



**ENGAGING
PEOPLE WITH
PURPOSE & PROFIT**

**GIVE YOUR
PEOPLE A REASON
TO GET OUT OF BED**

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by Alain Thys

OVERVIEW

To give your people a reason to get out of bed, your business needs to formulate a mission statement or purpose that is clear, meaningful, authentic and relevant to every employee. By doing so, your business can make a difference in the world whilst also driving profit.

*"Hardly anyone
in your business
gets out of bed to
move a KPI".*

Alain Thys, Experience Architect

According to a [2018 article in the Harvard Business Review](#), 9 out of 10 employees would be willing to trade a percentage of their lifetime earnings to do more meaningful work. That's right- across age and salary groups, workers want meaningful work so badly that they are willing to pay for it.

THIS HINTS AT A DIRTY LITTLE SECRET IN THE WORLD OF MANAGEMENT.

Despite all the articles in lofty magazines, the endless workshops and conferences and the billions that are spent on consultancy, hardly anyone in your business gets out of bed to move a KPI.

Some people get uncomfortable or even offended when I say this, but it's a reality that cannot be denied. Despite the interesting spreadsheet and beautiful dashboards, most of us go to work

because we want to make a living for our family. Go to a cool place. Connect with colleagues. Build our self-image. And most of all - for those who can - to make a difference in the world.

UNFORTUNATELY, TOO MANY STRATEGY DOCUMENTS AND TRANSFORMATION PLANS IGNORE THIS REALITY.

They start from a mission and vision statement, or a vaguely described 'purpose'. Then, they quickly move back to their comfort zone of numbers, graphs and KPIs that focus on efficiency, focus and process. These are quickly linked to performance measures which in turn are linked to salary scales.

The result is that only 42% of employees feel that their organization's purpose is actually having an effect and even the most motivated employees get confused about how their work as an individual contributes to the 'world improving vision of their employer.

IF HAVING A CLEAR REASON TO GET OUT OF BED IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST MOTIVATORS FOR ANY WORKFORCE, HR LEADERS NEED TO CLOSE THIS GAP.

They need to work with the C-Suite to clarify the company mission or purpose then help every employee understand how their



because we want to make a living for our family. Go to a cool place. Connect with colleagues. Build our self-imapersonal actions and behaviours contribute to this end vision. This will increase engagement, productivity and motivation across the board, foster a true sense of belonging and help and drive the future success of your organization.

Here are powerful three ways you can upgrade your mission statement or purpose to give your employees a reason to get out of bed.

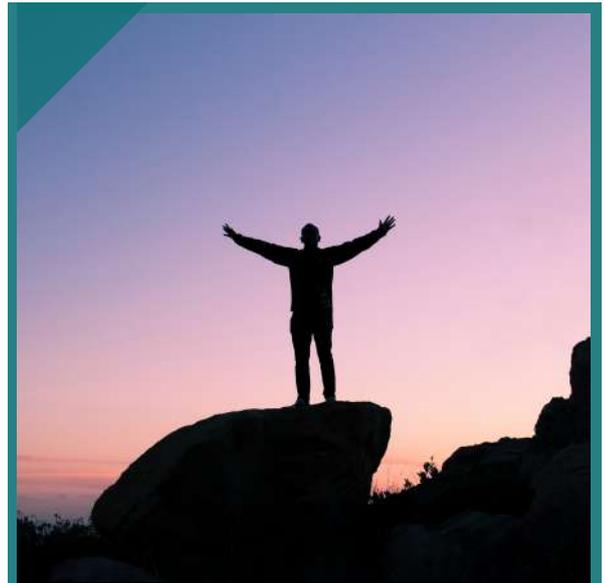
#1 - MAKE YOUR PURPOSE 'SIZZLE'

We all know them. The mission statements that took a lot of time, effort and alignment sessions to create. But somehow, they turned out to be boring, abstract and uninspiring. Sometimes it's hard to tell which company they belong to and often employees cannot recite them, let alone explain what they mean. But based on the numbers above, they do matter.

For this reason, you need to get ahead of the game and make sure that your company's mission or purpose is clear, meaningful and authentic:

CLEAR

If you cannot explain your company's mission or purpose in 30 seconds to your mother-in-law then it's too complex and vague. So don't aim to be the 'bold innovation partner that provides synergistic opportunities to expand possibilities. Use real, human language that talks about things people can understand and relate to.



WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES OF A COMPANY'S MISSION STATEMENT?

Clarity - Use real, human language that talks about things people can understand and relate to. It has to be simple and comprehensible enough for you to be able to transmit it in 30 seconds to any audience.

Meaning - Needs to be something that impacts people, that gets them fired up. Make sure this is exactly what yours achieves.

Authenticity - It also needs to be in tune with the values of the business and reflect the way your company actually wants to behave.

MEANINGFUL

Your mission statement or purpose needs to be something that gets your people fired up because it improves quality of life, rights a wrong, or prevents the end of something good. Make sure this is exactly what yours achieves.

AUTHENTIC

It also needs to be completely in tune with the values of the business and reflect the way your company actually wants to behave. Even to the point that your business would walk away from any deal that would compromise the bigger goal.

This last point is especially hard for existing companies because making a difference may mean letting go of certain business activities and their associated profit.

But it is also the most important one. Like all humans, your employees are masters at noticing inauthentic behaviour. And if they do, all the beautiful mission, vision and purpose work will have been in vain.



#2 - MAKE YOUR PURPOSE STATEMENT TANGIBLE

Even the most eloquent, authentic and inspirational purpose statement will be meaningless if your people cannot understand it and relate it to the job they do every day. Your senior leadership team may say that the business aims to clean up the planet. Make people healthy. Even end world hunger. But for most employees, these are abstract statements.

In one meeting I attended, this was brilliantly illustrated in the words of an employee who said: "I love the idea that our technology is making traffic safer, but I frankly don't see how that involves me. I work in accounting and make sure the totals on the invoices match the payments we receive!".



"People need to be able to relate the mission statement to their everyday work."

Alain Thys, Experience Architect

AS AN HR LEADER, YOU MUST ENSURE THAT YOUR MISSION STATEMENT OR VISION BECOMES PERSONALLY RELEVANT TO EVERY EMPLOYEE.

It's likely that your team already has the processes in place to make this happen, but these need to be expanded to focus on purpose. As you do so, make sure that your business doesn't take an approach that is too rational. The reason we really get out of bed is usually emotional. Don't suck the fun out of it with too many process charts and measurements.

#3 - HELP YOUR C-SUITE TO CONNECT PURPOSE TO PROFIT

Even with a 'sizzling' and 'tangible' purpose, there is still an elephant in the room that needs to be addressed. And that is profit. Because let's not be naïve. Everyone talks about purpose but in most businesses, profit is priority #1.

As a CEO once told me, "I genuinely would like to make the world a better place. But I have to be realistic. While my shareholders like healthy trees, clean oceans and fair pay, they like profit even more".

When I talked to his board members, this was confirmed. While the shareholders all subscribed to a sustainable and fair business in principle, their pension funds preferred that ROI ruled.

If this is the case in your business, you are bound to encounter problems. But this doesn't have to be the case. If you can be authentic and align your

TIPS



HOW TO MAKE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT PERSONALLY RELEVANT TO EVERY EMPLOYEE ?

Employees need to:

- See how their individual actions and behaviours contribute to the overall business mission.
- Get instant and positive feedback when they make the right choices.
- Personally experience the company's commitment to the goal (i.e. their own employee experience needs to live this mission).

purpose with your profit model, you should be able to grow your profit by fulfilling your purpose.

THIS IS WHERE YOU, AS AN HR LEADER, SHOULD STEP IN.

Rather than accept a woolly, non-committing purpose or mission statement of which everyone knows is merely a slogan, you need to push for change. Your C-Suite should be challenged to connect that business purpose to the bottom line.

The leadership team needs to clearly demonstrate how getting out of bed to help the business achieve its bigger goals isn't just good for the world and everyone's motivation but also increases shareholder value. When done in this way, the board will be eager to support this vision and the leadership will become more aligned in its decision making.

ALAIN THYS THE AUTHOR



Alain Thys is an experience architect who has led transformation programmes impacting employees in 100+ countries. He specialises in the development of customer, employee and stake/shareholder experiences that delight and transform.

SOURCES

[1] Shawn Achor, Andrew Reece, Gabriella Rosen Kellerman and Alexi Robichaus. 9 out of 10 people are willing to earn less money to do more meaningful work, Harvard Business Review, November 2018

[2] Purpose: Shifting from Why to How. McKinsey & Company April 2020.



HR & STRATEGIC CHANGE

AS AN HR LEADER, YOU SEE THE CHANGE

Digitalization brought us a world of new business models, eco-systems and complexity. New collar jobs require a lot of blend digital, technical and soft skills. Change has truly become a constant. Talent shortage is real.

YOU WANT TO EXPAND YOUR ROLE, BUT LACK THE TOOLS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

In the 2020s, HR leaders will need to become true talent managers, proactively helping the business to manage the human aspects of digitalization, uncertainty, engagement and supply chain transformation. And while you want to create tomorrow, your toolkit still focuses on improving yesterday, assuming that HR is only about attracting, developing, retaining and especially administrating employees. If you want to do more, the white papers on Google offer beautiful buzzwords but they provide little practical guidance.

HR & STRATEGIC CHANGE: Key services & tools to support you

- ▲ Personal coaching and assistance from global experts to expand HR to talent management.
- ▲ Craft employee experiences that increase employee engagement and help align behaviour to the company strategy.
- ▲ Engage your people with an organisational purpose that delivers profit and a sense of personal fulfilment.
- ▲ Create a tech positive culture, that uses automation and digitalisation to augment the performance of the talent in your business.
- ▲ Leverage the talent in your company's ecosystem for maximum value to your organisation.

**CONTACT US TO DISCOVER THE NEXT STEPS
FOR YOU AND YOUR COMPANY**



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