

HOW TO GET EMPLOYEES TO WALK THE TALK

2 out of 5 employees don't understand their organization's goals.

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THE PROBLEM

It has become a cliché that "management must walk the talk" but so should employees.

Our research shows that many employees don't understand how their work contributes to the organization's objectives. In short, they don't see the big picture. They don't recognize that no matter what their role in the organization, they can be contributing to its goals, vision, and brand.

Is it no surprise that their behavior is, therefore, often inconsistent with the organization's vision?

For example, one of my clients is a dental practice with the philosophy, "We offer our patients quality care and peace of mind." A receptionist who doesn't embrace the importance of these values to the practice might:

- Fail to be completely honest with patients;
- Fail to reassure them about their fears; and
- Fail to treat patients with respect and dignity.

Employees lose sight of their organization's "corporate philosophy" because:

- Their organization doesn't have a clear vision or brand;
- There is a vision, but employees don't understand it;
- The culture of the organization doesn't support the vision.

HOW TO FOCUS EMPLOYEES ON YOUR BRAND OR VISION

1. Create a Meaningful Vision or Brand

Develop a vision or branding statement that truly reflects what the organization is trying to do. Make certain that employees can understand and relate to it. Involve employees in its development and execution.

2. Treat the Vision as More Than Just "Words on the Wall"

Most organizations today have some type of vision or mission statement hanging on the wall. Often it is in the lobby where customers can see it, but employees cannot. However, where it is hung is less important than making the vision come alive in the organization. It must be discussed frequently and incorporated into every employee's day-to-day routine.

3. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Organizations spend millions of dollars promoting their brand to customers through advertising, but pay very little attention to communicating their brand to their own employees. Management must communicate the organization's brand and vision on a consistent basis.

4. Conduct Vision Implementation Workshops

The purpose of these workshops is to discuss the vision and identify how each department and individual can best contribute to it.

5. Use Customer Surveys to Assess Whether Employees are Walking the Talk

Conduct a Customer Satisfaction Survey to learn how well the organization's vision is being practiced by employees.

6. Use Internal Customer Surveys to Assess Whether Employees are Walking the Talk

Are different departments walking the talk when they interact with each other? An Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey can provide the answer.

7. Provide Role Models

Management must show by example that their behaviors are consistent with the vision and brand of the organization.

8. Recognize Employee Behaviors Consistent With the Vision

Provide positive feedback to those employees who demonstrate through their actions that they have internalized the organization's vision and brand.

CONCLUSION

Walking the talk is as important for employees as it is for management. Develop a meaningful vision and provide employees with the encouragement and support they need.
