

Does Your Team have Mysterious or Multiple Mission Statements?



The importance of mission statements struck me when I was still a coach and teacher, because I worked at five different high schools in my career.

The moves happened because of coaching positions that came open, but one of the curious things I noticed after working at that many different schools is that they were all very unique...

The principals had different personalities.

The students came from different backgrounds.

The architectural layouts were diverse...

But there was ONE thing that was oddly **similar at every school** – and I'm guessing that it is the same wherever you have worked.

Every school I worked at had a mission statement posted in the main office and also around the building on hallway walls.

You know what I'm talking about...

"We will inspire life-long learners who are responsible citizens in the global community."

or

"Through combined effort of staff, parents, students, and community, we will provide students with a foundation in basic skills, to provide an introduction to the arts, to foster a positive work ethic, to create an environment that harbors tolerance and respect"



Having a mission statement on the walls is OK

The problem was that those mission statements **stayed on the walls** – and never made it into the hearts and minds of teachers or students or curriculum...

The problem was that – even though every school I worked at (and likely every company you have worked at) spent time and resources to identify a formal mission statement – there had been **very little attention to making sure it was adopted and applied** to our everyday activities as employees...

In fact, I would argue that in a school of 140 faculty members, there were probably 140 very different mission statements – none of them that truly matched the ones that were posted in the hallways.

Each teacher had consciously or unconsciously chosen the purpose and direction of their daily classroom efforts...

And each one meant well.

But their daily efforts were not connected to a compelling COMMON GOAL.

And communicating that shared goal is the job of a leader.

At every meeting, are you repeating your organization's compelling common goal?

Let me ask you this: if you were to ask ten people at YOUR company what their mission is, how many different responses would you get?

The answer might convict you.

But there IS HOPE!

Clarity inspires commitment.

First, be sure to involve your team in creating the mission statement that they will be working on and contributing to every day.

And second, to ensure that your people begin to understand and adopt a compelling common goal, YOU must take responsibility for sharing it and repeating it and making it personal to them.

Here are a few ideas you can use to get started:

- Add it to your email signature.

- *Open your meeting by saying it out loud (and be sure to memorize it... if you can't remember it without reading it, why would your people think it was important?)*
- *Record and share a phone video of people talking about what it means to them.*
- *Tell stories in conversations that illustrate WHY it is important.*
- *Make sure that it is clearly visible on your website and all marketing pieces*
- *Describe to people how THEIR efforts contribute to making the mission a reality.*

Ultimately, your success as a leader comes down to creating unity on your team – you want to get everyone rowing enthusiastically in the same direction.

And paychecks don't motivate as much as a true sense of purpose...

UNITY is Created by Connections.

You have to connect people to each other (that is the power of [team building events](#))

And you have to connect people to a compelling common goal.

If you have a staff that gets out of bed excited to contribute to a shared cause and everyone is on the same page with the same passionate focus on the same mission, you are doing an incredible job...

But more likely than not, you may have some of your staff splintered off and working on a mission that isn't quite the same as the rest of the team's.

Maybe you could use a [customized teamwork workshop](#) to clarify your values and mission and define what that is supposed to look like in your day-to-day behaviors...

Successful leaders know that **all failure is the result of vagueness.**

Clarify your team's mission. Repeat it and make sure it is at the core of why people show up each day to be part of something larger and more significant than themselves.

Praise people when they do things that contribute to that cause.

If they don't know WHY they are there, they won't do much WHILE they are there!

When you begin to emphasize the goal that all should be serving, some people may leave... and that is okay.

Because when YOU are clear about why you are there together, your people will accomplish an great deal more, and will take more pride in the results!

Winning Teammates know their mission –

Even more importantly, they communicate it often to ensure the clarity and focus of everyone involved in making it happen!

Sean Glaze delivers engaging [conference keynotes](#) and interactive [team building events](#) that help healthcare and education leaders build more positive and profitable cultures.

Sean is also an author, and each of his four books, [The Unexpected Leader](#), [Rapid Teamwork](#), [The 10 Commandments of Winning Teammates](#), and [Staying Coachable](#), are entertaining parables with powerful take-aways for team growth and leadership!



What issues are YOU dealing with that would disappear if you could [build a team culture](#) that inspired connection, accountability, and a team-first attitude?