

## Rebuilding Morale in the Optometric Practice

**Obakeng Malope\***

*Chairman of Visionstryt, South Africa*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Obakeng Malope, Chairman of Visionstryt, Johannesburg, South Africa.

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### Abstract

An Optometric business owner (i.e. leader) can only go as far as the vision he or she has for themselves. Optometric employees (i.e. potential leaders) can only go as far as they see their leader goes. Optometric practices (i.e. leading organizations) can only go as far as the potential leaders are willing to go.

The more and better potential leaders are raised up and developed to thrive within a practice, the greater and more significant that practice can become.

Practices increase their capacity in relation to how the employees expand themselves within the business. Employees increase their effectiveness within the practice in relation to how the business owner enables them to grow. The owner on the other hand extends themselves in relation to what they really want to achieve and accomplish.

Visionstryt has discovered that the majority of Optometric practices have very low employee morale and this affects the growth of the practices on many levels. This article details specific ways in which practices can rebuild their most appreciable asset in the business, its people.

**Keywords:** *Leadership; Team Work; Development*

### Introduction



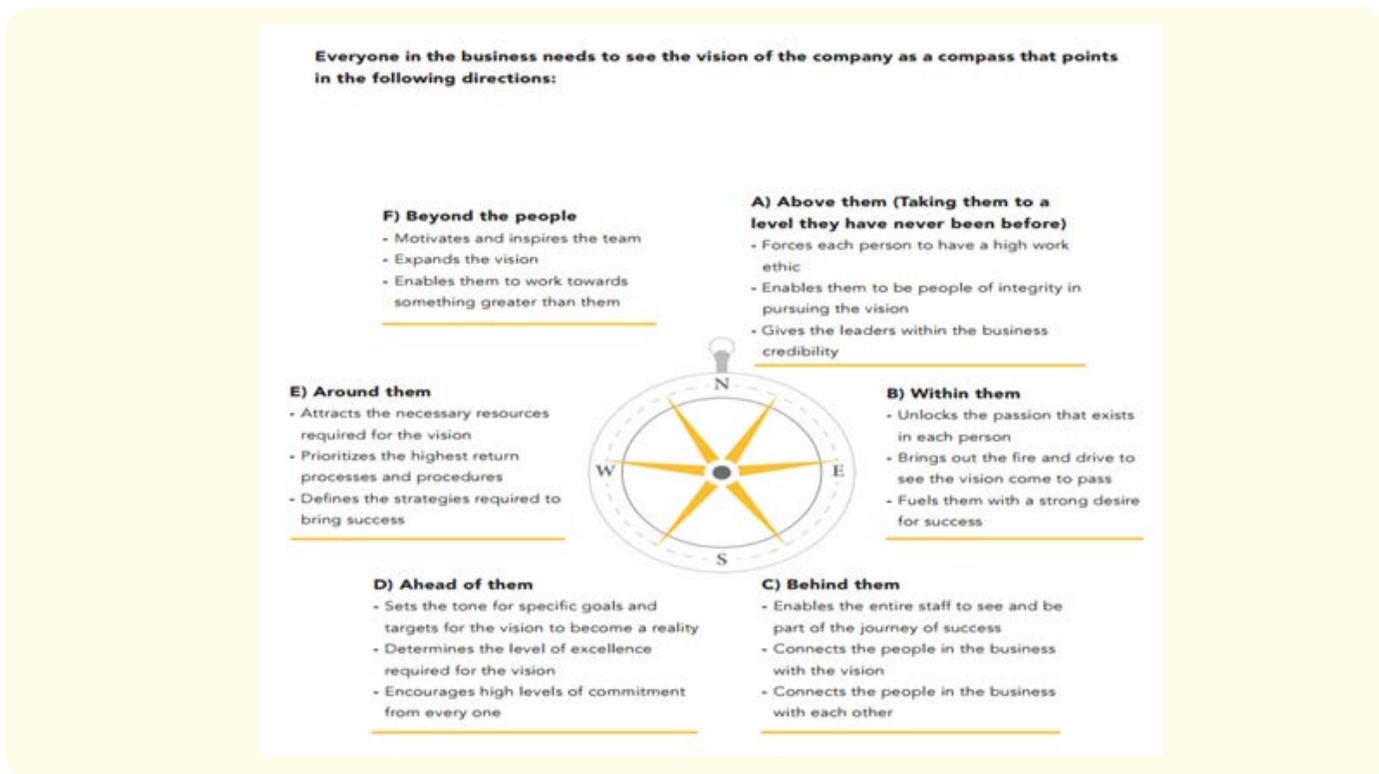
The key difference between the owner of the business and the people employed by the business is that leaders find the vision first (i.e. the Optometry Practice) and then the people he or she needs to employ to see that vision come to pass. People on the other hand find the leader first (i.e. place of work to earn a living) and then the vision (i.e. discovering what they really want to do).

For the vision of the company to become a constant reality; that means there has to be a personal ownership of the vision of the company by each staff member:

- As the business owner, you determine whether or not the vision is credible and worthy for your staff to be part of, let alone pursue.
- The vision becomes acceptable by the staff when it is compelling and you share and inspire it upon them.
- The more confident your staff become with the vision, the greater value it will have as a result.
- Your responsibility as the owner is to keep the vision in front of the staff at all times, for that is when it begins to direct the staff and eventually creates an opportunity for their commitment levels to rise up.
- Finally, the vision becomes a reality and leads to success when all employees take ownership of it.

**What does the above mean for your business in a practical manner?**

1. Get rid of the roster you have on the wall in the kitchen and put up the vision for the business there.
2. Get rid of the list of contact details you have on the wall and put up the vision and sales targets.
3. Get rid of the rules and regulations you have on the wall in the test room and put up the vision.
4. Have a WhatsApp group with the staff where you constantly sharing things that have to do with the vision of the company.
5. Every time there is a company meeting, share and discuss the vision.
6. As a business owner, your commitment towards the vision on a daily basis determines the staff attitude and actions towards the vision every day.



Once the vision is very clear to everyone in the company and all parties involved have bought into that vision, team work then starts to take effect as each person then knows what their specific role is in that vision.

**Materials and Methods**

Vision alone is not enough, there is still a critical role that you as the owner need to play over and above the vision being shared.

As the leader of the business, it is imperative that you realize that for your business to succeed, you need the right people on your team who will help take your business to where it needs to be.

You cannot do everything on your own as the owner or Optometrist, and therefore there are numerous tasks and responsibilities that you need other people to take care of.

This can only be done if the right people are functioning at the right place within the Optometry Practice.

**This can be explained as follows:**

Action	Result
<b>1. The wrong person in the wrong place</b> (e.g. debtors lady with no people skills trying to secure an eye test appointment)	- Missed Opportunities - Loss in Sales - Regression - Demotivated People
<b>2. The wrong person in the right place</b> (e.g. Optometrist doing the filling or cleaning jobs that need to be dispensed)	- Poor Working Environment - Low Self Esteem - Frustration - Jealousy amongst staff
<b>3. The right person in the wrong place</b> (e.g. eye wear consultant doing after service calls instead of checking benefits and confirming appointments)	- Poor Work Ethic - Procrastination - Confusion - Poor Service Delivery
<b>4. The right person in the right place</b> (e.g. Dispenser sorting out all dispensing related queries and not being busy with recalls)	- High Efficiency Levels - Momentum - Progression - Increased Commitment
<b>5. The right people at the right place</b> (e.g. Eye wear consultants selling different management options to the consumer and being incentivised for it)	- Increased Priority Levels - Growth Opportunities - Multiplication - Enthusiasm
<b>6. The wrong decision at the wrong time</b> (e.g. Eye wear consultant dealing with a problematic consumer regarding delayed jobs instead of the dispenser or optometrist)	- Unhappy Consumers - Broken Loyalty - Disaster - Dishonesty
<b>7. The right decision at the wrong time</b> (e.g. Doing recalls on a Monday morning)	- Resistance - Failure - Limitations - Mediocrity

<p><b>8. The wrong action at the right time</b> (e.g. over promising something that you know you can't deliver on with excellence)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mistake</li> <li>- Uncertainty</li> <li>- Barriers</li> <li>- Zero Sales</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. The right action at the right time</b> (e.g. Optometrist exceeding expectations in the test room)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prosperity</li> <li>- Expansion</li> <li>- Excessive Financial Rewards</li> <li>- Success</li> </ul>

There is a phrase that says those closest to the leader will determine that leaders` potential. Well this is important when it comes to delegating responsibilities.

Most business owners make the mistake of putting on all the different types of caps required for the success of that business instead of delegating authority and responsibility to the relevant individuals.

**The great value of team work in an Optometric Practice is that it affords more:**

- Human Resource Capacity
- Creativity
- Innovative Ideas
- Energy
- Multiple Perspectives
- Several Alternatives
- Maximum Potential and Ability
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Increased Productivity

As the leader of the business you need to connect with the team individually

Why?

Connection with the team leads to your vision becoming the aspiration of the staff.

When the vision is worthwhile and bigger than what the team can comprehend, it does the following for them:

- Stretches them
- Challenges them
- Inspires them
- Unlocks what they themselves can achieve

**How then do you identify the right people to delegate too?**

You need to constantly empower the people working for you and afford them opportunities to grow beyond their level of expertise.

**Results and Discussion**

Your team`s capacity to achieve is determined by your ability to empower them. (That is your most important role as the owner of the practice).

**Identify the potential leaders within the team**

- Look at the character of the individuals on your team and see which people are the best candidates for what the business needs to grow and expand

**Build team members up continuously**

- New employee needs direction *regularly*
- Few months into the job employee needs *coaching*
- Committed team members need *support*
- Those that have proven their loyalty need *responsibility*

**Equip team members regularly and consistently**

- Employees desperately require an eagle environment for them to grow
- Keep a compelling vision of the company before their eyes
- Reward team members with incentives and great benefit packages as the business grows
- Encourage creativity and challenge them beyond their comfort levels
- Believe in them, support them & show them what they are able to achieve

**Take Note**

The strength of the team is impacted by its weakest link.

Team members who don't carry their own weight slow down the entire progression of the team and that of the business. (E.g. late coming; incompetence; not doing the job they are being paid for; etc).

The bigger the difference in competence between team members, the greater the detriment to the business.

Most important thing to remember is that everything that happens in a business is a direct reflection of the leader at all times, nothing else, nothing less.

People buy into the leader first and then the vision.

The leader finds the vision and then the team.

The team finds the leader and then the vision.

“People only follow worthy leaders who promote worthwhile causes”

“People can do just about anything for the vision of company when they believe in the leader”

**Below is a quick example of the impact vision has when it connects you with your staff:**

Optometric Team	Practice Vision	Leadership Result
<p><b>If the team doesn't support the leadership they work for:</b></p> <p>- You just the person that pays their salaries but they couldn't care any less about you</p>	<p><b>And they don't believe in the vision of the practice:</b></p> <p>- They have complete disregard of what the practice wants to achieve or what you are trying to build as the owner</p>	<p><b>They will find another leader/job as the work they produce will be evident of that:</b></p> <p>- They will look for opportunities to steal from your business and integrity &amp; work ethic will be at an all-time low</p>

<p><b>If the team doesn't support the leadership they work for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You just the person that pays their salaries but they couldn't care any less about you</li> <li>- They do things behind your back that can destroy you</li> </ul>	<p><b>But they believe in the vision of the practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have full confidence that this is a great company to work for but they just don't like working for you</li> </ul>	<p><b>They will find another leader/job:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They will constantly be on the internet looking for new opportunities</li> <li>- They will add no value to your business or contribute in any way positive towards it</li> </ul>
<p><b>If they support the leadership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You are a great boss and a lovey person to work for</li> </ul>	<p><b>But they don't believe in the vision of the practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They probably have other plans and the working environment does not stimulate them</li> </ul>	<p><b>They will get another job:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They will most probably look for a different working environment that enables them to grow even more</li> </ul>
<p><b>If they fully support the leader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You can count on them and they are very reliable</li> </ul>	<p><b>And they totally believe in the vision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They are fully committed to seeing the practice grow and achieve its goals</li> </ul>	<p><b>They will get completely behind the leader and the vision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A connection between the leader and his team results in the vision of the leader becoming the aspiration of the team</li> </ul>

Therefore, as the leader of the business, it is important to model *creativity; hard work; punctuality; excellence; completion of tasks* and most importantly *a genuine care and appreciation of your people.*

The above results in the team becoming and producing what the leaders are and what the business requires

**Conclusion**

The highest return of investment for a company is brought about by high levels of team work.

Victor Hugo is quoted saying: "No army can withstand the strength of idea whose time has come"

That simply means when a team functions together as a unit, nothing can stop or limit their growth potential and that of the organization.

A team that functions together, grows together and multiplies the organization's effectiveness to the highest level.

It is better to have a great team with a weak vision than to have a great vision with a weak team.

Nothing fruitful can ever come from having a great vision with a bad team.

**Remember the following:**

- When the leader grows, the team grows and business grows as well.
- The leader only goes as far as he or she is willing to sacrifice for the vision.
- The team can only go as far as the leader can go.
- The business only grows as far as the people are willing to go.

**Acknowledgements**

Visionstryt has published 2 books for the Optometry industry.

Book one is called Visionstryt's Business Guide for Optometrists and the book summary can be downloaded on [www.visionstryt.co.za/visionstryt-book-summary/](http://www.visionstryt.co.za/visionstryt-book-summary/)

Book two is called Visionstryt's Practical Guide for Optometric Staff and the book summary can be downloaded on [www.visionstryt.co.za/practical-guide-book-summary/](http://www.visionstryt.co.za/practical-guide-book-summary/)

Obakeng Malope is the author of both books.

### Financial Interests

There is no financial interests in writing and publishing this articles.

### Conflict of Interest

No conflict interest exists in the publication of this article.

### Bibliography

1. Malope O., *et al.* "Consumer profiling in an Optometric Practice". Visionstryt's Business Guide for Optometrists (2016) and Visionstryt's Practical Guide for Optometric Staff (2017).

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