

Leadership Purpose



I'm currently preparing to help a group of leaders define their personal leadership purpose—their leadership philosophy or identity. Exercises like these generate both excitement and pushback. Some resonate; others resist. But check out these findings:

- 79% of business leaders believe that an organization's **purpose is central to business success**, yet 68% shared that purpose is not used as a guidepost in leadership decision making processes within their organization.
- The **highest-performing employees** are 3x more likely to work for a company with a **strong sense of purpose**. Yet only 13% of them said that their organization is differentiated by a "purpose-driven mission."
- More than 90% of employees are **willing to trade a percentage of their lifetime earnings** for greater meaning at work.
- 83% of Gen Z in the US **consider a company's purpose** when deciding where to work.
- 74% of employees **place a high value** on finding work that delivers on a **sense of purpose**.

If you are not the kind of leader who establishes a higher purpose or the "Why" of work, employees will find that connection elsewhere. Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher, said, "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." Employees need to know why what they are doing matters. It's hard to get the benefits of high engagement if employees don't know what they are fighting for.

The benefits of having a clear identity statement are compelling:

- Forces you to think deeply about your life
- Identifies what is truly important
- Forces you to clarify your deepest values, aspirations, and what you stand for
- Integrates who you are; becomes a code of conduct that defines your convictions
- Provides focus
- Simplifies decision-making; allows you to more readily dismiss distractions
- Creates accountability
- Becomes a personal barometer to assess your success
- Points the direction you intend your life to move in like a personal compass or north star

- Defines your “why”

Seneca, the Roman philosopher, said, “Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind.” Managers may be good at following the course, but it’s leaders who point everyone in the right direction and elevate our vision to distant harbors. My message to this leadership group in a couple of weeks will be: “It’s time to define your north star so that your employees know what kind of leader you are and how they are going to follow.

Sources

<https://www.businessofpurpose.com/statistics>