



THRIVING BUSINESS COMMUNITY

5 tips to become a Thriving Business Community

Tip 1

Encourage and enhance self-leadership

Can you imagine learning to look at patterns that do not serve you, and learning to consciously create new possibilities for yourself?

Self-leaders have a drive for autonomy, can make (better) decisions, are more creative and persevere, even when facing challenges. Self-leadership is more fundamental and considerably more powerful than leadership. In order to be an effective leader of others, we must become a leader of ourselves.

Studies in various settings, from the educational domain to the airline industry, demonstrate that when employees effectively practice self-leadership, it can lead to multiple benefits such as improved job satisfaction, self-efficacy and mental performance.¹ Self-leadership involves “leading oneself” via the utilization of both behavioral and mental techniques, which include self-observation, examination and alteration of self-dialogue, beliefs and assumptions.

Employees’ autonomy during work processes will also lead to higher levels of customer service and will also create a feeling of fulfillment among employees.² Our *greytogreen* module addresses thought patterns and habits in one’s thinking, effectively developing the participants’ ability to consider alternative perspectives and develop successful outcomes for themselves and their companies.

“In business and in their personal lives, many people who are having trouble accomplishing goals suffer quietly by assuming the worst. They think they don’t have the power to do anything about it and refuse to ask for the help they need. Effective self-leaders are able to avoid self-defeating beliefs, leverage their points of power, and collaborate with others—resulting in goal achievement, independence, and the ability to lead others more effectively.”

Ken Blanchard

On a scale from 1 (*not present at all*) to 10 (*completely integrated*), to what extent have you already integrated Tip 1 in your company? Honestly? Please take a moment to reflect upon this and then circle your answer:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Tip 2

Employees' and managers' continuous development is a crucial ingredient for a company's success

Can you imagine a company culture where everyone feels that they are continuously growing, both personally and professionally?

A company where everyone, from management to the concierge, truly thrives and infuses their lively presence in their activities, will attract business and attention, because that 'alive-ness' is transmittable.

Research was conducted on successful organisations who are built around the conviction that the organisation can only prosper if its company culture is designed to enable ongoing development for all its people. Their vision is that a company cannot meet ever-greater business aspirations unless its people are constantly growing through doing their work. In such an environment, everyday situations and meetings provide a context to make progress and overcome individual blindspots – behaviours or ways in which you are prone to self-sabotage and limit your own effectiveness at work.³

The environment created by a focus on development in the workplace that is universal (across all ranks and functions in the organisation) and continuous (and therefore habitual) unleashes some surprising qualities: compassion alongside tough-minded introspection and organisational solidarity that comes from collective work at self-improvement. This creates a different kind of vitality at work: a work and life integrated rather than balanced against each other.⁴

Employee performance is closely related to both intrinsic factors (training level, motivation degree, personal expectations, and attitudes) and extrinsic factors (the work environment). In order to work properly, any employee needs a working environment that creates optimal conditions for personal and professional development. Continuous training and learning is vital for the success of the organisation and can help build employee loyalty, thus the periodic organisation of trainings and personal development programs is essential.⁵

On a scale from 1 (*not present at all*) to 10 (*completely integrated*), to what extent have you already integrated Tip 2 in your company? Honestly? Please take a moment to reflect upon this and then circle your answer:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Tip 3

Embrace the 'Strength-Based Approach'

Can you imagine that your intrinsic motivation drives you and enhances the satisfaction and joy in your job?

When a person is in a role that plays to their greatest strengths, they are much more engaged in their job and will be much more productive. Strength-based development focuses on one's strengths, but it does not ignore one's weaknesses. It suggests overcoming weaknesses by utilizing or optimizing our strengths, which can reduce our resistance to change. It is an active and energizing approach.

When working on a weakness, you need to work a lot harder and longer to bring about a little change – whereas when you work on strength, a little work yields a lot of change.

"It is the abilities, not the disabilities that count."

Peter Drucker

This strength-based approach means people must first discover their strengths, and then develop and apply them. It also includes a focus on a person's interests. Having a deep passion for one's job is the essence of employee engagement. When you get someone with the right talents in the right position, with a deep passion for their work, the next thing you can do is to help them continue to develop their talents.

That is, you can help them achieve and maintain a high level of performance. A central idea of strength-based development is to identify your most powerful talents, and then enhance them with skills and knowledge. ⁶ This process requires a good deal of introspection and self-knowledge, a discovery of your talents and passion, offered by our *greytogreen* workshops.

When people are in a role that falls together with their natural talents, they will develop much faster, stay longer and add far more value to the organisation.⁷

On a scale from 1 (*not present at all*) to 10 (*completely integrated*), to what extent have you already integrated Tip 3 in your company? Honestly? Please take a moment to reflect upon this and then circle your answer:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Tip 4

Companies that are community-oriented perform better

Can you imagine everyone in your company communicating authentically without fear of ridicule?

As human beings, we are programmed to want certain things. The primary needs are having a sense of belonging and the feeling of being understood. These needs are most often met through families and communities. When companies begin to focus on building communities, it makes a powerful impact that forges an emotional bond.

In times of profound change, business must often reinvent themselves to survive. Yet, the impulse for many is to hunker down, wait for the tide to turn and worry about changing later. This both increases the risk of failure and misses the opportunity to energize employees and jump back into competition through community-driven change. By engaging not only with customers, but extending to employees, partners, society and investors, a company can reinvent itself.

In tough times more than ever, people crave a sense of community support. When companies provide this by building communities that deliver tangible and emotional value, through employees and customers working together to solve collective challenges, they build lasting bonds of loyalty and discover new sources of growth.⁸

“At its very heart, a business is the beauty of bringing together people and things to make the community better off – these are the businesses we admire. Empathy is the one tool that makes it all happen.” A. Cabrera, President of George Mason University

The door for empathy opens when we suspend our disbeliefs and openly engage new ideas. Relationship-focused success expands capacity and potential, and empathy is a business skill that actually grows when practiced and shared. Although it may be unlike any practice you have ever used within your business, empathy in the workplace creates and encourages sharing ideas free from the fear of ridicule. If we are to keep our businesses relevant and our consumers happy, we must embrace empathy and let it be the force that drives us forward.⁹

We are living a transition from an industrial era characterized by repetition for performance into a world that is fundamentally different than it was even half a century ago – a world in which every individual needs to be a changemaker. One of the qualities you need as a changemaker is empathy. Fluid, open teams, where each employee has both the skills to identify opportunities and to solve problems, is the emerging organisational format for this new era - as well as the departure from monolith-type corporations.¹⁰

On a scale from 1 (*not present at all*) to 10 (*completely integrated*), to what extent have you already integrated Tip 4 in your company? Honestly? Please take a moment to reflect upon this and then circle your answer:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Tip 5

Holistic approach of the company or organisation

Can you imagine everyone understanding how their company works and knowing how they can contribute to the whole?

A holistic approach starts bottom-up, with every individual in the organisation grasping the bigger picture, and taking responsibility for his or her role. When people thoroughly understand how they are contributing to the whole, their engagement and quality of performance increases drastically. In addition, they are able to incorporate more elements of self-leadership into their tasks.¹¹

This holistic approach is based on the idea that everyone matters, everything matters, that everyone is interconnected.¹² A lot of companies disregard this point of view and focus only on external relationships, partially or totally neglecting internal relationships. Building an organisation that cares for each individual client always starts with building strong internal relationships. Every company or organisation that is able to do so will obtain higher performances.¹³

One of the most powerful ways to establish interconnectedness is with a common vision. Within an organisation, this is achieved around purpose—the “why” of its existence.¹⁴ While a for-profit enterprise obviously exists to make money, that cannot be its only purpose. Rather it must define the ways in which it is uniquely changing the world on behalf of others. Otherwise, its purpose will not be compelling enough to bring employees together and keep them aligned.

It takes leadership to define and communicate a purpose that pulls people together. When team members understand the “why” of what they are doing, self-interest is transformed into shared interest. The more participants understand that purpose, the more they will become aligned with it. They will find their place within that purpose in a way that honors their individuality, their uniqueness, their diversity, and take ownership. Interconnectedness around purpose also preserves the fabric of an organisation no matter what change it encounters, externally or internally.¹⁵

It all starts with every individual understanding their impact and their contribution to the whole. Our *Balinca* workshops provide a holistic ‘top-down’ view of the functioning of a company, while offering hands-on experience of different functions and departments. This effectively enables different departments of a company to collaborate more effectively.

Companies have only just begun to realise the benefits that will arise as they strengthen their internal connections. The boundaries within companies are beginning to dissolve. Organisational, functional and system silos are giving way to dynamic networks that span conventional boundaries, extending and enhancing business processes. The victors will be those companies that are able to take a new approach to business, designing and managing processes that extend across traditional corporate boundaries.¹⁶

On a scale from 1 (*not present at all*) to 10 (*completely integrated*), to what extent have you already integrated Tip 5 in your company? Honestly? Please take a moment to reflect upon this and then circle your answer:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Take the sum of all the answers from tip 1 to 5, and divide it by 5.

If the average is:

1 to 2: You would greatly benefit from our workshops.

3 to 5: You already have a taste of what a thriving business community is like, but you are not there yet. Allow us to support you along the path.

6 to 8: Congratulations, you are pretty well on your way! Ready to take the next steps?

9: Feel free to contact us, to see how we can help you reach the top.

We hope these 5 tips have inspired you! If they did, feel free to take a moment to share our website with your network on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Google +](#),...

Our tools support you to become a Thriving Business Community.

Contact us: jele@ThrivingBusinessCommunity.com

¹ Manz, C.C. & Neck, C. P. In press. Mastering self-leadership: Empowering yourself for personal excellence (2nd Edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall; Neck, C.P., & Manz, C.C. 1996-b. Thought self-leadership: The impact of mental strategies training on employee behavior, cognition and emotion. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17: 445-467; Neck, C.P., & Manz, C.C. 1992. Thought self-leadership: The influence of self-talk and mental imagery on performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13: 631-699.

² Markos, S., & Sridevi, M. S. (2010). Employee Engagement: The Key to Improving Performance. *International Journal of Business & Management*, 5(12), 89-96.

³ Robert Kegan, Lisa Lahey and Andy Fleming, "Does your company make you a better person?", *Harvard Business Review*, January 22, 2014.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Munteanu C Cătălin, Pagalea Andreea and Cristea Adina, "A Holistic Approach On Internal Marketing Implementation", *Business Management Dynamics*, Vol. 3, nr 11, 2014, pp. 9-17.

⁶ <http://torchlms.com/general/strength-based-development/>

⁷ *Ibid.*

- ⁸ L. Lee, "The Power of Community in Marketing", *Forbes*, 6 April 2009. <http://www.forbes.com/2009/04/06/lara-lee-community-branding-leadership-cmo-network-marketing.html>
- ⁹ J. M. Boyers, "Why Empathy Is The Force That Moves Business Forward", *Forbes*, 30 May 2013. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ashoka/2013/05/30/why-empathy-is-the-force-that-moves-business-forward/>
- ¹⁰ J. Pahlka, "Empathy in Business: Indulgence or Invaluable?", *Forbes*, 22 March 2013. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ashoka/2013/03/22/empathy-in-business-indulgence-or-invaluable/>
- ¹¹ Munteanu C Cătălin, Pagalea Andreea and Cristea Adina, "A Holistic Approach On Internal Marketing Implementation", *Business Management Dynamics*, Vol. 3, nr 11, 2014, pp. 9-17.
- ¹² Margaret Heffernan, "Why it is time to forget the pecking order at work", *TEDWomen Conference*, May 2015. https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_why_it_s_time_to_forget_the_pecking_order_at_work
- ¹³ Munteanu C Cătălin, Pagalea Andreea and Cristea Adina, "A Holistic Approach On Internal Marketing Implementation", *Business Management Dynamics*, Vol. 3, nr 11, 2014, pp. 9-17.
- ¹⁴ Simon Sinek, "Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action", *TEDxPuget Sound*, September 2009. http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?language=en
- ¹⁵ Gary Burnison, "From Diversion and Inclusion to Interconnectedness", Korn Ferry Institute, 11 May 2015. <http://www.kornferry.com/institute/diversity-and-inclusion-interconnectedness>
- ¹⁶ Hammer, M. "The Superefficient Company", *Harvard Business Review*, September 2001; Hammer, M. "The Process Audit", *Harvard Business Review*, April 2007. <https://hbr.org/2001/09/the-superefficient-company> <https://hbr.org/2007/04/the-process-audit>