working toward a collective vision: "It's our vision."
- **Share the goals.** If you present a new vision without providing a reason, people may be confused and potentially upset. Explain the endgame and how it will positively impact their positions in the company.

Inspire and Delight

Bring excitement and joy to the learning process while also motivating staff to form daily habits that will help fulfill the company's vision.

- **Make it a game.** Create friendly competitions around milestones relating to the vision. For example, online shoe and apparel retailer Zappos has implemented a successful peer-to-peer recognition process. Employees nominate each other when they see a colleague perform an action or gesture that aligns with Zappos' vision. Nominees receive rewards for their actions, such as the closest parking spot to the building.
- **Show the impact of one.** Everyone wants to contribute to something larger than themselves. Take the time to explain to your staff that their contribution to the company is priceless.

Helping your staff understand your company's vision means making it easy to understand, empowering your staff and motivating them through inspiration. It sounds simple, but remember, 60 percent of the workforce can't articulate their company's vision. Make an active decision to get your team up to 100 percent! ●



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