



The Power of Purpose

“My Job is to Put a Man on the Moon”



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With a PhD in Leadership Coaching, Paul is widely known in British leadership and performance development. Hugely experienced in research, analytics and design and delivery of leadership, resilience and high-performing teams, Paul is one of Delta V's finest senior consultants.

Aim

To discuss the role of core purpose and purpose driven leadership in an organisational context and consider the rationale for organisations utilising such a visionary leadership approach to transform their business performance.

Approach

To undertake a literature review to identify and relate evidence-based research findings to practical strategies on how core purpose driven leadership can be lived throughout an organisation to achieve transformational change and high performance.

Findings

The case for core purpose driven leadership within organisations is growing through an increasing number of research case studies across the globe. Whilst the idea of core purpose driven leadership is compelling, bringing the idea to life is challenging. Evidence based approaches are emerging, which if followed, will enable organisations to overcome the challenges of implementation and benefit from a core purpose driven approach.

White Paper Summary

Today more than ever, people are looking for a sense of purpose. People want to feel they are doing something worthwhile and valuable. Having a meaningful clear Purpose aligned to Purpose Driven Leadership drives customer and employee commitment, trust and loyalty.

Paul Turner, Director of Portfolio and Markets at DeltaV explores number of key questions in his White Paper entitled “My Job is to Help Put a Man on the Moon - Releasing the Power of Purpose Driven Leadership”. With an outstanding track record of business success as an Executive responsible for multi-channel, customer service and HR, Paul moved into consultancy and coaching in 2006. He gained his PhD in organisational leadership behaviour in 2011.

His latest Whitepaper recognises that making ‘Why?’ the most used word in strategy debates is a powerful driver of aspirational change. The relatively modern-day fascination in shareholder value has created an obsession with short term objectives and a reduced focus on long term purpose. He questions if the time has arrived for a rebalancing of the financial equation between the present and the future.

How many employees are emotionally engaged with their organisation’s core purpose? How many organisations even have a core purpose? Paul explores the theme that core purpose can be driven by past legacy or future aspirations. Why does the organisation’s existence matter? What is the value to its customers? What creates passion in the organisation? What can the organisation excel at? He proposes and presents evidence that by creating a core purpose, organisations can increase their commitment levels, amongst both employees and customers, enabling them to drive growth and take advantage of new markets and opportunities.

So, how can those organisations that have created a core purpose, maximise their value and deliver the Leadership Message through core purpose driven leadership?

The Role of Core Purpose

Core purpose driven leadership has been with us from the earliest days of our evolution. There is a strong, rich thread of core purpose running throughout thousands of years of our history where it was played out in tribes, armies, religions and governments. In more recent times there have been many outstanding examples of core purpose playing a central role in an organisational context. There was John Cadbury who opened his first shop in Bull Street, Birmingham in 1824 with a core purpose of creating a healthy and delicious alternative to alcohol (it was not until his sons, Richard and George, took over the business in 1861 that the social vision of Bourneville emerged and the creation of an industrial factory in a garden village rather than in a squalid and depressing inner-city

area). Walt Disney, who started trading in the 1920s, summed up his mantra in just four words 'To Make People Happy'. Hewlett and Packard in 1938 set out to make technical contributions for the advancement and welfare of humanity. In the 1960s Sam Walton of Walmart started his business with a core purpose that all people should have access to low cost value for money goods. In the 1970s Apple was founded by Steve Wozniak who thought everyone should have a computer to enrich their life and Steve Jobs who wanted to take on its established competitors and shake up the status quo. Howard Schultz of Starbucks was so impressed by the social driven aspect of Italian coffee houses on a visit to Italy in the 1980s that he transformed the company through his desire to offer people a great social experience. The common denominator? Each exemplar focused firstly on the why (purpose) before developing the what (product).

Walt Disney, who started trading in the 1920s, summed up his mantra in just four words 'To Make People Happy'

Yet despite many great examples of core purpose driven success the vast majority of companies today continue to focus solely on what they do and how they do it. Yes, these aspects are important but not before asking the question 'why?'. Making 'Why?' the most used word in strategy debates powerful driver of aspirational change. The relatively modern-day

fascination in shareholder value has created an obsession with short term objectives and a reduced focus on long term purpose. Has the time arrived for a rebalancing of the financial equation between the present and the future? It seems so. Victor Frankl in his book 'Man's Search for Meaning', first published in 1946, told the story of his life in concentration camps between 1942 and 1945. Frankl's mantra was that meaning can be found at all times, even in suffering, and he found that those prisoners who held to a meaningful vision managed better than those that did not.

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (Leiter, B., 2013) summed up this approach in the sentence 'He who has a 'why' to live can bear with almost any how'. In an organisational sense the search for meaning plays out against a changing business landscape which challenges those involved to change and adapt without, fortunately, such life-threatening circumstances. However, a sense of purpose and meaning can help facilitate personal change and development amongst workforces.

For a moment just think about postal delivery workers. Their job is to deliver letters from A to B. A very small cog in a massive postal delivery machine. Such a job with its routine repetitiveness may create motivational challenges. I have experienced throughout my life postal workers who have let the job shape their behaviour going about their duties in a demotivated way. Yet I have also, more memorably, met postal workers who have shaped the job through a purpose driven approach building community links, connecting people and bringing a smile to the faces of all those they meet. They were driven by the why rather than the what. How many employees are being shaped by their roles rather than them doing the shaping? How many employees are emotionally engaged with their

organisation's core purpose? How many organisations even have a core purpose? Without a core purpose, an organisation (and its employees) does not know its reason for being nor why it exists.

By creating a core purpose an organisation sets out to fulfil its purpose, achieve its vision and deliver its mission through their chosen business channels in a value driven way.

The Case for Core Purpose

The evidence for core purpose continues to build. Recent research by Jim Stengel, built on the evidence in his book *Grow: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World's Greatest Companies* (2011); studied 50 purpose driven organisations and concluded that they significantly outperformed the Standard & Poor 500 market - 382.3% increase compared to a loss of 7.99% for the S & P 500 benchmark average (2013). In the 'soft' measure of employee engagement, purpose also wins out with employees citing a compelling purpose as an 'extra mile' motivator and loyalty builder. Woods (2012) reports on a study of 4,000 employees in which two-thirds of employees said that purpose is second most important to pay, and they would go 'the extra mile' for an organisation with an underlying ethos that goes beyond commercial and career progression.

The evidence for core purpose driven leadership continues to build. James Heskett and John Kotter (1992) found that companies with purpose and values-based cultures achieved 400% higher revenues, 700% greater job growth and 1200% higher stock prices than those without. In their book, *Built to Last*, James Collins and Jerry Poras (1994, 1996) evidenced that purpose driven organisations outperformed the general market and comparison companies by 15:1 and 6:1 respectively. They followed this with later research that led them to assert that companies which enjoy enduring success have a core purpose and values that remain fixed whilst their business strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world.

Nikos Mourkkogiannis (2006) makes a powerful case for the purpose driven organisation highlighting that organisational purpose generally fits into one of four categories: discovery (new and innovative); excellence (service and quality); heroism (brave and world changing) and altruism (value for money and social/life improvements). Raj Sisodia, Jag Sheth and David Wolfe (2007) showed how prioritising employees' and customers' needs ahead of shareholders' desires leads to faster stock market growth than conventional competitors through creating purpose and passion to achieve profit.

When it is considered that 40% of an organisation's brand reputation is determined by its purpose and the other 60% by performance this clearly shows the importance of purpose to brand (Burson- Marsteller, 2013). John Baldoni (2012) researched leaders from a variety of fields and found that sustainable success is achieved by ensuring the purpose of an organisation is clearly understood by all and runs like a thread throughout its culture.

A sense of purpose is increasingly recognised as essential for business and personal success (London Business School, 2011) and a strong and well communicated corporate purpose is associated with up to 17% better financial performance (Burson-Marsteller/IMD, 2010). Yet only 40% of employees understand their organisation's strategy (Accenture, 2010). In research involving 20 of the world's leading companies, it was found that transparency around purpose is critical internally and externally; corporate purpose grows in importance at times of organisational transformation (i.e. change of leadership, following a merger and for re-establishing and refreshing a brand) and crisis; and that there was a strong corporate belief in the power of a core purpose and related vision, values and behaviours (Burson-Marsteller/IMD, 2013). An organisation's purpose shows up in its brand, products, services and customer experiences. Core purpose can be driven by past legacy or future aspirations. When an organisation decides on a concrete purpose that fills a gap in the marketplace then high performance will follow. Critical questions may include: Why does the organisation's existence matter? What is the value to its customers? What creates passion in the organisation? What can the organisation excel at?

Purpose driven organisations outperform the general market and comparison companies by 15:1 and 6:1 respectively. 40% of an organisation's brand reputation is determined by its purpose. A strong and well communicated corporate purpose is associated with up to 17% better financial purpose.

Martin Luther King joined the ranks of those who have shaped America when he spoke the immortal words 'I Have a dream...' King did not say 'I have a plan...'

At DeltaV, our Leadership Message process facilitates the creation of a core purpose and the supporting vision, mission, channels and values. This forces leadership teams to make hard decisions about what the organisation stands for, by articulating the difference a business makes to its people, its customers and to the world. Creating a core purpose means organisations can communicate not just what they do and how they do it but why they're doing it.

In the book 'Start with Why', Simon Sinek asserts that people don't buy what you do; they buy into why you do it. By focusing on the 'why' first, organisations and leaders can engage and motivate their people before moving on to what and how they will do it (Sinek, 2010). Martin Luther King joined the ranks of those who have shaped America when he spoke the immortal words 'I have a dream...' King did not say 'I have a plan...'

So, the evidence continues to build and the case for core purpose continues to strengthen. Whilst at DeltaV we keep up to date with new research in this area, we also have the

privilege and pleasure of seeing our client purpose driven organisations in every day action. We take great pride in their achievements, whether in the private sectors of retail and banking or the public and social sectors of defence, government and housing. All of them chose to create or refresh their Leadership Message.

They realised that a core purpose gave their people a rallying cry and generated passion and inspiration based on their emotional as well as tangible USP. By creating a core purpose supported by a vision, mission, channels and values on one page they increased their organisational commitment levels, amongst both employees and customers and further built their brand power enabling them to drive growth and take advantage of new markets and opportunities.

This is what DeltaV's Leadership Message methodology is designed to achieve – a one-page strategic overview of why, what and how, which has the potential to engage and sustain a purpose driven culture. Igniting and sustaining that potential then requires leadership behaviour (including compelling personal and corporate communications) to be aligned to the Leadership Message.

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Aligning Purpose Driven Leadership to the Leadership Message

Once a Leadership Message (including core purpose) has been created and shared the next step is to make it come alive. This requires an emotional bridge to be built between the Leadership Message and leadership behaviour. Why? Leadership behaviour drives and sustains employee engagement and performance. The number one predictor of employee engagement and performance is a positive view of leadership behaviour. Relational awareness skills in leadership teams is important to creating a positive perception of leadership, increased employee engagement and higher performance (Turner, P.S., 2012). 88% of highly engaged employees believe they can positively impact the quality of their organisation's products; only 38% of disengaged employees think so (Towers Perrin, 2008). According to Julian Birkinshaw of MLab and London Business School 'you cannot foster true innovation without engaged employees' yet only 4% of UK workers exhibit the highest level of engagement with their work (MacLeod, D. and Clarke, N., 2009). So how can those organisations which have created a core purpose, maximise its value and deliver the Leadership Message through core purpose driven leadership? Once an organisation has clearly articulated its core purpose the purpose driven leader can build their own personal links to it and work out how they and their team and peers can make a difference to an organisation's products, services and brand.

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To achieve this requires a transformational leadership approach which inspires and motivates all within the organisation to achieve it. This in turn requires self-aware leaders. 'Nosce teipsum' or 'know thyself' has been a philosophical thread throughout history. Yet very often there is a lack of self-awareness at the highest corporate levels. This is evidenced by research which found that leadership teams with high self-awareness deliver

a higher rate of stock market performance. Specifically, poor performing companies had 20% more leadership blind spots and were likely to have lower self-awareness levels than high performing companies. Poor performing companies' employees were 79 percent more likely to have low overall self-awareness than those at organisations with a robust return on revenue. Stock performance was tracked for over two years. During that period the companies with the greater percentage of self-aware employees consistently outperformed those with a lower percentage (Zes, D. and Landis, D., 2013).

Self-aware leaders are able to focus their energy on purpose and therefore take purposeful action (which is a powerful combination of energy and focus). Yet only 10% of managers take purposeful action. Of the remainder, 30% of managers procrastinate, 20% show detached behaviour and 40% exhibit distracted unfocused behaviour (Ghosal, S. and Bruch, H., 2004). A low level of personal self-awareness in an organisational leadership pool, therefore, needs to be addressed if a purpose driven leadership approach is to be aligned to a Leadership Message. So apart from high self-awareness what makes a purpose driven leader? Purpose driven leaders show certain characteristics such as being highly positive, organised, self-directive and adaptive (Seligman, M.E.P. and Csikszentmihalyi, M., 2000) as well as highly resilient (Maddi, S., 2002), goal oriented (Dweck, C., 1986) and have high self-efficacy (Bandura, A., 1991). Intelligence (IQ) whilst important is less important than the ability to engage people emotionally – EQ (Ackerman, P. L., 1994; 1996).

Through our work at DeltaV with business and sports leaders we have noted all of these qualities in purpose driven leaders. Additionally, we have observed that great purpose driven leaders are keen to push the boundaries; create a compelling focus on one key area rather than several; accept and give feedback; proactively manage risk whilst displaying confidence in achievement; learn from failure; are incredibly customer focused; lead people and manage process and are positive and passionate about what they are doing and why they're doing it. They also set BHAGs (big, hairy audacious goals). Their sense of purpose spreads around their leadership team and employees and creates a growing sense of belief in their ability to achieve their ambitious goals.

Purpose Driven Leadership – Making it Happen

Trust in businesses is at its lowest ebb for many years. The major challenge for organisations today is to build customer/employee trust and loyalty. Great organisations have high customer/employee trust and loyalty levels. Today more than ever, people are looking for a sense of purpose. Purpose driven organisations which inspire trust gain a huge competitive advantage. But to be a purpose driven organisation requires purpose driven leaders. The most successful leaders balance personal ambition with wider responsibility. Generally, those who succeed in the long term have a broader vision to add value to a greater cause. Self-interest is there but so is a recognition that other interests are important too. Purpose leads to an optimal performance-flow.

Leaders are stewards of organisational energy and are responsible for aligning individual and organisational purpose (Loehr, J. and Schawtz, T., 2003). At DeltaV we work with leadership teams to create high organisational energy and a high-performance flow directed towards achieving their vision, mission and goals. When employees are challenged and engaged they are able to release their potential to take them into high performance flow territory. However, if the business challenge increases without employee potential being released then this will eventually result in poor performance and failure.

To create a greater performance flow requires organisations to articulate their purpose by asking why they are in business and what difference they want to make. By doing so, a purpose driven culture can be fostered. Employees don't get truly inspired by just talking about profits. Employees do get inspired by a compelling purpose. To achieve the higher levels of performance envisioned within their Leadership Message the business challenge increases which requires employee performance to increase also. Whilst transactional measures such as cost cutting can work in the short term, the only medium to long term winning solution is business growth through sales and services. Purpose driven transformational leadership can deliver this step change in growth through engaging an organisation's people and releasing their unused potential.

We help organisations do this through the Full Range Leadership (FRL) model which codifies the leadership behaviours required to transform an organisation's performance and tracks increases in released employee potential (discretionary effort) through the application of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire or MLQTM, a 360-feedback tool (Avolio, B.J., 2010; Avolio, B.J. and Bass, B.M., 2004; Bass, B.M., 1985; Bass, B.M. and Avolio, B.J., 1993, 1997; Bass, B.J. and Riggio, R.E., 2006).

The MLQTM is widely regarded as the global benchmark measure for transformational leadership 360 feedback survey tools, being the most researched and validated transformational leadership model in use (Turner, P.S., 2013). The transformational styles

described by the FRL model and measured by MLQTM are highly correlated with leadership success and this enables organisations to achieve a high-performance culture through focused leadership development.

Our leadership development approaches are designed to create a coherent approach by fostering a collective sense of purpose. To do this, we utilise our purpose driven PTO development programme across all levels of the organisation, from the Executive Team down, to ensure a tipping point is reached quickly. The PTO development programme focuses on aligning personal purpose to overarching team purposes, creating a strong cross-functional team and a coherent, purpose-driven culture. The programme thus creates a clear focus by which to organise leadership priorities and activities.

In most organisations there is strong focus on task driven behaviour, which has the effect of suppressing a focus on personal and team development and effectiveness. Task is less emotional and therefore easier to deal with. Managers can plan, organise, structure and measure performance outputs without having to look in the mirror too deeply or consider their impact on the people around them. Compliant and relatively effective organisations can be managed with a transactional focus and reasonable performance can be achieved. This may be just enough if the business environment is routine and stable,

however in a changing, demanding and competitive business landscape such an approach leads to failure or at the very least suboptimal profits. In order to have any meaningful debate or true alignment and commitment based on core purpose, it is essential that the leadership team develops a collective consciousness, strong sense of team and delivers a coherent message which is found to facilitate behavioural change (Rock, D., 2006). This requires a developed sense of self awareness and team effectiveness, which at DeltaV we facilitate through our PTO leadership development and coaching model to leverage culture change transformation and deliver step change increases in ROI. The PTO model creates a discipline in terms of defining and progressing purpose driven goals.

Whilst it is readily accepted that a sense of purpose is proven to be critical to high achievement, there is often a lack of focus on purpose within organisations. Indeed, very few leaders and managers use purpose driven techniques whether in their personal or business lives. Yet defining purpose, creating a vision, identifying goals and tracking progress clearly pays off. In the book 'What they don't teach you at Harvard Business School', Mark McCormack (1984) refers to a story about a research study involving students participating in the Harvard MBA programme. Students in the class of 1979 were asked the question 'Have you set clear written goals for your future and made plans to

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accomplish them?'. Only 3% of the graduates had written goals and plans; 13% had goals, but they were not in writing and 84% had no specific goals at all.

Ten years later, the graduate participants were interviewed again, and the story goes that the 13% of the class who had goals were earning, on average, twice as much as the 84% who had no goals at all. Yet even more astounding was that the 3% who had clear written goals earned on average ten times as much as the other 97% put together. What more proof is needed to show the power and value of purpose driven approaches? The only problem is that despite this story having gone around the world millions of times there is no evidence available to suggest any such research study happened. It appears to be an urban myth as no evidence of the actual research study has emerged despite the investigations of many researchers.

So why do we, at DeltaV, still believe in the power of purpose centred leadership? Well, much research since the 1970s has supported the Harvard story (despite it being a myth!). In particular Dr Gail Mathews of the Dominican University of California undertook a research project aimed at testing the principles of purpose driven behaviour by asking participants to write down goals, committing to action and being personally accountable. The research study concluded that those who have a written shared purpose and related goals achieved significantly more than those who do not. Furthermore, publicly committing to their purpose through the sharing of their goals was proven to be beneficial to their achievements. So, like many a fable or old wives' tale the urban myth is correct although the evidence base needed to be found elsewhere!

Another well-known story tells of how when President Kennedy visited the NASA rocket launch base in Florida, he asked a cleaner what his job was; the cleaner replied, 'My job is to help put a man on the moon.' Whether true or not, the story illustrates the cleaner's complete alignment with NASA's purpose, mission, aims and strategy. That is the level of personal clarity and focus our PTO programme delivers.

Those who have a written shared purpose and related goals achieve significantly more than those who do not.

To learn more about how DeltaV Partners, specialists in bespoke Organisation Purpose programmes, can help your people, please get in touch on [020 7769 6882](tel:02077696882) or hello@deltavpartners.com

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