

Creating a Team that is Emotionally Connected

Designing a culture of learning while building trust and empowering your workforce

I firmly believe that as a leader, it's our responsibility to create a well-defined culture within our business in which each employee feels empowered, vested and valued. There are many benefits to doing so, too many to go into in this format, but the primary reason is to create a team that is as committed to the success of your business as you are. When you create and foster an emotionally-connected team, in which team members are invested in the mission and who care deeply about each other and the work they do, your business will achieve more than you ever thought possible. So where do you begin? Here are three ways to begin impacting your team culture:

1. Select the right people

The first critical component to building an empowered workforce is to select the right people for your team. Yes, compensation and benefits matter, but that is not what retains talent in the long haul. It is the culture, the work environment, the overall team itself. Employees want to be led, challenged and empowered. As business owners it is our responsibility to get to know our employees beyond their resumes. We need to understand what motivates them individually and to identify where those skills and abilities align with the needs of the organization. This is something that takes time and commitment on your part and if you are too tied down by running the business day-to-day, finding the time will be a challenge. **The key is to hire the right team members, empower them and challenge them, as individuals and collectively. When you make the time to get to know your team members, build trust, and develop a strong professional relationship, in turn what happens is a workforce that feels confident, loyal, and free to share their ideas and input.**

2. Invest in your team members

In my experience, I have found success in allowing my team to work and contribute to projects and areas that are not necessarily aligned with their primary responsibilities. At times it has taken some creativity and investment from the leader to create those opportunities, but it has fostered a team approach to problem solving. It is important for your team to know that you're invested in their success with both time and money. In my experience, good leaders create frameworks that allow employees to define and refine their own process to complete their assigned tasks in a more efficient manner. Tell your team what you need them to accomplish and let them determine the best way to accomplish the task. In the process, coach them and mentor them but never tell them how to do it. The return is well worth the effort. It is that simple.

3. Communicate your vision and impact clearly

A leader needs to have a clear vision of their business and how that creates a positive impact in the world. Equally as important, the vision and the impact need to be communicated frequently. Our mission and impact demonstrates to each employee what their function and contribution to the overall success of the company looks like. It also communicates stability and freedom to explore how their specific roles and skill sets contribute to that larger goal. **A good leader is**

truly a servant to two masters: the employees they are stewarding and the vision of the business they are pushing forward. Leadership is not meant to be self-serving. It is a continual decision to be authentic, honest and lead by example.

Once, while I was playing on a lacrosse team, one of my teammates was running in circles around midfield and not advancing the ball. The coach yelled at him, “Rich, what the heck are you doing?” to which Rich replied with a smile, “I am doing it all, coach!”. Though a lighthearted example, the implication can easily be understood: when you try to do it all, you’re likely not making a ton of progress. As an entrepreneur you wear many (sometimes every) hats and it can be easy to have tunnel vision on the tasks you have to accomplish. However, when your head is down you may not be providing the leadership your team needs so they can get fully involved.

When was the last time you took time to just check in with each employee and ask them how they are doing or what they did over the weekend? If you would like to discuss ways that you can build a high-performing, emotionally-connected team, let's hope on the phone soon! Schedule your free consultation call today!

Michael