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Even the Best Leaders Get 'Decision Fatigue.' Here's How to Prevent It

The CEO's role is to ensure their team understands, buys into, and lives by the company vision. Here's how to make that happen.



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If you've worked in corporate America, you will have come across the traditional [list of values](#) pasted to the conference room wall. It probably included [buzzword phrases](#) like, "Put the customer first," or "Collaboration is key." And very often, despite all the corporate paraphernalia sharing [vision and values](#), most employees don't understand the path and can't articulate it.

If your team isn't clear on the company's vision and direction, even a team of extremely high performers may be unable to make decisions and will row in different directions. Conversely, if your team does clearly understand your vision, they will be able to easily make decisions that contribute to the company's goals, there will be less need for day-to-day meetings to get on the same page, and, overall, your company's successes will come naturally and with less stress.

Here are some practical ways to make sure your team succeeds by understanding the company's path.

1. Sell your vision to your team the way you'd sell a product to your customers.

Find ways to communicate the company's vision in the most earnest way possible.

Since we know that most employees don't fully absorb your vision from the list of the company's values, you need to craft activities and sales materials that help pitch your message to your team. For example, if you want the team to get excited about a new initiative, mock up a fake magazine cover, dated a year in the future, and write the headline that your team has accomplished the goal. Write the article and pretend to be interviewed by the reporter so you can bring it alive with your own quotes about what it felt like to have that successful project complete.

Another way is to embed your vision and goals into the day-to-day habits of the team. For example, each quarter at my company when we do our 12-week goal setting, we articulate each activity we are going to undertake relative to the company's vision and values. This ensures that each time a team member is taking a moment to articulate that in the context of where we are headed and ensure it all matches up.

2. Repeat yourself at least seven times.

In the world of sales and marketing, it's common knowledge that repetition is key to gaining a customer. The [rule of seven](#) says that a prospect needs to be exposed to your offer at least seven times before they really notice it.

This isn't any different for your team members, who are your customers in this case.

Each time you have a team meeting, repeat your company's vision and goals. In addition, look for ways to incorporate daily or weekly reminders about the company vision into the habits of your team. For example, we do a weekly "high-five Friday" where the team comes together and recognizes the successes from the prior week. Each high five is linked to one of our six goals -- the elements of our vision. This allows the team to put what they've accomplished back into context.

3. Tell a story to drive your messaging home.

People learn in different ways. Some say that a picture is worth a thousand words, whereas others believe that [words stick in our brains five times longer than images](#). But if you want to really drive a message home, use both approaches [through storytelling](#).

Well-told stories encourage your listener to not only hear what you have to say but also generate an image that helps them to absorb the information and remember it using two of their senses.

4. Ensure that each person on your team understands their role as part of the vision.

Here's where metrics come in. Each person on your team should not only understand where the company is headed at a macro level but also what their part is and the data behind it. Why data? It's easy for the team members to see how they can play a role in a given success if they can quantify and measure their contribution. Don't do this just for your senior team members; everyone can and should play a part.

One simple way to do this: Make sure that each person on your team has a "number," or a way to quantify their specific contribution to the business. It's an approach heralded in [Gino Wickman's popular book, *Traction*](#), which really enables individual ownership on outcomes, as opposed to just tasks.

As the CEO, your job is clearly defined: You need to lead every team that works with you in the same direction. But doing that is much harder than it sounds; it requires not just knowing the message you want to deliver but also being thoughtful about how to deliver that message. By following the tips above, you can ensure your team is set up for success through a genuine understanding of your company's mission and values.

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