

Well, hey there and welcome to the another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast. I'm so happy that you are here with me. I am your host Theresa Cantley and I am super, super, super glad that you are with me for another episode of this podcast. I absolutely love doing this podcast. I love spending time with you every single week. Like I said, I have my coffee or my tea or my water. I actually have water today.

And I just spend some time here just chatting with you, and chatting with you about all kinds of stuff to help you to really grow your business and to really build that signature experience in your own business and to give you some things that might help you work through some, maybe struggles or frustrations that you've had because building and growing a business, it doesn't matter if it's an online business or a brick and mortar business either or, it takes a lot of grit.

It takes a lot of determination and it takes just really sticking to it and never ever giving up. And I know a lot of people struggle with that. I've struggled with it over the years. And hopefully, some of the episodes, all of the episodes, most of the episodes give you some things that you can do, some helpful tips from my own experiences and the experiences that I've been through working with people one-on-one for over the past decade.

But today I wanted to talk a little bit about, sometimes I go into and we talk about some more complicated topics. Other times I do some more easier stuff. This topic that I wanted to talk about and it's all centered around clear expectations and why it's so important. And you might be thinking, "Why get it Theresa?" And you know what? It's a concept that is so easy, but it's also something that many, many, many businesses and many business owners forget about. It's almost like people just assume that people understand what's expected of them. And in reality we can't assume that kind of stuff because you know what happens.

So I wanted to talk about this whole thing centered around clear expectations and exactly what they are and the importance of them. And then as I've talked with my clients, one of the main things, main, main, main things that we want to do, like the underlying core of creating a signature experience is creating a healthy environment. That is one of the main key things that we focus on. And it's not like environment, like a clutter free environment, although that's part of it. But there's a lot more that goes into it and it's a huge part of the internal experiences that we build and the external experiences that we build and both of those together combined with the bigger picture of what our business is about, that is what makes up our signature experience. Like in previous episodes I've talked about how some people think it's just about the customer. Other people think it's just about the employees and it's about all of that. Okay?

So when we're looking at our internal experience, that includes our employees, it includes our management team, our leadership team, and it also includes us. And then our external experience includes takes into account our vendors, our community, and the vendors could be part of the community, and our customers. And when I talk about this whole thing of creating a healthy environment, in order for anybody to feel successful that comes into contact with us, we want to make sure that we are creating a healthy environment for each one of those segments. It could be for the employees, it could be for the leadership team, it could be for us, it could be for our customers. Okay?

And part of that healthy environment, creating that healthy environment is something that will support where everybody wants to go from a wealth standpoint, where everybody wants to go from their health and happiness standpoint, and where everybody wants to go and what they want to do from a creativity standpoint. So in each one of those areas, we want to make sure that we're creating a healthy environment. So what goes into creating a healthy environment? When we look at ourselves as the business owner, or we look at our leadership team, or even if we look at our employees, part of what

creates that healthy environment is understanding A, what the vision and the mission and the purpose of the businesses that goes into it.

What also goes into it is what are our core values and why are they important to the business and how do they really create that atmosphere that we want people to thrive in. Okay? For the core values. And then also besides the core values, maybe what goals are, what the goals are of the business and what the goals are that we have for each of the individuals. So all of those together and some other things, create that environment in any of these areas. Okay?

So one of the things that really helps to solidify and become the foundation behind creating that healthy environment and any of these areas, whether it's part of the internal experience or it's part of the external experience, one of the main things is this whole concept around setting clear expectations because when we don't set clear expectations as to what it is that we want, but also what we're trying to do or what people can expect from us, that's when we get into a lot of gray area. For businesses who aren't clear on the problem that they solve or what they're all about or the offers that they have, if they're not setting clear expectations to their customers, it's really hard to attract customers into your business.

So from the internal perspective, it's really hard to get people to do the things that they want to do, or to get them to do the things that you need them to do, I should say, and also to have them to rise to their highest potential. We need to make sure that we are setting clear expectations. Now you can probably see why I said in the beginning, a lot of businesses don't do this. They just gloss over stuff. I have a client who has, there's two managers in the business, and when I started working with them, and we've been working through this since I started working with them, when they hire new people, they talk about the business, they talk about what the business is it about, who the owner is, what the history is, the products that they sell. They go over processes as far as how to ring customers out, how to return things. They go over that. But that's it. That is it.

So when we started digging into it, my question to them was, do people really understand what it is that their role is here? Do they understand really what they are doing beyond just the mechanical of, ringing a sale or doing a return or putting something on layaway, do they understand what that greater expectation is for them? And the answer to that was no. So there was never any training created to talk about really what does it mean to be a brand ambassador or what does it mean to be a customer service person at this particular business? Okay? Or even when you are training a manager, what does it really mean to be a manager in the business?

And I've had customers that have management teams and the management, they think that there's being a manager means that they create a schedule and they tell people what to do and they try and control everything and that's it. And that's not really what it is. But whose fault is that? If they don't know if the business owner hasn't communicated to them what the expectation is for anybody who is a manager in their business same thing with the employees if you haven't really communicated what the expectation is, how do they know any better? Because here's the deal, when we do set clear expectations, whether they're with the internal experience or with the external experience, when we set clear expectations, that's how we can really start to build a relationship and people know, people really know who we are and what we're trying to do. Really in essence, what we're trying to do and how we're trying to do it.

And when we are able to communicate that in a clear and concise manner, and we support that and back it up with all of our actions on a daily basis, monthly basis, weekly basis, whatever, that is how we can really solidify the trust with the people that we interact with. And we can also hold ourselves and others in integrity. So we say what we're going to do, we do what we say and we say what we do. Okay? So we really uphold those principles, where if we say that we are going to provide superior customer

service to all of our customers that walk through the door and one of our main pillars is education, well, guess what? If you don't set clear expectations with the people that work there, and you're not setting clear expectations, or let's say you set a clear expectation with your customers in your marketing messaging that this is what you do, but you don't communicate those expectations, so the people that actually work there, well, the two won't be aligned.

So somebody walks in, nobody talks to them, nobody. The only thing that they ask is, "Do you need help?" But they don't do anything else. Well, there's going to be a misalignment there. And that breaks down again, the integrity that we've already set with, okay, this is our message, this is what we're about. But then the internal experience or that internal environment that we're building doesn't support that. And you can start to see how things in business start to break down. Plus also back to my comment about managers, some of the management teams that I've seen, and I talked to employees when I first start working with people, I talked to employees and sometimes I get comments from them about really how things are and how it's not so fun and how it's miserable and yada, yada yada. And then you talk to the management team and they're like, "Oh, we can't get people to do their jobs." And then I started asking the question of have you communicated that? Have you communicated what it is that they really need to do?

And the next question out of my mouth is normally, do you believe that you are fully showing up, fully responsible for your role here and for the business? And their answer to me most of the time is, "Well, yeah. I create a schedule and I make sure that people take their lunch." And it's like, "No, no, no, no, no. Are you showing up and being fully responsible for your role here in the business?" And part of what that means is, setting clear expectations with all the people that work with you and underneath you, or for you, I should say.

So building, when we build this environment that has a core foundation of clear expectations, that's when everything else can be built on top of it. We can build that integrity or everybody stays in integrity and that matches the internal experience and the external experience. So if we say something in our marketing and we promise something to our customers, we're going to deliver with the experience in the environment that we create internally, so that the two are combined and that the two shall meet. And we can also take, people can really start to take responsibility for their role in the business and really start to take ownership of the performance that they have and the performance that they are doing and the work that they're doing on a daily basis.

I just had a conversation with one of my clients over the weekend actually, and I had this conversation where they're having a struggle with an employee and this employee has some hardships going on in their life. They have some health issues and they have some other situations going on. And the conversation was centered around, should we, this person wasn't showing up for work, they thought that they had gotten sick, again. And or having some struggles and indeed they were, and it was like, should we get rid of them? Should we fire them? And they asked me what do I think? And of course, my next answer as a question is, well, what do you think the right decision is for the business? And we ended up getting into this conversation and one of the things that I uncovered is, this employee is a good employee. They do a good job. Okay?

They do a good job and they have a lot of tasks that they have to do that are not the most fun task, but they do them and they don't complain and from that standpoint, they're a good worker. But the expectation of what they really want this person to do and that explanation of what this person's purposes beyond these tasks that he does on a regular basis, that has never been communicated to him. Never. So that is why people can't rise to their highest potential if they don't know. If they don't know what's expected of them. They can't rise to their highest potential if they don't really understand what their grander purposes in all of this, beyond the fact that they wash dishes, or beyond the fact that they

answer telephones, or beyond the fact that they clean the toilets, beyond the fact that they wait on customers.

If people don't have, if there's not a clear expectation set as far as, what their greater purposes, then how are they ever going to be able to rise to their highest potential. If the expectations aren't set as far as, even though you're a dishwasher, this is what we expect from a dishwasher here at XYZ restaurant, or this is our brand, this is our vision, this is where we want to take the business and we want you to be a part of it, and this is what someone who is a receptionist, this is what we expect from them, or this is what someone who is a server, this is what we expect from you. And you can see how those expectations combine the vision, the mission, the purpose, the core values all together. Those are the underlying foundation of it. But then when it gets communicated to anybody in the internal experience and anybody in the external experience, it's setting those clear expectations and why everything is important.

So you can see here, having those clear expectations helps us to make sure that we have clarity when we're putting projects together. It helps us to make sure that we have clarity when we're communicating strategic objectives for the business and how we want to grow, how we're going to achieve all the goals that we have set for ourself. It helps us when we have those clear expectations. It helps everybody to understand what each person's strengths are, and how person fits into the bigger piece and to the bigger puzzle. It also allows us to have people share in the responsibility by owning, again, owning their job performance, owning what it is that they're doing.

But it's such a simple concept, but so many businesses don't spend the time to have this be part of creating that healthy environment for people. And when we do, when there are those clear expectations and you understand what your manager needs from you, or you understand what you need to do with this project or you understand what the next steps are, that brings so much clarity and for everyone. And if you remember, clarity is power. And when we have that clarity, we feel empowered and we can also take action. We can take action and we know what direction to go because we also know what's expected of us.

When people don't have, when they don't fully understand what's expected of them in a specific role or on a specific project or in a specific task, that's when things start to go chaotic and crazy. That's when people start to make up their own rules. That example that I used about how one of my clients didn't have a training program when new employees would come on other than here's how you ring a customer, here's how you ring this, they had people saying all kinds of stuff that really didn't make sense and really didn't go with the business, but they didn't know any better. So they were just saying what they thought, pronouncing words incorrectly and saying things that they thought fit based on whatever they could possibly learn from whatever they saw, brochures or books or [paints 00:19:54] or whatever. So we had to reel it back and say, "All right. Let's reset this, let's reset what the expectations are and then let's create processes," that can really carry forth what those, or help people to carry forth what those expectations are.

So again, when we set clear expectations in our internal experience, but also in our external experience, that is what helps us to create a healthy, inspiring environment, an environment where people can achieve their goals, where people can rise to their highest potential, and also an environment where customers understand what the business is about and they know they have that subconscious understanding of what the business can do for them and the transformation that the business provides. When we don't set clear expectations, people make up their own stuff, they make up their own interpretation of what's happening, or they make up their own interpretation of what they need to do and that's when, again, things start to go a bit wonky, whether it's people on the internal side or people on the external side.

So some of the things that you can start doing, three key things that you can start doing to start setting clear expectations is number one, have meetings with your people on a regular basis. I can't tell you how many people I have talked to, where they don't have staff meetings. They have one time per year. You can't have one staff meeting. You got to have them at least on a monthly basis. Every month have a staff meeting. It doesn't have to be long. You have clear objectives in your staff meeting, you have an agenda that you can follow and everybody stays in the loop on things. So that's number one, making sure that you're having regular meetings with your people.

Number two, making sure that you are clearly communicating the vision and the mission and the purpose of the business on a regular basis to absolutely every single person that works there. Just like my story about my client who had a situation with an employee who was having some job performance issues or attendance issues, I should say, that person doesn't really have a clear idea as to really what the vision of the businesses and what their purpose is in the business. They just think that they just show up and do their tasks. So making sure that you're clearly communicating the vision, the mission, the purpose of the business to absolutely everybody that works there. Everybody that works there, communicating it in your messaging to your customers, to the external people, to your community, not just once, not just twice, but consistently, consistently.

And then number three that you can do is, you can focus on setting regular goals with your people and making sure that you are focusing on taking those goals and breaking them into smaller pieces that align with these expectations that people have. So it's number one, having regular meetings. Number two, clearly communicating your vision, your mission, your purpose, and your core values. And number three, setting regular goals for people, so they have something to achieve, they have something to strive towards, and helping them to figure out how to make those goals happen by breaking them into pieces, by having a daily strategy as to how they can make those goals happen.

And that's how we can take that, setting those clear expectations, and building that healthy environment for both internal and external experiences. So if you haven't done this yet in your business, I highly recommend you start really thinking about what it is that you want to do, who you haven't communicated this to and who you need to communicate it to, how frequently you're going to do that. And then also how you can help people to really rise to their highest potential by helping them to set their own goals, and not only set them, but how to figure out how to achieve them. So I hope this episode helped you, and until next week, I wish you a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful rest of your week and a very healthy and happy rest of your week and I will see you soon. Bye for now.