

Are Your Employees Intimidated by Your New Business Goals?

You see a new and expanded market out there. You are making observations about how, with about the same amount of staff effort, your company can tremendously boost revenues. Aren't you excited about these new prospects and already patting yourself on the back for your amazing business savvy? It is only human and natural that you are so excited, you are already dancing the jig in your office! So you can hardly wait to deliver the new business goals to your business development team. You are thinking, "They will hardly believe that these numbers could be so real!" Unfortunately, you are probably right. They probably won't believe it. The response will unlikely be enthusiastic, but rather one of shock and quiet reflection. They are often thinking (without saying it out loud), "Is he/she out of her mind? We've never even gotten close to those kinds of goals before! What kind of dope are those business owners smoking?" The happy announcement you just made backfired. What went wrong? Does your sales staff need more sales training in order to be more confident? Maybe. And maybe not. One thing is for sure. You might have just unwittingly intimidated your staff into virtual panic and even paralysis. Sales training will not be a targeted solution there because your staff simply and fundamentally believes they can't do it---maybe not that it can't be done, but that they don't see themselves doing something they've never done before---to that degree.

Not to worry. Creating new dilemmas for your workforce IS the nature of work! That's what you ultimately hire staff to do---solve problems and

overcome barriers to success. Solving your customers' problems is ultimately what you are in business to do, after all, right? There are varying levels of dilemmas however; and it's important that you are aware of what level you are working on---at any given time. There are personal level, professional (career level), and organizational (business) levels of dilemmas. What level does this dilemma fall into? And if there are multiple dilemmas at multiple levels, how do you sort out what belongs where?---and what to do about it? Might you have been so focused on your customer market and your market research that you inadvertently forgot to create a staff transition plan for the relationships, skill sets, and the staff's "inside your skin work" that need to drive your new fiscal goals? Without such an intervention plan, your employees may begin to believe that their job title just changed to, "Magician: Pulling bunnies out of hats." Not to worry. It's not too late!--- but your staff definitely need an "inside your skin" kind of intervention!

What about a motivational expert? If you are thinking of a one-time motivational talk, forget it. That kind of "hit and run" intervention hardly lasts the whole day that it is presented on. While motivational speakers definitely have a productive place at large company events, they are not problem-solvers per se. They almost certainly do not know how to identify and resolve those complex dilemma sets which are interacting with each other between your company's system and your customer base. Cheerleading will not save the day. You need an intervention of more substance.

How about training? Staff may need some sales training---a definite possibility---but time is of the essence to you as a business owner and real sales training takes a long time. How does one rule out if that's what they really need or if they need some other kind of intervention and which one will more precisely resolve their intimidation problem?

Perhaps the first step for you is to do real diagnostics with your staff. We tend to make lousy decisions with lousy information, so go after solid information! Remember, your goals may still be right on, but you may have unwittingly changed the imperatives about how your company needs to do business. . . and you have GOT to help your staff make the transition inside their hearts and minds to keep them with you. . . and perhaps re-assign certain business processes. Defining the dilemmas or "the rub" between goals and success is exactly where the real substance of your business is right now. Go there and pay attention right now . . . or you will be losing some of your most promising staff.

So how do you do the diagnostics without a long, time-consuming process? Most people think of time-consuming

and bureaucratic surveys which are a nightmare to orchestrate---and still won't solve your intimidation problem. Great news! Chances are overwhelming in your favor that you don't need to go that route either. The diagnostics for your company's situation can often be done in anywhere from less than one day to a mere several days (or only weeks depending on how big your company is) if you are in a hurry to correct your strategic course.

What should you expect? You should expect to gain critical "real time" company and market information regarding the market you are going after AND WHAT IT WILL TAKE FOR YOUR STAFF TO PULL IT OFF. You should expect NO time wasted on complaining and making excuses because the dilemmas you will uncover will be, by definition, those of real substance to your organization. You should expect to discover exactly where to put training resources, if any, so that your time and resources are not mis-targeted and therefore wasted---along with the lost time in which revenues could have been generated.

Bottom Line: The right diagnostics tell you the right thing to do in the fastest way possible.

Lori Keegan of Transition By Design, Inc., offers professional and personal strategies to individuals and organizations. Contact her for more information.

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