Greeting from Val

State of the Company Brief

Hello! Welcome to 2018!

Azimuth has been very busy growing throughout the last year. In early March, I am planning to visit all of our work sites to deliver to you a “State of the Company” briefing.

I’m excited to share the store of our recent growth and introduce you to our new technology, skillsets, personnel and customers. In addition, we will discuss how you (insert Uncle Same emoji) can help Azimuth do better.

We will be performing multiple strategic planning sessions, leadership trainings, and employee engagement opportunities to solicit your feedback and ideas (for example, improvements to the employee reimbursement process). Please try to attend if you can.

All our success this last year is directly attributable to your hard work and dedication to Azimuth’s customers. We thank you for that.

Looking forward to an exciting and prosperous New Year!

Thank you,

Val

Let's get our great minds thinking!

With the expansion of our work in the Ohio and D.C. area, Azimuth is ready to revamp our motto "Direction in Business & Technology". There will be a contest to submit the most viable, unique, but relevant, new motto. Get your ideas together, and send them to cmaccallum@azimuth-corp.com
NEWS FROM CORPORATE

Brad Bloom: Azimuth’s future is you.

These are exciting, yet complex times for companies that support national defense. Rapid technological innovation, globalization, and exponential increases in the value of information provide fantastic opportunities for growth. However, these same conditions also demand that companies in our industry effectively balance efficiency and productivity with equal focus on innovation and adaptability. This is necessary to successfully navigate a future characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Johanson, 2012). Achieving this balance requires an effective business strategy. Developing and implementing an effective business strategy requires you!

A business strategy can be defined as “…the pattern of choices that an organization makes to position itself for superior performance over time” (Hughes, Cloarelli Bailey, & Dinwoodie, 2014). Author Schein (2010, p. 74) outlines five basic steps for external adaptation and growth. These are (1) a shared understanding of mission and strategy derived from core missions and functions; (2) consensus on shared goals derived from the core mission; (3) a consensus on means to achieve those goals (structure, division of labor, reward and authority systems); (4) a consensus on criteria to be used to measure success and progress; and (5) consensus on appropriate remedial or repair strategies when established goals are not being met. To help Azimuth sustain our ongoing success, while also positioning our company and our people for even greater future achievement, we have been developing our strategic planning and analysis capability. You, as critical stakeholders, and the reason behind any Azimuth success, are an integral part of this process.

Some of you may have already participated in one of more leadership and strategy surveys managed by Azimuth’s Brad Bloom. Mr. Bloom is currently in the latter stages of his Doctorate in Strategic Leadership through Regent University. In addition to your participation in these studies, many of you will be asked in the future to participate in a variety of forums to help us refine and implement strategic initiatives. In addition to this formal and episodic feedback, we strongly encourage each of you to share ideas on innovation, opportunity, or adaptation with your program manager. In addition to task management, our program managers are equally important to us as open conduits to each employee’s creativity, initiative, and enthusiasm for our shared future success.

References


EMPLOYEE MENTIONS

Andrew Stamer and Amanda Sullivan, supporting the Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA) Public Affairs Office, received letters of appreciation from the Department of Defense Deputy Chief Management Officer, Mr. John H. Gibson II. Andrew and Amanda were recognized for their dedication and daily contributions to the PFPA Team. Amanda was also recognized by the Director of the PFPA Corporate Communications Office, Ms. Jacqueline Yost, for her initiative, attention to detail, and her can-do attitude. Many thanks to the PFPA Public Affairs team for your stellar support to the customer and Azimuth!

NEW EMPLOYEES

D.C. - Maryland - Virginia

Robert Cook  OCT 30
Gregory Hamilton  DEC 05
Yolanda Meaders  NOV 07

OHIO

Michael Ericksen  OCT 30
Eric Harper  OCT 16
Kristen Hirschfeld  OCT 10
Jonathan Meyer  DEC 20
Aaron Snider  DEC 06
Lirong Sun  NOV 16
UPCOMING EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

- Kyungmin Lee: JAN 2010
- Craig Teeters: JAN 2012
- Amelia Crossman: JAN 2016
- Alan McWilliams: JAN 2016
- Jonah Nelson: JAN 2016
- Antoinette Rice: JAN 2016
- Steven White: JAN 2016
- Sureva Johnson: JAN 2017

- Cindy Schneider: FEB 2008
- Rachelle Credle: FEB 2015
- Gilbert Barrie: FEB 2016
- James Clark: FEB 2016
- David Turner: FEB 2016
- Derek Bas: FEB 2017
- Laura Filson: FEB 2017
- Jordan Hansbrough: FEB 2017
- Jennifer Lawson: FEB 2017

- Michele Ramirez: MAR 2016
- Michael Glaccum: MAR 2017
- Thomas Harris: MAR 2017
- Cedric Ntwali: MAR 2017
- Shawn Reece: MAR 2017

EMPLOYEE BIRTHDAYS

- Courtney Fuller-Lee: JAN 12
- Stephen Johnson: JAN 12
- Derek Whitehurst: JAN 17
- Kyungmin Lee: JAN 21
- George Schmidt: JAN 31

- Tamika Clark: FEB 02
- Michael Glaccum: FEB 04
- Crystal MacCallum: FEB 04
- Jordan Hansbrough: FEB 09
- Charles Rossi: FEB 11
- David Turner: FEB 13
- Sergey Basun: FEB 16
- Sureva Johnson: FEB 16
- Geralyn Rudat: FEB 16
- Jennifer Lawson: FEB 18
- Amanda Sullivan: FEB 21
- Cedric Ntwali: FEB 24

- Joselle McCracken: MAR 08
- Benjamin Kowalski: MAR 09
- Gino Camilo: MAR 17
- Katherine Gonzalez: MAR 21
- Steven Durrant: MAR 23
- Abby Neal: MAR 23
- Chelsea Weber: MAR 28
- Michelle Kirkland: MAR 30
AZIMUTH HOLIDAY PARTY REVIEW

Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate the Holidays with us! We had a great time with you and your guests!
When it comes to successful business relationships, everyone knows communication is key. Even so, most organizations fail to focus on the right kind. Honest communication is crucial to building strong relationships in business – but it’s also increasingly rare.

The evidence is striking: 80% of all work problems can be traced to lack of open, honest communication. When employees, colleagues, and executives don’t say what’s on their minds, the entire company suffers. How can managers help their teams succeed if employees never share their top challenge? How can CEOs and executives lead effectively if no one gives them honest feedback?

After all, you can’t fix a problem that nobody tells you about – and you can’t use an idea that nobody shares with you.

The solution to this widespread problem is to “get the unsaid said” by encouraging open, honest communication throughout the organization. While this concept might seem simple, it’s notoriously difficult to implement in day-to-day business life. That’s where the 4 levels of getting the unsaid said – shutdown, reactive, proactive, and foreshadowing – can help dramatically. Read on and learn exactly how.
The 4 Levels of Getting the Unsaid Said

Getting the unsaid said exists on a sliding scale: Some organizations are better at it than others, and there’s always room to improve. Once organizations can identify the different levels of getting the unsaid said, they can gauge their current approach – and start to move to the next level.

Level 1: Shutdown – No communication

It’s no surprise that being “shutdown” is at the bottom of the communication pyramid. At this level, people don’t make any attempts to communicate honestly. They don’t share their thoughts, even when asked, and they resist engaging in conversations that might require their opinion.

It’s important to note that people are actually “saying something” by choosing to be silent at the shutdown level. The message? “I don’t feel comfortable enough to share my thoughts in this environment, and don’t see any potential benefits to sticking my neck out by voicing my concerns – only potential backlash.” From here, there’s nowhere to go but up.

The first stop is reactive honesty.

Level 2: Reactive Honesty – Ask and you will receive

Reactive honesty is the most basic level of getting the unsaid said, and it’s where the majority of organizations find themselves. At the reactive level, people don’t share their problems unless they’re specifically asked to. This makes it common for business problems to spin out of control before anyone tells the person in charge. At that point, a manager might ask, “Why didn’t anyone tell me?!” and the employee will likely say “You never asked us and we didn’t know if it was any of our business.”

When people are reactively honest, they don’t share ideas without being asked, either. This hinders innovation at the organization, preventing the free exchange of ideas to improve the work environment. Companies that practice reactive honesty are in the danger zone – not much better than the “shutdown” phase of communication. Why? Because problems aren’t openly discussed, and ideas aren’t freely shared, unless the right questions happened to be asked of the right people.

For those reasons, staying in the reactive honesty space will quickly become costly for any organization. Check out the accompanying sidebars about a company case for a powerful example of how reactive honesty can wreak havoc at even the largest, strongest organizations.
SIDEBAR: THE DANGERS OF BAD COMMUNICATION

In 2016, a banking institution was fined $185 million to settle charges of illegal banking practices. That September, the bank’s stock plummeted to a 31-month low, following revelations that its employees had fraudulently created as many as 2 million fake bank and credit card accounts in a widespread cross-selling scheme. 5,300 workers were fired.

Once the biggest bank in the United States – and one that weathered the 2008 recession far better than its peers – the bank suddenly faced an investigation by the Department of Justice, two Congressional hearings, lawsuits filed by angry customers, and even a federal class-action lawsuit brought by former employees who claimed they were wrongfully fired. All this, in addition to $185 million in fines.

So, what does this bank’s costly stumble have to do with getting the unsaid said? From my perspective, everything.

Most people look at this kind of company debacle from a moral perspective, citing the blatantly unethical sales techniques that were incentivized throughout the organization for years. In an interview with Wall Street Journal, the bank’s former CEO even admitted that the company’s sales quotas directly incentivized employees to engage in fraudulent behavior. He was later forced into an early retirement due to the scandal.

But the true cause of the bank’s humiliating mistake wasn’t simply a lack of ethics. It was also a lack of getting the unsaid said. From what we know about the scheme, it seems that the bank’s company culture could have encouraged silence, penalized employees who voiced their concerns, and rewarded those who kept their mouths shut. Nearly a half a dozen of the bank’s employees claimed they were fired for calling the bank’s ethics hotline to report unethical behavior. One such employee, a manager who lost his job after reporting suspect behavior to his superiors, recently won $5.4 million from the bank under whistle-blower protection laws.

How does a massive, otherwise well-run bank, end up in such a seemingly predictable mess?

Blaming the scandal on lack of ethics ignores the evidence that many employees and managers tried to stop the unethical behavior. The company’s culture likely silenced the voice of “productively honest” workers, who took it upon themselves to say something. This discouraged other workers from raising the alarm – and further entrenched the unethical sales practices. As a result, most people at the bank were understandably practicing reactive honesty – only voicing their concerns when asked – while others were completely shut down, afraid of the repercussions of never speaking up.

This story proves that even the strongest, biggest corporations will stumble mightily without the right communication strategy in place. That’s why it’s so important to understand the 4 levels of getting the unsaid said, and know exactly where your business stands.

Steven Gaffney is a leading expert on honest, interpersonal communication, team performance, leadership, and change management. He has worked with numerous fortune 500 organization to increase revenue and drive profit, as well as with many governmental agencies to better allocate resources and taxpayer dollars. Thousands credit Gaffney’s seminars, media appearance, books, and products with making immediate and lasting changes in both their organizations and personal lives. He is also the author of two groundbreaking books, *Just Be Honest* and *Honesty Works*, and the coauthor of *Honesty Sells*. For more information on Steven Gaffney, please visit www.stevengaffney.com.