

The Seven Pillars - People

Almost every business depends on the contribution of people. We might call them staff, or workers, or team members, or God forbid resources, but at the end of the day we are talking about living, breathing, thinking, emotional, sometimes irrational, sometimes astounding *people*.

Let's work on the basis that we are in an organisation that relies on the inputs and outputs of people. What does this mean to us as business leaders? Well to me it means we must actually be *leaders*. Leadership is something I am passionate about. Maybe it's because I was an Army Officer for around 15 years, and there is no better place to learn about leadership and the incredible results it can achieve, or maybe it's because for more than 2 decades in business I have repeatedly seen the bottom line results that can be delivered by a well lead team.

Sadly, too often I see motherhood statements about leadership, something that adds nothing to the debate or our collective knowledge. Let me give you three practical tools that I believe can improve the leadership driven outcomes in your business. They are communication, decisive action and accountability.

Firstly communication, and by communication I don't mean talking to your staff, putting out motivating emails and plastering the lunch room walls with posters promoting values that are ignored on a daily basis. Something by the way I was subjected to by some of my clients over the years. What I mean by communication is having a clear and easily explained vision of where you are taking your business and how you plan to get there. Then, once you have this message, don't tell people about it, live it. Think about some of our greatest contemporary business leaders and their ability to share a clear vision that people wanted to sign up to. Think Gates, Branson, Jobs, Turner or Forrest. If you don't recognise any of these, then go research them, all have a great story to share.

Second is decisive action; something that is an effective enemy of procrastination. Decisive action comes from executing soundly made decisions. Notice a subtle point here, just reaching a decision actually achieves absolutely nothing. It is the action that follows that makes things happen. You might decide to increase the sales in your business but until you take action, such as increasing marketing budgets or motivating sales staff, then nothing much happens.

Third, and arguably most importantly leadership action, is accountability. If we accept that people want to do their best, then they need clear direction about what is expected of them and some guidance about how they are performing. My experience has shown me that left unguided, people finish up doing what they want to do rather than what they are actually paid to do within the organisation.

To summarise, the people who contribute to your organisation really are mission critical to your personal success. If you lead them well by giving them a vision to pursue, guide them by taking decisive action based on sound decisions and provide clear accountability guidelines, then they will reward you with bottom line outcomes.



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