



PETRA PEOPLE

4 WAYS TO IMPROVE CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL
COMMUNICATION



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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

Team. Departments. Divisions. Silos.

Wait, what?

If you're not familiar with the jargon, "silo" is a term used in business to refer to a group of individuals within a company. Having silos within your company isn't an issue, but problems do arise when the silos become disconnected from one another, creating a "silo mentality." To quote BusinessDictionary, this is "a mindset present in some companies when certain departments or sectors do not wish to share information with others in the same company." This mentality can lead to lack of alignment, frustration among employees, duplicate work, and poor customer experiences, to name just a few of the consequences.

When teams are separated from one another, a weird competitive atmosphere develops, promoting power struggles, job protection, and politics. Communication becomes slow and disjointed throughout the organization. Everyone may be marching in the same general direction, but the plans are different for each team and no one is discussing what the outcomes should be. The company functions awkwardly instead of nimbly, which ultimately prevents growth.

Keep your internal silos healthy and thriving with these four best practices for better cross-departmental communication:

1. CLARITY STARTS AT THE TOP

Company executives and leaders must get on the same page and meet regularly about strategic goals and company priorities. They must communicate these plans often throughout the entire organization.

Working alone or within departments creates differing plans for the same goals due to differing opinions among teams, but when the leadership team communicates clearly, everyone knows exactly what the 3-5 year plan, annual plan, and quarterly priorities are. This allows the entire team to march the same path in the same direction. When teams are working together to accomplish whole-company initiatives — rather than operating compartmentally to achieve departmental goals — the needle really begins to move.

2. CREATE A SHARED CULTURE, PURPOSE, AND VALUES

Much has been written about the millennial desire to do work that makes an impact, but all generations in the workforce really want that same thing. Identifying and strengthening your company purpose gives employees a clear, shared vision, which creates an environment of trust and fosters increased sharing of information and knowledge.

Don't let visions of trust falls and awkward team-building exercises hinder you from taking the leap. Team huddles, notes of kudos, and quarterly outings are stress-free ways to build a culture of shared purpose and collaboration.

3. STREAMLINE PROJECT WORKFLOW

Many operating procedures are set up to move from department to department, dumping the work into the next silo on the checklist. This method of operation may seem to work on paper, but in reality, it is clunky and creates internal inefficiencies that lead to poor customer experiences.

Instead, create teams that are agile and collaborative. What if a designer sat in on your development projects and your developers collaborated with designers? What if your accounts payable person was involved in your sales team onboarding, so that salespeople would be working with a familiar face when collecting invoices? Your business will benefit from the diversity of thought, and your employees will thank you for distributing the workload more thoroughly.

4. MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

There's a myth that adding bean bags and ping-pong tables to the office will make employees happier and more productive. However, productive employees are happy — not the other way around.

It's important to note that "productive" isn't the same as "busy." Employees are fulfilled when they know what outcomes they are working toward and when team progress is transparent. Your teams should feel like they've had a successful day when they are reporting on key performance indicators (KPIs) and contributing to moving company priorities toward completion.

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Many CEOs and executive teams are afraid to break down silos because they worry they will lose control. However, when you connect your departments through a shared vision and culture, communication, efficient workflows, and KPIs, you actually gain control through transparency, alignment, and accountability.

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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.**

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