

Pickin' a Mission for your Team

By Nick Arnette

What use is a team that doesn't know what it's supposed to do or where it's supposed to go? If you set out on a journey with no destination in mind, you will soon find yourself lost.

The best place to start is with a mission statement. You can call it a goal, a slogan, or a motto. It just needs to state what you want to convey and accomplish. For our purposes, I'll refer to it as a mission statement.

Your mission should be clear and concise. There may be one overall mission statement for your business, such as, "Our company's mission is to provide quality products at affordable prices." Each department (sub-team) in turn would have its own mission statement, such as, "The goal of the Customer Service Department is to provide excellent service by treating our customers like family." You might even want to have mini mission statements for your meetings, such as, "The goal of today's meeting is to choose a theme for our next event." The same idea works for your home, volunteer, or other activities. For example, a home mission statement could be, "Our family goal is to have quality family time."

Once you know your mission, you can discuss with your team how to achieve it. The family whose goal is quality time might agree to turn off the TV for an hour a night to do an activity of some kind together. Or, if you're super busy, it could be that you'll all eat dinner together with no interruptions or distractions at least once a week. It's your team, and it's your mission. Define it.

The sky is the limit when it comes to mission statements. The most important things are that it's clearly defined and that everyone on the team knows what it is. It's surprising to me that most people don't know their organization's mission statement. If you don't know where you're going on your mission, how are you ever going to get there? In addition to that, if you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you're there?

On the other hand, if you do know what your mission is, be it long-term or short-term, everything you do can be influenced by it—because you're on a mission!

When I was in first grade, my entire family went to Stapleton International Airport to see President Lyndon B. Johnson. Our mission was to see him and shake his hand.

We were on the tarmac waiting behind a thin rope as Air Force One pulled up near us. It seemed like hours, but finally, there he was, L.B.J. in all his presidential splendor. The president started going down the long line of people, shaking hands as he went. When he came near me, I was ecstatic. I was going to get to shake hands with the president! Well, he just passed right over my little first-grade hand. As a matter of fact, he didn't shake

anyone's hand in my family, except for my mom's.

We were more than disappointed. My dad saw the disappointment on our young faces. My mom came up with a brilliant idea. She said, "Hey, I just shook the president's hand. So if I shake your hand, it will be just like shaking his hand." We all bought into it. Even my dad, although he might deny it! We all went home feeling like we'd accomplished our mission, thanks to my mom being a team player.

Sometimes accomplishing a mission requires a little flexibility, a little sensitivity, and a little imagination.

Take a little time to write a few mission statements for your life. The best way to get somewhere is to know where you want to go.

1. My mission at work:

2. My mission at home:

3. My volunteer/civic/spiritual mission(s):

The preceding article is an excerpt from *Me, We and Glee: How to have a great attitude, work as a team and keep your sense of humor*, by Nick Arnette. Known as *The Feel Good Funny Guy*, Arnette is a popular keynote speaker at business meetings throughout the United States and Canada. You can contact Nick Arnette at www.NickArnette.com, email: nick@nickarnette.com

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