

Leading with a vision

How to identify and achieve a clear vision for business planning and success

A leader looks to the past, the present and the future in order to establish and shape an inspiring vision. This vision paves the way for how the organization will motivate its employees to develop and execute its business plan.

“It’s integral to involve the people in your organization right in the thick of it — build teams and encourage contribution,” says Ana Mederos, the CEO of Palmetto General Hospital, which is a part of Tenet Healthcare Corporation. “To achieve your vision, you have to have a work force behind you that is motivated, engaged and commitment to shared goals.”

Smart Business spoke with Mederos about how to identify and achieve a clear vision for business planning and success.

How can business leaders create inspiring visions for their organizations?

In my experience, it takes a team of many individuals to create and achieve a shared vision for an organization. Together, this team must consistently answer these key questions: Who are we? What have we accomplished? What are our strengths? What is our realistic potential?

These are powerful questions that pave the way for determining where an organization is and where it can go.

How does a vision influence the development and implementation of a business plan?

Like a road map, an organization’s vision creates a beginning point and a final destination; the business plan creates the exact path to get there. The business plan sets the goals and objectives and the strategies and tactics to achieve them. I compare this process to putting together a winning Super Bowl team. If your vision is to win the Super Bowl, how do you get there? You have to recruit the very best managers, coaches and football players that share the same passion and desire to be the best. Leadership identifies the best players and then invests in training those with drive and potential.

As a hospital, we have the vision to be the preferred place for health care in our local community. We want people to think of Palmetto General Hospital first, especially for heart care and open heart surgery. For example, just a few years ago our goal was to develop a leading cardiovascular open heart surgery program. To create



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our program and bring it to the level that we envisioned it to be, we had to recruit cardiothoracic surgeons and entire medical and nursing teams that had the right experience and commitment to quality. Throughout the hospital, we’ve created a team of medical staff leaders, administrative staff, directors and employees that embrace this vision and fit the direction in which our hospital is moving.

What are the key elements of a good business plan?

The business plan covers what you intend to do and how it will be done. First, it’s important to look internally at your organization to determine your strengths and weaknesses. Then, you look externally with a thorough market analysis of your consumers. You must deliver a service that consumers need and want. This often defines a particular service line or area of growth for an organization. The next important step is analyzing your competitors. It’s critical to get insight into what competitors are offering as well as when and where they are looking to grow. Are you ahead of them or behind? Your answer may form the timeline for your operating and marketing plans.

The operating plan describes how you intend to implement your strategy, which will

influence your marketing strategy. Once you develop or expand your new service, how will your community and consumers know about it? Last but not least, it’s important to keep the entire business plan realistic. A financial plan will help you map out the costs to determine whether or not the investment is realistic and is likely to result in a positive and worthwhile return.

How do you motivate individuals within a large organization to purposefully work toward achieving its goals?

An organization’s biggest asset is its employees and it is critical to invest in them. Developing employees and retaining their loyalty will increase their commitment to the organization and desire to achieve its goals. One way to foster employee morale is to ask employees for input. At Palmetto General Hospital, we established an employee leadership group that meets on a regular basis. This group brings forward new ideas on how we can assist employees in making their jobs easier and it helps them feel ownership in what our hospital wants to achieve. We also celebrate employees for their positive achievements through an active recognition program, which is communicated through a monthly newsletter. This newsletter features the employee of the month, in addition to compliments or letters from patients, updates on the hospital, awards and achievements, internal activities and more.

Another way to boost employee engagement is to encourage continuous learning and professional growth. At Palmetto General Hospital, we have expanded our status as a teaching hospital. We have found that students generate a new energy and they motivate employees to stay current. Their passion encourages everyone to excel and it brings a higher level of quality service. Other organizations should consider expanding learning opportunities for their employees and bringing in students through an employee mentor program or internships. Investing in employees and creating excitement and purpose in their work will create a determined organization that will grasp its vision for the future and see it to fruition. <<

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