

The Keys To Cultural Leadership

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CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BLOG SERIES

with Chris Stevenson

While there are many definitions of leadership, I recently came across one that I thought stood out from the rest. Leadership expert, Warren Bennis, explains, "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." Accordingly, a company has a vision that it wants to execute; the leader is the one who does that. So, how does a leader turn a vision into reality?

Successful leaders use various methods to ingrain the company vision with every member of the team: leading by example, effective communication skills, and tangible tactics and strategies.

Leading by example is the most important piece. There is no quicker way to destroy a culture than by saying it is one thing but then doing something different. As a leader, you are always on "stage." Team members are always watching. If they are told something is important, and a leader behaves in a way that shows it isn't, not only will team members not buy in, there will be trust issues, and possibly a loss of respect. There is no more important role for a leader than leading by example.

Communication skills are also extremely critical to successful leadership. Ironically, great communication skills start with being a great listener. Active listening involves truly hearing other people's thoughts and opinions, asking clarifying questions, and sometimes rephrasing things to develop a better understanding. Successful leaders also communicate openly, honestly, and with compassion. Be concise and direct when delivering feedback, but be kind. Team members will appreciate that. Another thing imperative to effective communication is an awareness of your body language. The way you carry yourself conveys strong conscious and subconscious messages. Try to stay relaxed, open, and maintain eye contact. This creates a comfortable environment for everyone involved in the conversation. Finally, it is essential to stay open-minded and be willing to accept feedback from others. The willingness to ask for and accept feedback is a great way to develop trust, strengthen relationships, and nurture an

environment where team members are more willing to share and communicate openly. Leaders that foster environments that promote safe, open, and honest communication are the most successful.

Beyond leading by example and excellent communication skills, successful leaders use tangible strategies to turn vision into reality. One way to do this is to market the vision internally to the team. Post your vision, core purpose, mission statement, and core values on the wall in your office or employee break room. Incorporate them into every team meeting. Create “core cards” that your team members carry in their pockets while they are on shift. Hire, fire, express gratitude, and evaluate based on the vision. Keep cheat sheets behind the front desk. Do everything possible to keep the vision at the forefront of every team member’s mind. As a side note, I believe you should also share your vision and values with your members. It is a great way to let them know what you stand for and helps bond them to your brand. Once the vision is ingrained in every team member’s brain, great leaders define specific roles and responsibilities for team members to execute in order to carry out the vision. Successful leaders then provide all of the training, tools, coaching, and support needed for team members to carry out those roles and responsibilities.

Simply summarized, successful leaders bring a vision to reality. This is done through leading by example, communicating effectively, and by giving the team the inspiration, as well as the tools and support, they need to execute. I call this cultural leadership.

Are you interested in becoming the most effective leader you can be? If so, attend my conference session at the CWA Summit! For an even more in-depth exploration of leadership strategies, please attend my workshop “Cultural Leadership: The Key to Employee Engagement and Motivation”. I would love to see you there!

Here are the details for the workshop:

Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Time: 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Cost: \$150 for conference attendees

Location: Big Thompson Room, Embassy Suites Conference Center

Description: Excellence comes from an engaged and motivated team. One way to accomplish that is through cultural leadership. In this interactive session, learn how to lead by infusing a culture that inspires and motivates your team to be the best they can be! Explore strategies that dramatically increase your level of team member engagement. Attendees will leave with tangible tips and tools that will make an immediate impact and are easy to implement.

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About The Author



Chris Stevenson is the owner of Stevenson Fitness, a full-service health club in Oak Park, California. The club's success is based on providing an unparalleled member experience, which centers on proper staffing, systematic operations, and world-class leadership. This success is reflected in the club's Net Promoter Score, which is consistently in the high 80s (industry average is in the 40s). Chris is an international speaker who presents viable, applicable lectures that resonate with every audience.



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