

Building a Transparent Open-Book Company: 3 Things Every Entrepreneur Needs To Know

By Ruth Schwartz



Because the old model of management often results in a disconnect between the employer and the employee, now is the time to consider making a shift that will not only benefit employees, but ultimately have a positive impact on your company's bottom line. Whether you run a multi-million dollar company or are a first-time entrepreneur, how you think about aspects of your business can make a huge difference in the outcomes you achieve.

Transparency in business means changing the way we think about aspects of our business such as determining who gets raises, how employees are evaluated, the channels of communication within the company, when meetings are held and how they are run, the role and responsibilities of employees, and who has access to the company financials. Shifts in each of these areas constitute the stepping stones for escaping the paternal hierarchy of traditional business, and building a transparent company where everyone from the bottom up has a chance to thrive. The shift in thinking begins with making small changes.

Articulate a clear, compelling mission and vision.

If you are able to articulate something that really speaks to you and you are able to put it in writing, you then have the basis of strategic thinking that will serve you for the lifetime of your business. In simple terms, the mission is who you are and the vision is where you are going. They are the foundation of your business; the reason all of your decisions are made; what keeps you aligned and on track. They are your guides in navigating various problems and obstacles that are bound to arise. Communicating your mission and vision is critical to every company's success.

Hold open, consensus –building meetings.

Staff meetings are a time for opinions, problem solving, discussion, consensus, and decision making. They are a time for sharing and for input. In a transparent company, meetings are a time to come together, to bring your knowledge, and be a part of the conversation. When meetings are run in this manner, people are excited to be there because they are contributing to the larger conversation. When meetings are run well, everyone knows what to expect and they save topics, ideas, and issues to share.

Create a Team to Manage Everything.

Employees thrive when a passionate team experience is created. This occurs when everyone in the team is working together to attain the company's mission and vision. There is a huge difference between working with and for someone. In a transparent company, your team is working with you and by default the greater good. When employees feel like family something magical happens. People aren't just doing a job, they're choosing to be involved.

By clearly creating and stating your company's mission and vision and repeating it often so employees know what is expected of them, they see their part in the whole and understand their value to the business. Open, consensus-building meetings give everyone a chance to speak their mind, to share what they know and to be appreciated for their contribution, whatever it may be. As a result of the first two actions, people begin working together where they can make a difference. Making changes in these three areas means entrepreneurs and executives alike will begin to experience a shift in the way they do business. The result—a positive impact on the bottom line and the beginning of a process that will lead them away from being a slave to their business.

Ruth Schwartz started Mordam Records in 1983. By the time Nirvana hit the pop charts and Green Day went platinum, Schwartz was running a ten million-dollar company. In 2012 Schwartz chronicles her success in *The Key to the Golden Handcuffs – Stop Being a Slave to Your Business*. Published by Outskirts Press, and based on Schwartz' business experience, the book gives entrepreneurs and business executives insight into shifts that can be made to create a transparent, open-book company. Today, Schwartz is an internationally certified business coach, motivational speaker, and the facilitator of business peer advisory boards. She owns High Performance Advocates, a management development and marketing company. Contact Ruth through www.highperformanceadvocates.com or by calling 530.288.0180.