



# PETRA PEOPLE

**LEADERS, SHRINK YOUR THINKING:  
SMALL ACTS ADD UP**



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### **LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS**

After learning earlier this year about significant technology shortcomings affecting some business owners in Uganda, my company embarked on an initiative to address the issue.

We felt compelled to assist these Ugandan business owners because helping businesses succeed is what we do. And, from a big picture view, we know that helping small businesses succeed in a developing economy has ramifications that extend far beyond the success of individual businesses. It also benefits the many stakeholders in these businesses, such as customers, employees and the communities they serve.

See, this big picture inspired us to act — but actually making something happen requires thinking on a smaller, tactical scale. It required us to think about who, specifically, we could enlist to help us make this happen and how exactly we were going to make it happen. That is, we had to map out the incremental steps toward attaining our goal.

First, we enlisted the support of friends and colleagues, which is a relatively easy pitch because we were relying on personal relationships. That is, people donated because they know and trusted us (and maybe owed us a favor). So it was more about a personal connection than it was about the cause itself.

The next step was to reach outside of our personal networks to ask the companies we serve to donate small amounts of money toward the cause. In this case, though a personal relationship was involved, the importance of the cause also played a role. Thus far, the results have been astounding. Many of our member companies pitched in and, together, we raised enough money to purchase 20 computers for Ugandan businesses.

There's a business lesson here. Can you spot it?

Incremental steps bring about big results over time. Same in business: Success is often a culmination of many small steps over an extended period of time. This requires an unrelenting commitment to reaching a goal and the patience to be satisfied with incremental change instead of dramatic, overnight results.

It's not just any business lesson for us — it's the foundational lesson that we teach to leaders every day. Small acts may not seem like much on their own, but if you stick with it and combine them with the efforts of others, big things can and will happen.

Here are three things leaders can do to think small in order to accomplish big things:

### **1. ACKNOWLEDGE THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.**

Want to boost morale at your office? Want to be surrounded by great colleagues? Make sure to acknowledge team members' contributions.

Many small compliments are more powerful than one big gesture because they communicate consistent appreciation. It's simple: When a colleague does something that you appreciate, say so — out loud, in front of others. While the comment may seem insignificant to you, or the act daunting, these small, regular compliments have a tremendous effect on the attitudes of your team members. So be generous and genuine when dishing them out.

You'll be surprised by how empowered your team will feel as a result of your small acts. Not only will they feel appreciated and valued, but they'll also be more likely to pass it on to others. With one small act, you've jump-started an entire cultural shift.

### **2. INSPIRE YOUR TEAM.**

Acknowledgement of good deeds is crucial and helps to boost morale, but to breed actual business growth in your organization, you also need to inspire your team members.

One example of a small inspirational act could be sharing your personal story. Many leaders refrain from sharing the details of their personal histories. But being candid and vulnerable with the people in your organization helps to form meaningful bonds and will establish a relationship of trust that will make the working relationship easier — not harder.

Also, try sharing your passion with your team members. Don't hold back on sharing your vision or the bigger picture. After all, team members who realize that they share your vision will be much more likely to excel in helping make that vision a reality.

### **3. BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT NEWS.**

Just as leaders should be candid on a personal level, they should also be transparent about organizational news — good or bad.

If bad news breaks in the workplace, leaders often experience sinking morale and motivation among team members. But, when times in the trenches get tough, one surefire way to have your team members lose trust in you is to withhold vital information.

A small act that can help is being transparent about the news. Gather the entire team —yes, even those who may not seem vital to the discussion – and share the details with them. Once you're finished, offer up a time for questions and then listen (really, listen) to everyone who has concerns, whether it's an administrative assistant or a person in senior leadership. Maintaining this clarity in your organization will help to avoid excessive employee turnover when times are tough.

In sum, if you're not accustomed to thinking small about your organization, try beginning with these small steps. Then evaluate, adjust and do it again, continually refining what you do and say until thinking about others before yourself becomes a habit – a great habit that leads to a hugely productive team and long-term success. You'll always keep your long-term goals in mind, of course, to assure that the business stays on the right track. But remember that it's the small acts that win over your team members, and with these small steps big leaps are possible.

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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.**

### **PETRA COACH**

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