



# PETRA PROCESS

ENGAGE YOUR TEAM WITH A GREAT THEME



## **ENGAGE YOUR TEAM WITH A GREAT THEME** **LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS**

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If you have ever needed a fun and engaging way to focus your team on a single goal, then this article is for you. Perhaps the best way to understand the concept of a company theme is to give some examples of great themes from Petra Coach members.

The “BOOM!” awards at Trojan Labor was a theme award program used to promote and reinforce the company’s core values. The employees developed a habit of yelling “BOOM!” when something good happened. So one quarter they decided to build a company theme around this habit. They made “BOOM!” cards that allowed employees to capture stories about instances when another employee demonstrated one of the company’s core values. They collected the completed “BOOM!” cards in a “BOOM! Box.” At the end of every week they reviewed the “BOOM!” stories from the week to select the best story and present the employee with a “BOOM!” award. The theme infused the core values with all team members and reinforced a cultural habit.

A large landscape company created The Iron Man Award – an annually reoccurring theme to support their core value of “work hard.” Each week employees or customers could nominate a team member for their “hard work.” From the weekly nominees a winner was chosen and their “hard work” story was told to the entire company. At the end of each quarter, an overall winner was chosen from the weekly. And finally, the overall winner received an Iron Man watch and their name was added to the Iron Man plaque containing all previous winners of the award. The Iron Man Award has become a permanent part of the company lore and reinforces a company core value.

"It's 5pm Somewhere" was a theme created by Parthenon Publishing to motivate employees to use their project management software called 5pm. It was a unique theme that was based around punishments. If an employee was caught not using the software, he or she was called out during the end-of-week huddle. The group would then decide the worst offender of the week. The guilty party then spun the "wheel of punishment" that contained humorous penalties, such as eating oatmeal out of a diaper or holding a sign on the street corner that said "Honk if you love 5pm" until someone honked. They recorded these punishments on video and posted them to the company blog. It certainly worked to get employees using the software and was a fun bonding time for the team.

"MCT Rock Stars" was a theme created by Music City Tents and Events to enforce its core value of "Rock Star Company Service" and its core purpose of "Giving You the Best Day of Your Life." Employees printed business cards that had their core values on them and on the other side it said, "Have the Best Day of Your Life." The company challenged its employees to give out one card per day to anyone. They set a goal of how many cards they wanted out in a quarter and tracked it on a large poster shaped like a guitar. What a brilliant way to get everyone involved in the core values, core purpose and use it as a guerrilla marketing campaign.

Don't ignore the power of reoccurring company themes. Themes that happen the same quarter every year and have a permanent place on a wall can become a powerful way to build and reinforce company culture, like The Iron Man Award.

Themes can come from company values, purpose or priorities. It is the golden triangle of themes when they come from all three like MCT Rock Stars. Some themes work so well that they start taking on a life of their own. The "BOOM! Awards" have turned into a "BOOM! Event" with "BOOM! Bucks" and customers joining in using the "BOOM!" as well.

When you start creating your theme, use the following steps:

1. **Identify where your organization needs focus.** Look at your quarterly priorities, company values and core purpose and decide where you need focus.
2. **Brainstorm and select the right theme.** I find it helpful to divide your team members into several groups and let them brainstorm theme ideas as a group. You can make it a competition to create the best theme. Evaluate the ideas based on the following: How clearly does it connect to the priority? Does it have context for all team members? Can everyone participate? Is it memorable, fun and inspiring? Does it have an emotional connection? And will it achieve the desired outcome.
3. **Determine how to make the theme come to life.** Next, decide on how to visually represent the theme and how it will be measured. An important step is to determine the final celebration of the theme.
4. **Assign a theme owner.** Select one person to be responsible for launching the theme and making sure it's executed effectively. I find that themes gain greater acceptance if the owner is NOT a part of leadership.

When you need your organization to focus on a single priority, core value or company purpose, engage your team with a fun and focused company theme.

# THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

**The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.**

## **Looking to change your business life - forever?**

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

*Gene Robinson is an entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra. Visit his blog at [www.petracoach.com](http://www.petracoach.com) for more business and leadership insight.*

### **PETRA COACH**

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