

What Do You Believe?

When challenged with the task of defining the core beliefs of a company, you have to look at not the what of what you do, but the why. This fascinating video on TED.com by Simon Sinek: entitled, “How great leaders inspire action” was the stimulus for defining the core beliefs of DrawSuccess.

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action.html

The lecture discusses the importance of identifying the Why – How – What of what people and organizations do what they do. Sinek asks, “Why do you get out of bed in the morning – and why should anyone care?”

The result of watching the video numerous times turned into a list of beliefs. Some simple, some inspiring, some a bit controversial and some maybe even breakthrough.

Before reading the rest of this article, take a couple of minutes to ponder your answer to the following questions:

- What do you believe in?
- What is the purpose of your role as a learning leader?
- Why do you do what you do? And why should anyone care?

The following is my list of beliefs for our company. We would love your thoughts and comments. (See the link at the bottom of the article).

We Believe - that "to educate" means "to draw out."

The Latin word “educare” is translated as “to draw out.” For many learning professionals, this is a radical idea. Most training is more about “putting in” information than it is about drawing out. But for our company (DrawSuccess) we believe in this oft-forgotten approach. Instead of teaching, we learn from (or draw out) the learning from the participants in our classes.

We Believe – that learning not only can be fun, it MUST be fun.

Wow. What a concept. Fun mandatory? Absolutely. Fun ensures engagement. It creates a safer environment for opening up and sharing. It keeps the energy flowing. It solidifies retention with an emotional anchor. It builds relationships. And it’s simply more enjoyable – for the facilitator as well as the participants.

We Believe - your employees are an untapped wealth of knowledge.

Inside every organization there is a goldmine of intelligence, experience and information. So, how about, instead of giving them more information, you set about creating programs to tap this incredible wealth of knowledge? The result can be remarkable ideas and solutions for your organization. New products, improved processes and solutions for overcoming obstacles are just a few of the opportunities.

We Believe – people can solve their own problems, if given the right tools.

Which is more empowering: a manager who tells you what to do, or a leader who empowers you to solve your own problems? In which situation are you more likely to retain what you learned? The key is to have the right program, product and/or process that creates an environment for problem-solving.

We Believe – the solution for Diversity & Inclusion is facilitating open discussion.

In the training world, Diversity & Inclusion is a specialized area, often comprised of “dos and don’ts” to adhere to specific legal requirements. But isn’t it more likely to be true that dissention comes from lack of *understanding* than lack of knowledge? Creating a safe forum for opening up discussion is a much more effective way of producing an environment with awareness and acceptance.

We Believe - the way to sustainable results is through Ownership.

Which class would be more interesting? One where an “expert” lectures on the qualities of an effective leader, or one where a facilitator asks the question and opens up the discussion with the participants, who come up with a definition they can all agree on? And which program would you be more enthusiastic about: one that was given to you, or own you helped co-create? When an idea is yours, you own it. And when you own it, you take action on it.

We Believe – in building a culture of Accountability.

How do you define Accountability? How do your colleagues define it? Accountability, like beauty, is often “in the eye of the beholder.” To one person, it may mean keeping commitments. To another it may be defined as equal contribution. And to another it may relate to behaviors like accepting responsibility or treating others with respect. Therefore, the “rules of engagement” regarding Accountability must be clear and uniformly accepted – and part of an organization’s culture. And while OD experts may suggest that it takes years to change a culture, I disagree – because I’ve seen it happen in a miraculously short period of time.

We Believe – training without results is like a race without a finish line.

If you were the CEO of your company, what would be your primary objective? Maximizing shareholder value by achieving the goals of the organization, right? If you failed to get results, you would be replaced. So, it should be no surprise that the chief executive of your organization is looking for the same levels of measurement from the training department. The most meaningful results are ones that can be measured by either topline sales or bottom-line profit. Keeping this in mind will make sure your training is adding quantifiable value to the organization.

We Believe – the first (and most crucial) step is to know yourself.

Plato’s simple creed, “know thyself” speaks volumes. Everything we hear, learn and do is filtered by our own perceptions. Unless we know and understand these filters, we can never really learn anything new, and we certainly won’t effectively change our behavior. In this time of new year’s resolutions, we need to first be aware of *why* engage in the behaviors we want to change before we can have any hope of keeping these commitments.

We Believe – Training must be experiential to have a lasting effect.

As learning leaders, we all know the importance of engaging the five learning styles: auditory, kinesthetic, visual, metacognitive and social/emotional. To “lock-in” the learning, integrate all five styles into an experience where the participants are directly involved and able to reflect, conceptualize and analyze and then make decisions and plans based on this experience.

We Believe - in Innovation at all levels.

Ideas can come from anywhere and everywhere. Mailroom attendants can have incredible ideas for new products. Shop workers may be able to save the company significant bank. And store clerks may hold the solution to the problems that are keeping your organization from achieving greatness. I say “may,” because unless there is an interesting, safe and engaging way to prompt these ideas, either they could be lost forever – or move on to your competition.

We Believe – that together we can change the world!

The other day I explained to an influential business leader that my company’s mission statement is to “change the world in a fun and profitable way.” His first reaction was to kind of roll his eyes. He said that people won’t change unless they want to change. Of course, he’s right. Or is he? I responded by telling a story of a man who started the day with defiance and self-righteousness and ended the day with a profound self-awareness and commitment to change his life. (Which he did – much to the surprise and delight of his co-workers). The goal of all training is to change, don’t you agree?

You can change the world. We all can. Believe it.

Let’s make 2012 is the year of Believing!

Let us know what you think about our Beliefs – and what you Believe in.

<http://drawsuccess.com/beliefs-values/>

Thanks!

- Brownell Landrum