

Hello. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in. As always, we're interested in your comments, topics potentially for future blogs, and then subscribe to our YouTube channel so you never, ever, ever miss another blog. Thanks very much!

This week I want to talk about a terrific book – “Making Vision Stick” by Andy Stanley. Andy is a minister for one of the big churches around, and obviously in a church, you seem like your vision ought to be really clear, but it's not always. That's what he talks about in this book. It's only about 70 pages. It's a short read, but it's really powerful. Obviously, the shorter the book, the more concise the message, which I kind of like. Maybe my next book should be 70 pages.

Anyway, so, the main thing he asks in this book is how do you make your vision sticky, because we talk about vision, mission and values all the time in these blogs. Then, me too, me as a leader and I'm sure you as a leader you think, "Well gosh, we put all this time and effort into it, how come nobody else really believes in this vision and this mission the way I do? How come it's not as close to their hearts as it is for me?"

Andy says, "Hey man, look. That's not the fault of the followers. That's the fault of the leaders." I agree with that, so we have to point the finger of blame at ourselves as leaders. If our team doesn't have that mission and vision deeply embedded in their hearts the way we do, that's our fault as leaders, not their fault as followers.

Having said that, let me tell you a story about one of our consultants, Bundy Bundesman who used to be with a wonderful firm, I'll tell the story some time about McDevitt and Street, but McDevitt and Street was started by Bob Street. He was the principle owner. Bundy was actually running the southern California office at the time. He got a strange call from Bob, who was his best friend, and it was kind of a cold call. Bob said, "Bundy, I need you in my office in Charlotte at 8:00 tomorrow morning."

Well, Bundy had to hop a red eye and come back to the east coast and ended up in Charlotte in Bob's office the next morning at 8:00. Bob's assistant greeted him. Again, they were good friends, but it was a very cold meeting. She keeps him waiting for a few minutes. He goes in Bob's office, and Bob sits down and he looks at him and he says, "Bundy, I called a superintendent on one of your job sites in southern California yesterday, and he couldn't recite our company mission statement. Can you believe that?"

Bundy was on his heels, obviously. He said, "Well, Bob, I can believe it, but it'll never happen again." Bob said, "Good," and dismissed him, and that was the entire meeting. He paid for a guy to travel all the way from the west coast on a last-minute ticket and back home again to the west coast for the simple reason to impart that you as the leader of that office out west, you need to make sure that every single person has that mission close to their hearts, and that was a lesson Bundy never forgot. You can bet that superintendent never forgot it either, and it's a lesson that I have not forgotten.

Andy says that time is hard on your vision. Growth adds complexity, and complexity adds distractions, and we kind of get away from our vision of what our company should look like. He says that your vision is what your

company could and should be. Life is right this minute, life is the urgent stuff, the stuff that's just hounding you and vying for your attention. The vision is the big picture, but it's what you want your company..how you envision what your company should be like, rather than how it is at this very moment in time.

Five rules for how to make your vision stick according to Andy Stanley. The first thing is, make it really simple and make it memorable. I'm going to give you an example of what we hope is a memorable vision statement, and I want you to send me yours, too. I would like to see yours. I'd like to see what creativity is out there among our audience, so feel free to send it to me in the comments below.

At FBI, our vision is real simple. We are the company that family businesses turn to for a better life. As simple as that. That is our vision, not for how we are. We're not as omnipresent among family businesses as we would like, but that's our vision for what we want the company to be in the future. That's our aspirational vision for the company. Hopefully you've got a memorable vision statement that you can share with us.

The second thing is cast it convincingly. Every vision, according to Andy Stanley, is a solution to a problem. Your vision statement should have something of a problem-solving element to it. In our case, a better life for family businesses. That's what we want you to have. What do you want in life, really, as a family business leader? You want two things. A prosperous company and a harmonious family. You know, that's what we want to be able to give to people, and that's what our vision imparts.

The third thing, repeat it regularly, and this is what we don't do often enough as leaders. We worry about being redundant and saying the same thing over and over, but you have to do that, especially as your company grows and you have more complexity and more people and more new faces and more new systems and all that kind of stuff. The vision is simple, and so you should be able to recite it regularly and talk about it regularly as a group. Otherwise, it'll get buried in all those distractions and all the immediate stuff.

You should celebrate your vision, the fourth point. A great question that he asks, and let me get this right is, what happened in the last week that made you feel we made progress in our mission to, whatever your mission is? Asking rank and file people, people that maybe are closer or farther away from customers than you are, what happened in the last week to make you feel like we furthered our mission to do something?

Then he also talks about how to do this. Verbally is one way, talk about it all the time is one thing. You can also send people notes, you can use it in your email communications, you can make your vision ... Communication is more than just verbal today of course, so by all means in all your forms of company communication, talk about your vision.

Then finally, the fifth thing and maybe the most important thing is, you've got to embrace the vision personally. You have got to live your vision as the leader. If you're not, if you're saying, "We're going to be 100% honest in all our dealings," and then you go and try to cheat on your taxes or screw over a vendor or not pay somebody on time or something like that, then you're not living, you're not embodying those values. People, as you've

heard me say many times, people respond much more energetically to the things they see you doing rather than the things they hear you saying. If you're not going to live your vision, by all means, forget about it, because it's not going to be genuine, it's not going to be authentic.

Finally, let me finish up with one of the ways we started. You're responsible as the leader for making your vision stick. It's not the responsibility of your followers to push it up the chain, it's you pushing it down the chain as the leader. If your vision means anything to you, by all means, put in the time and the effort in your organization to make your vision stick and that's the name of the book, Making Vision Stick, Andy Stanley. Get it, it's a great little read, enjoy it. Let me have your comments. I would love to hear what your vision statements are. The creativity among our audience is wonderful, so I'd love to see that. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks very much.