



**Getting Leadership
on the Same Page
with the Workforce**

One for All and All for One!

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One for all and all for one! This is a phrase typically attributed to the main characters of the novel *The Three Musketeers*, written nearly 200 years ago,¹ and is recognized as the motto of Switzerland, which created a sense of national unity of the country's population following widespread flooding in the Swiss Alps in 1868.²

Ironically, the term 'silo' is from around that same period. According to Merriam-Webster, the first known use of *silo* was in 1856, derived from a Spanish word to describe a tall structure to store food. However, it wasn't until 1988 that the term was applied to the business community, when Phil Ensor, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, wrote that the word 'silos' describes where, "...people across the organization do not share common goals...communication is heavily top-down, on the vertical axis. Little is shared on the horizontal axis."³ This describes the conundrum many companies face today as employees and department's work independently.

Why is it Critical for Everyone to be on the Same Page?

Fortunately, many companies recognize the need to 'share common goals' and work together, across and throughout the organization (vertically and horizontally), to maximize business results. They realize that employees are on the front line with customers, whether they are at the counter, on the sales floor or handling calls to helpdesks or service centers. This personal contact with customers makes it critical for leadership to properly communicate their organization's message to employees to ensure that they reliably represent the brand and thoroughly train employees to ensure they provide the utmost of customer service.

To the extent that everyone can contribute to the success of a company, leading organizations are also communicating, and working, with employees of strategic partners, such as suppliers, marketing and public relations firms, distributors, and managed service and staff resource vendors to ensure that the corporate message is clearly conveyed and the brand properly represented. More important, although from a different perspective, it requires engagement with, and input from, customers.

Our fast-paced digital environment requires that diverse individuals bring their experiences, perspectives and ideas together. The vast quantity of information available makes it virtually impossible for individuals or departments to thoroughly consider and implement viable solutions on their own. "*Management is a team sport,*" according to Dr. John Wagner, professor of management at Michigan State University's Executive MBA. "*As a manager, you cannot succeed on your job as an individual. Managing requires that you work with others and do so in a way that leads to shared success.*"

¹ *The Three Musketeers*, Alexandre Dumas, 1844.

² Wikipedia.com (Best explanation – Google it).

³ *The Vocabularist: How did 'silo' get to mean something else?* Magazine Monitor (www.bbc.com, 2015).

Ultimately, it means that everyone must communicate, engage, collaborate, cooperate and listen. This embraces the essence of the phrase *one for all and all for one*. Could there be a better phrase to describe it? Probably not. To achieve this state of ‘*kumbaya (closeness and compassion)*’ is it necessary to break down the corporate silos? Maybe, but not always. As stated in the paper, *Getting Leadership on the Same Page*⁴, some silos are welcomed strategic requirements, such as departments and business units, which are designed to focus on specific areas and may require unique skills and knowledge.

Silos can be leveraged to perform specialized functions, but when blended with work efforts of other departments and business units, in a collaborative, cooperative way, can provide exceptional results. Hence, on an organizational, and personnel basis, there can be a preference to bend existing silos, rather than break them down.

According to a study sponsored by Aruba Networks, “*The Right Technologies Unlock the Potential of the Digital Workplace*”, 70% of “Digital Revolutionary” companies reported improvement in collaboration and 73% said digital workplace technology had a positive impact on their productivity.



Although Video is Powerful, It’s Not Just About Visual Communications

In the first two editions of the series, *Getting Leadership on the Same Page*, we focused on the *Value and Role of Video for Communications and Employee Training* and *Selecting the Right Video Technology*. The assumption for this edition is that you recognize the value of video, and the role of video technology, for companies to provide enterprise-wide communications to get everyone in, or who are closely aligned with, the organization on the same page and the need to use every media channel available to reach all team members.

Make it Happen

In today’s digital world, where technology enables and facilitates communications throughout, and outside of, organizations, it is critical that companies maintain a variety of media channels that reach everyone, in a consistent, timely, and unified way – *whenever, wherever*, and on the best device *however* to be informed. This will likely require centralized procurement by, and management of, the technology and systems to ensure enterprise-wide communications and training. Although, individual departments may be approved to purchase and operate equipment that comfortably integrates with institutional systems. Through communications, cooperation, guidance, and once again, by blending work efforts and bending silos, companies have a chance to reach their business objectives – Improve results!

Whether for training or communicating, or both, when everyone is on the same page—thinking the same things, accepting roles, and clearly understanding direction—there is a much greater chance for success. According to the Harvard Business Review, “*Profit and growth are stimulated primarily by customer loyalty. Loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is largely influenced by the value of services provided to customers. Value is created by satisfied, loyal, and productive employees. Employee satisfaction, in turn, results primarily from high-quality support services and policies that enable employees to deliver results to customers.*”⁵

⁴ Getting Leadership on the Same Page About the Value and Role of Video For Communications and Employee Training, Randy Palubiak, March 2019.

⁵ Officevibe, Employee Engagement Solution Guide.

A 2018 survey of the *Chief Learning Officer (CLO) Business Intelligence Board* finds a vast majority (86 percent) of CLOs are not taking the good times for granted and expect the learning function to be more aligned with company business objectives. The CLO Business Intelligence Board is a group of 1,500 professionals in the learning and development industry.

Many successful companies can attribute improved business results to a culture that fosters employee engagement. In the *State of American Workplace 2017 Report*, Gallup finds that highly engaged business units realize a 41% reduction in absenteeism and a 17% increase in productivity. According to Dale Carnegie Training, companies with engaged employees, outperform those without by up to 202%. These statistics make a strong case for companies to communicate, engage and collaborate with employees as well as listen to them and other key stakeholders.

What are the Benefits? The Expectations?

Key benefits for companies to have everyone on the same page about business objectives are:

- Improved business culture and work environment;
- Reduced employee turnover;
- Improved customer experience;
- Higher customer satisfaction;
- Improved business results.

These are logical expectations and what every company should aspire to. According to Eagle Hill Consulting, 77% of employees agree that a strong culture allows them to do their best work. Glassdoor, an employment placement and recruiting company, finds that 90% of job seekers say that it's important to work for a company that embraces transparency. According to Udemy, a teaching and learning company, 42% of employees say learning and development are the most important benefits when deciding where to work. However, Achievers, an employee recognition and reward firm, finds that 38% of employees have either never heard senior leadership talk about culture or they talk about it, but there's no action to back it up.

As millennials continue to enter the workforce, statistics indicate that, more than previous generations, they are likely to change jobs frequently. O.C. Tanner, an employee recognition firm, finds that almost 25% of millennials have worked for five different employers and 60% have worked at two to four different organizations. Turnover is expensive, costing companies about one-third of an employee's salary to find and train replacements. It is critical that companies manage turnover, keeping it to the lowest level possible.

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CLO Business Intelligence Board

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Gallup

77% of employees find that a Strong Culture allows them to do their best work.
90% of job seekers believe it important to work for a company that embraces Transparency.
42% of employees say Learning and Development are the most important benefits.
38% of employees have poor experience with senior leadership Conversation or Action.

Best Practices for Effective Communications and Employee Engagement

Leading organizations are realizing gains by embracing the practice of getting all employees on the same page from executives and managers to customer facing associates. A few of the key best practices for leadership are:

1. Provide direct, honest communications;
2. Consistent and thorough sharing of goals;
3. Establish alignment throughout the organization, both horizontally and vertically;
4. Establish accountability at all levels;
5. Encourage and accept feedback from employees and be responsive, engaging.

So, what can companies do to improve and/or increase business results by providing a work environment that fosters communications, collaboration and engagement with employees and other strategic stakeholders?

1. Clearly articulate and share the company's vision, business strategies and objectives with all employees and strategic partners.
2. Provide guidance and training to ensure that employees:
 - a. Thoroughly know and understand products or services;
 - b. Properly represent the company's brand;
 - c. Provide excellent customer service/experience;
3. Institute and nurture an employee engagement program, to ensure an ongoing and transparent exchange of information, including employee feedback, executive/management responses, and implementation of valued suggestions.

According to Brad Tracy, Global Retail Segment Manager, HP, "*Successful retailers will empower associates with seamless access to real-time and relevant information.*" The information should be consistent and provided in a timely manner. With today's technology, the communications and training should be live, when and where possible, and on demand for those who require on-demand viewing, at the employee's convenience.

In Summary

In today's digital world, leading companies are embracing the practice of communicating, and engaging, with employees at all levels throughout the organization. As Dumas premised his story of the *Three Musketeers*, we too are living at a time where *one for all and all for one* has significant meaning. It is a time for everyone to be on the same page and work together; from executives and managers to employees and across departments. Technology enables enterprise-wide communications and training and statistics show that when employees are engaged and aligned with business objectives positive results are attained.



Enliten tracks industry sources to find trends and innovations relevant to the use of video and dynamic media in the enterprise space. Our experience is gained through analysis, establishing desired future states, developing cost models and business justifications and assisting with the selection of solutions and vendors to meet each customer's specific needs.

Enliten's role and value is to provide information and insight about the *what* (technology and solutions) and perspective and guidance about *how* and *why* which technology will best fit with your business objectives and content strategy.



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