

Well, Hey, Hey, Hey. We are back for another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast. I'm your host, Theresa Cantley, and I got a question for you. Do you have a mission statement? And if you don't have one, do you know what a mission statement is? I know that sounds like a funny question or a strange question, or you might be thinking, "Theresa, of course, I know what one is," or maybe you're not. I have found recently that not everybody understands what a mission statement is and why it's important to have one. I know it sounds weird. Right? But it's not because I think when we start our business... And I know I made this mistake early on, even though I knew better. When we started our business, we're just so focused on that top-line, "Got to make sales, got to make sales, got to make sales, hustle, hustle, hustle." We know what we want to do and we know why we want to do it, but we don't quite put it into words.

And what happens is when we don't have that mission statement, and we're going to talk about what exactly is the mission statement anyway, but when we don't have that mission statement, that is when our brand can become a commodity. That is when we get lost in the noise of everybody else. That is how we're unable to stand out from the crowd. That is also when we think that we need to serve and be everybody's cup of tea, serve everyone and everybody, and be everybody's cup of tea, and ultimately our business ends up becoming flat. So what exactly is a mission statement? Well, the definition of it is a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual. So you can have a mission statement as a company or as an organization, as a huge organization, a nonprofit, or you can also have a mission statement as an individual.

And it is something that I encourage my people that I work with to not only have a mission statement for their business, but also to have one for yourself. What is it that you stand for? What is it that you want to do? Because especially as a business owner, when you have one for your life, and then you have one for your business, you will see an alignment between the two. So again, the definition... And this whole conversation, by the way, comes from a conversation I had with someone on the management team last week for one of my clients. And it was an amazing conversation because this person, I mean, I've been working with them for a very, very long time, and it was the first time that we had a conversation centered around the mission statement, and not from the perspective of just having one, but because they're at a point in their business where the business has shifted and has grown, and as you shift and grow, the vision is going to change and things grow and things shift.

And I had actually had a conversation with the owner to say, "I think it's time that we take a look at this again and reset it because I think you've grown out of or things have shifted in such a way that you're doing much more or different things than what were in the initial mission statement." But I'm having a conversation with this individual, and we talked about her personal mission statement. And the other thing that we talked about in a much grander way is that a mission statement for an organization company should not be written in a vacuum. It shouldn't be... I mean, it can be, but there's a reason why when we write our mission statement, that you can put it together, but then getting input from your team and from your employees. So when we look at the definition is a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual. My definition of a mission statement is who are you right now in the present and what do you do for others? Okay?

The vision statement, so we're talking about the difference between the two, but the two need to work together. One needs to support the other. So the vision statement is much more detailed and explains the greater difference that you want to make in this world with your team, with what you do. So you can see the vision is much grander on a much grander scale, much more detailed than the mission statement. The mission statement can be one, maybe two sentences, sometimes three, but it's definitely a lot shorter. And the mission statement, clearly there's three components of it, which is who you serve, how you serve them, and what makes you different. So who are you? Who do you serve?

How do you serve them? And what makes you different? And a lot of people get hung up on it, and I mean, they're like, "Oh, I don't know. Our business serves everyone." Sorry. My calendar reminder went off. "My business serves everyone. I don't know if we can narrow it down to just one person."

And it's the biggest mistake that people make because when we don't get super clear on who it is that we serve and how we serve them, and we think we're just going to help everybody and anybody... I mean, yes, you might, but when we're super clear on who it is that our business helps, who it is that our business is making a greater difference for and how, and we're clear on what makes us different than everybody else in our industry, that's how we can get super laser-focused on what it is that we're doing, the goals that we need to set, and how we conduct every single day, and the decisions that we make on top of it. So your mission statement is who you are in the present, what are you doing in the present. Okay? The vision is, what greater difference do we want to make with what we're doing and our team to make a bigger difference in this world? That's the vision. And then we have our purpose and our core values. Okay?

But just talking about the vision and the mission, because I think a lot of people get those two things confused, and again, I know a lot of people who either don't have one or the other, or both, or aren't even really sure how to even craft one or put it together. So again, one of the things that we want to do is make sure that we have that mission. It was one of the big mistakes that I made and I knew way better that I needed to have a mission statement because what the mission statement is, is that helps to give you clarity on, again, what it is that... What are you doing? Okay? And who are you helping? And I've seen a lot of businesses who are floundering and kind of not really sure what they're doing, not really sure what direction they want to go, not really... And when we go back and look at it and I say, "Well, what is your mission?" And they say, "To be the biggest XYZ company in our industry." Okay. Well, that's not really a mission.

I mean, if it works for you, great, but obviously since you're having some struggles in your business, we need to recraft that. And in case you don't have one, you are in luck because I am going to have a free download in the show notes that will walk you through step-by-step how to put your mission statement together. Very, very simple, one-page simple questions. But let's go back to why it's important to incorporate your team into creating your mission statement. And same as the vision, and probably, if you've listened to my podcast before, I talk about this a lot with... Your vision, it's not something you define and set it and forget it. Your vision is going to constantly grow, but it's also something that you need to constantly talk to your employees about and reinforce it over and over and over again.

Same thing with the mission. When people write their mission statement, whether they had their employees involved or not, when they write it, it's like, it just goes into the abyss. They don't have it posted anywhere. It's not part of an employee packet or manual or anything. They just set it and forget it, same thing with the vision. And we don't want to do that. The vision will constantly grow. As you grow, your vision is going to grow, and as the business grows, the vision is going to grow. I mean, I'm getting ready to reset my vision for my business and talk to the team about it. But the mission at that core, okay? Yes, there will be times when you might adjust and shift your vision, especially if you've grown so much that things have kind of pivoted and taken a different course, but the true foundation of it, that true north will always stay there.

So going back to what I was saying with having your employees, why do you want to have your employees write it with you, or have your management team write it with you and collaborate on it? Well, what it does is it ends up giving five things. It ends up enabling... And it goes back to this core philosophy of when people are part of creating something, they're going to give much more energy, effort, enthusiasm. They're going to trust you when they are part of creating something for the business. And what it does is it creates ownership of their role. They understand the greater mission of the

business so that they can understand and take ownership of what they're doing in their individual role. The other thing it does is it gives skill mastery and education, and as we know, education is the way that we empower people. The more education we can give our employees, the more they feel empowered, plus the more confidence they build. If you want more confident employees, educate them, get them some higher level of skill mastery.

It also creates purpose. When we understand what the purpose of the businesses and we understand what the mission is and all these pieces and how they come together and what it is that we're trying to do, "We're not just a restaurant where something even bigger. We're a destination." "We're not just a retail store. We're an experience in creativity." Whatever it is, when people understand what the greater purpose of the businesses, they can understand what their purpose is and how the two are in alignment and how the two go together. I can't tell you time and time again, where I come into businesses, and it's like, people are just barking orders at employees. Employees are like robots, and you can see everybody's miserable. The energy is like... One of the best ways and easiest ways to come out of that is to make sure that people understand what the purpose of the business is and what their individual purpose is and how the two go together.

The fourth one is creativity. It gives them a level of creativity and enables them to pull from their past experiences, their diverse backgrounds, to give their thoughts, their input, and allow them to use their creativity to bring that to the group, to bring it to the mission so that the mission can stretch and it can grow and it can make a bigger impact. A lot of people I know, I hear this a lot. I work with small businesses and if you have a restaurant, you only want to hire people who have restaurant experience. If you're in retail, you only want to hire people who have retail experience. If have a yoga studio, you only want to have people who have experience with yoga studios. And that's just not the case.

When we bring diverse people from diverse backgrounds into our business, regardless if they have hard skills in that particular industry or not, when we do that, that's when we can come up with some really creative, unique solutions and unique ways of doing things, because if you've been in an industry, you are married to that industry ideals, those industry methods, that industry, and you can't... It's harder to break free from that and break out of that mold. So when we bring people in from diverse backgrounds... And I always tell my clients we want to hire for those soft skills, for those people who have the ability and capability just in who they are that align with what the business is all about. So when we can bring that diversity, those diverse backgrounds, and we allow people to have that open forum to be able to express their opinions, that's how we can bring a lot of creativity into the business.

And the last one is it builds trust. So when we build, when we have our employees be part of creating this, and when they can see that they have ownership of their role, that they can be a leader no matter what role they have in the company. They also understand that what they do and how they do it makes a difference in the performance of the business. And then also, they know that they're not going to just come in at a particular level, at a particular job, and just stay there. They have the chance to educate, get educated, and elevate their skills, and elevate their knowledge. And what that does is it builds trust, and trust is a foundation that is so important to have between management and the team, the staff, or management and the business owner, the business owner and staff, to everybody coming together.

They understand that the environment that they're working in is one that is open to suggestions, one that is open to creativity, one that embraces education, and one that allows them to, if they want to learn a new skill, they can. And when you have that with your employees, it takes things to a whole new level. So should some kind of impact come into the business, those employees are going... They know that, "You know what? We got this. We're going to get through it, and everything's going to be okay, and we're going to continue to move forward." But also having them be part of creating this mission statement, especially as I said in the beginning of this episode, mission statements are so important.

They are a guiding force. The mission and the vision and the purpose, the core values, they are a guiding force for how the business does things, how the business shows up to the community and also how they connect with their customers, with the community, with employees.

And it's so important to have that foundational piece in place, but also to make sure that you are reinforcing what that mission is on a regular basis. It is not set it, put it in a drawer, or set it, put it in a book and nobody ever reads the book. It should be something that you can incorporate into onboarding processes for new employees. You can incorporate it into staff meetings that you have on a regular basis. You can incorporate it into, if you have an employee portal, an online portal that people can go in and learn things. That is something that is always there in front of them that they can read and review and reflect on. It could also be something that is posted in a breakroom or posted where all the staff can see it, and even your customers.

I mean, it can be something that's on your website. It can be something that it's visible to people, so people understand what it is that your business does, who you serve, and how you do it, what makes you unique. And again, when we make people part of creating something, they have so much more engagement, higher levels of engagement, higher levels of trust, higher levels of good, positive energy that will then elevate the business and take the business to a whole new level. So if you haven't written your mission statement yet, or maybe you have one, go back and review it. And then if you have a management team, maybe even get your management team involved, and get a rough draft going. And then maybe if you have a staff meeting, present it at the staff meeting and just get some feedback as to what people think, how they feel about the mission statement.

That mission statement should inspire them. It should make them feel good. It should make them feel excited about coming to work and doing the work that they're there to do, because nothing's worse than having employees that are not motivated because they're bored, they're frustrated, they're micromanaged. There is nothing worse than that. So take some time. As I said, you can download my cheat sheet for creating a mission statement, but take some time to really think about it, review your mission statement, and maybe you need to rewrite it. Maybe you just need to just post it. Maybe your mission statement is great as it is, but maybe it just needs to be more visible. Maybe it's time that you have a meeting with your people and talk about it. Talk about what makes you different. So many people think that just because I'm in this industry, I need to be this way. Not necessarily. Carve your own path and get your people to be part of the creation process.

Like I said, you will get so much higher levels of employee engagement, higher levels of energy, higher levels of education and skill mastery and ownership of their role and confidence. So I hope this helped you. Don't forget to download the freebie, the cheat sheet on how to create your own mission statement. Super, super simple, but take some time, give it some thought, reflect on it, and let me know. I want to hear some of these mission statements. So leave me a comment on the podcast. When you have review, let me know what was most helpful, but most important, make sure that you take time to either write it if you haven't or review it and get it out there to your staff, to your people, to your employees, to your team, to your management team. Get it out there and make sure that it's not once that you share it, but you share it time and time and time again. So thank you for joining me. Until next week. Have a wonderful rest of your week, and I will see you soon.