

As a manager, I am fortunate. I work with some of the brightest people that I know. The recruiters here at Delta Dallas are all articulate, sharp and good communicators. Recruiters, after all, must possess those qualities in order to succeed. You would think that this would make my job as Vice President of Operations easy. Well, it doesn't.



You can talk to anyone who is in charge of any team, anywhere on the planet, and they will tell you that one of the highest priorities they have is **managing meaning**. You have to manage the meaning of vision, goals, objectives, project milestones, and your constituents' interpretation of these elements each day. (Sometimes you have to manage them from moment to moment!)

When you are talking about the importance of meaning, the first thing that must be addressed is the need for what I call *collective company meaning*. A foundation of certain elements and dynamics have to be established in an organization before you can begin to define meaning in individual projects or initiatives. There are many things you can establish, but the two most vital pieces are:

1. A clear, established company culture

People should know what to expect from their environment, and what behavioral, professional, and performance standards are set from their interview to their exit. This doesn't mean that there will never be moments when people need to be coached on nuances in cultural expectations, but your environment should create a clear picture from day one.

2. A clear, shared company vision

This comes straight from leadership. You can engage workers at every level by letting them know what your company is facing, good or bad – and engaging them in the process for growth. They need to be engaged in shared vision from the very beginning, as it creates meaning for even the most menial of tasks.

Once everyone is speaking the same language corporately, you can begin to create meaning within the context of specific projects. When we are beginning a new project or initiative here at Delta Dallas, I find that it works best when I have met with my team to establish communal meaning and interpretation of the following:

- The purpose for the project or initiative
- Expectations
- Common milestones for the project that are meaningful to each player and team
- Specific times to check back in and be assured that everyone is still sharing understanding
- Time line for completion
- How results will be measured and interpreted

I have found that when we are assured that we have a common understanding of project elements and company vision; it allows everyone to move forward with increased confidence. If leaders establish a culture of authenticity, vision, and opportunity through shared meaning, they can create a great deal of loyalty in their constituents and increase innovation as well as productivity. The new economy demands it.

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