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IWD 2024: Scaling for success - vision, values, and people power

Fri, 8th Mar 2024

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By Kate Massey, Head of APAC, Searchspring

The difference between growing and scaling

Growth happens as a result of your actions—the reactive outcome of efforts. That growth can start, stop, and change as different aspects of your business change. Scaling, however, is a forward-looking strategy that incorporates much more than isolated periods of sales growth or the reactive addition of team members.

To scale effectively and see continued results, you need a forward-looking mindset that builds on your company's vision and values, taps into team motivations, and celebrates successes. When you achieve the right strategy, the result is a continued success that can weather the short-term storms and bumps in the road that can happen in any business.

Starting with vision and values

As an old Japanese proverb goes, "Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare". Your vision and values are the building blocks on which success is built. For that reason, I believe that forming that foundation is a crucial aspect of all new-starter onboarding and ongoing employee engagement. Particularly when your business or operations are growing quickly, employees must be moving in the same direction with a common purpose.

Think about how best to communicate your company vision and mission statements. What do they mean to you? What could they mean to employees? Create an open dialogue about your company vision, what sets it apart from competitors, and the part it plays in driving everyone's success.

Team building events, such as company and strategy days, provide fantastic opportunities to discuss vision and values while keeping your team engaged—which is particularly important for remote-first teams like ours. I also leverage industry and networking events for more frequent ways to connect with my team—and to share the Searchspring vision and values with partners, customers, and potential new customers.

Tapping into your team's motivations

As workforces continue to expand into younger generations, it's essential to adapt to the needs and motivations of all employees. According to Gallup data, 55% of Millennials (Gen Y, born 1981 - 1996) don't feel engaged in the workplace. Only 29% of Millennial respondents in Gallup's research say they are engaged, with 16% actively disengaged. These figures illustrate a massive opportunity to increase engagement, particularly considering Gallup data lists Millennials as now making up 38% of the workforce.

Connecting on vision and values is a brilliant way to engage employees. Randstad's research shows that younger generations want their personal convictions to align with their employer's, with nearly half of both Millennials (48%) and Gen Z (49%) saying they wouldn't accept a job that didn't align with their values compared to just over a third (35%) of Baby Boomers. What are your employees' values, and how can you learn about them? Take the time to connect with each team member and provide opportunities to speak about what's important to them.

Regular company "all hands" meetings give my team a chance to engage with C-Level executives and hear about company strategy, while weekly "1-2-1" meetings provide space for each person to talk candidly with me, ask questions, and help us understand everyone's motivations, priorities and challenges, and progress towards targets. Actively seek your employees' feedback on what's working, what could be improved, and how the company aligns with their values to help keep engagement high.

Celebrating the successes

The strength of your strategy, the clarity of your vision, and the level of your team's motivation can drive your desired growth outcomes. To keep the momentum going, however, it's vital to recognise and celebrate your successes.

With a distributed team in Australia and extended teams in the US, technology plays an important role for me in recognising my team's efforts. Dedicated channels in our instant messenger application, Slack, help us communicate sales and departmental wins company-wide, recognise employees' efforts, and share what we've learned along the way. We also post new customer "win announcements" on social media channels to highlight the incredible relationships we're building with customers—and remind them we're on the journey together. Our annual "Partner Awards" also acknowledge the immense value our technology and agency partners bring to our company and the broader ecommerce community.

Look for opportunities to recognise and celebrate people who are integral to your ongoing success—whether that's your employees, partners, or customers.

Scaling for success takes grit, resilience, and determination. However, with a strategic approach that brings vision, values, and people power into the fold, you can achieve long-term, sustainable success.

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