

Setting the Stage for Innovation

Earlier this month I was on a panel discussion about Brainstorming.

A lot of good stuff was discussed, and I know we all tried as best we could to leave the audience with valuable insights and information, but I'm still not sure how successful an event it was -- primarily because I was never really clear of what we were supposed to accomplish.

My sense was that the panel moderator never clearly articulated what results he wanted from the evening, and so there was no way of knowing if we on the panel successfully achieved our mission.

The Super Ordinate Goal

My friend Dave Simpson and I had a cup of coffee after the event and I shared my feelings. He said: "Yeah, he didn't spell out a super ordinate goal."

"A super ordinate what??!"

Dave went on to explain that a super ordinate goal is a simple, but encompassing idea that paints a clear picture of the future. A super ordinate goal sets a destination that we can all focus on and work toward -- in harmony-- because it serves the greater good.

His description got me to thinking about how important -- and how powerful a tool this super ordinate goal thing can be. And how important a role it can play in helping you building a better brand.

Describing a Super Ordinate Goal is Key to Your Success

As business leaders, probably our most important job is recruiting, delegating and inspiring our team to help us realize a bigger dream.

Often, organizations are less than successful because they aren't clearly communicating a bigger, more exciting idea in an effective way. Consequently, employees don't understand where they fit, what their job is about and why they should care about anything more than the pay check.

But if, on the other hand, we could help our team embrace an inspiring vision of where we could all be if something great were to happen, and what their role is in accomplishing that, wouldn't that then have the power to excite and inspire them? Wouldn't that lead to more success?

A Super Ordinate Goal Can Accomplish The Impossible

Back in May of 1961, President Kennedy challenged the country to have an American walk on the moon and return safely back to earth by the end of the decade.

At the time he said this, no technology existed to shoot a rocket that far. No science knew how to accomplish a 451,490 mile round trip into non-atmosphere.

In 1961, getting a man to the moon and back was, in fact, impossible.

Yet, because the goal was so exciting -- and seemed as if it would serve the good of all -- people working on the team found it easy to embrace and work towards.

They invented the technology, figured out the science and of course, we all know what happened. In April, 1969, Neil Armstrong took: "one giant leap for mankind."

A Super Ordinate Goal Pays Dividends Beyond the Goal

The right super ordinate goal will inspire innovation and invention, and help you accomplish the seemingly impossible. It will rally the troops around a bigger idea. It will get everyone involved on the same page and recruit them as ambassadors to your vision.

It will also tell those not involved about your intentions and what you stand for.

In fact, my friends, a great super ordinate goal will recreate, rebuild and reinvigorate your brand.

Five Action Steps for Creating a Super Ordinate Goal

- 1.** Write down five dreams for your company. Verbally share them and discuss them with others. Let them percolate for a week and then revisit and rank them in order of importance.
- 2.** Choose the most company-transforming dream, no matter what it is, and expand on it. What would things be like if only that could happen? Write a paragraph or two describing your transformed company.

3. Create an action plan for realizing that dream. What resources would it take? How much would it take? How long would it take? Who would it take?
4. What would have to change if you were to realize that dream? Write down what you'd have to give up and what you'd gain from attaining success.
5. Simplify the mission. "We want to (be, do, have) ___ by ____ date. Be as specific as possible and make the goal clear and uncomplicated. Make sure the goal is beneficial to the entire team and to the greater good of all. Share it with your cohorts -- tell them what you see and why you think it's important. Ask them for input on how make it happen. Delegate responsibilities, establish benchmarks and set a timetable.

You've now set the stage for innovation and success (see you on the moon).

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