

Leading with Noble Purpose

How to Create a Tribe of True Believers

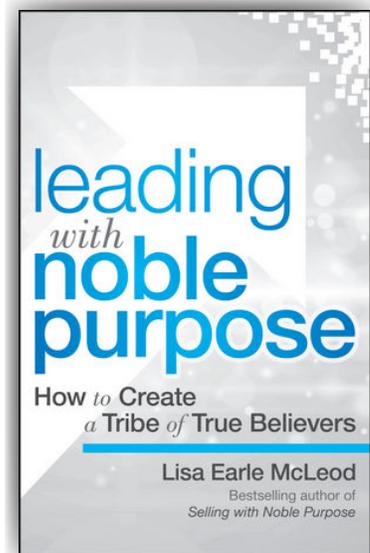
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KEY CONCEPTS

The most effective leaders lead with a true purpose. The path to noble leadership involves the following five steps:

1. *Claim.* Use focused customer engagement to clarify who your customers are, then develop a *noble sales purpose* (NSP) to match their needs.
2. *Prove.* Create a personal narrative to express your NSP and engage on an emotional level.
3. *Launch.* Transform your NSP from what you say to what you do.
4. *Operationalize.* Create systems to facilitate and reinforce your NSP at all organizational levels.
5. *Embed.* Infuse your recruitment and hiring processes with your NSP. Take steps to make your NSP the essence of your leadership and your organization.

INTRODUCTION

To be successful, leaders must harness the hardwired human desire to find purpose in their work. In **Leading with Noble Purpose**, Lisa Earle McLeod offers a template for making meaning central to any workplace or organization. Leaders who learn to push beyond profit to find passion and purpose are able to inspire those they lead to commitment and high performance.

PART ONE: THE NOBLE PURPOSE LEADER

PROFIT IS NOT PURPOSE

Most leaders believe that profit is the primary goal of their jobs. In reality, such a viewpoint limits the capacity for companies to excel. Corporations like Hootsuite and Explorys have experienced astronomical growth due to

their focus on a greater purpose. Hootsuite has grown 56,000 percent in five years and provides a central purpose in its message, vowing to empower clients to “turn messages into meaningful relationships.” Purpose in and of itself drives profits. An organization that prioritizes purpose becomes driven by meaning rather than money.

Revenue is an imprecise measurement of success because of a lag factor. What you decide as a leader today impacts your profit margin months down the road. Inspiring your workplace with noble purpose creates an immediate increase in team buy-in and brings about positive results for customers.

HOW METRICS DRIVE MEDIOCRITY

If you base your leadership strategy on data crunching, the results are bound to be mediocre. McLeod asserts that employees are motivated by passion, not numbers. Over half of all workers report that they are not actively engaged in their jobs. Another 17 percent are actively disengaged. These groups exert a negative influence over the remaining 32 percent who are engaged in their jobs. Judging a workforce by metrics places pressure on top performers and completely discourages weak performers. To instead make purpose an imperative for your business, you must embrace three trends:

Inspiring your workplace with noble purpose creates an immediate increase in team buy-in and brings about positive results for customers.

1. *Membership economy.* Brands are no longer bought; they are *joined*. Access and emotional identification with your company are key points in consumership.
2. *Forced transparency.* Everything about your company and its inner workings is likely to be available online. This means your competition cannot only read your customer reviews, they can gain access to your annual meeting notes and employee comments.
3. *Emotive expectations.* When people join your company or organization, they are looking for more than money. Employees want honesty, fulfillment, and meaning straight out of the gate.

Instead of numbers, Noble Leaders manage these three trends to craft a compelling impact-story. Inspiring narratives are: true, short, emotional, detailed, and based on your *noble sales purpose* (NSP).

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

To live and work with purpose, you must be prepared to inject your NSP at each step of the consumer process. Teams that are purpose-driven act on an emotional basis, bringing about a deeper engagement with customers. The following key points are essential to creating a unique, purpose-centered brand that will be a rallying point for both employees and consumers:

- *Have a clear NSP.* State your noble purpose to employees and customers in a straightforward way. Bring your NSP to life in all organizational interactions.
- *Pay attention to resellers and agents.* Resellers and agents are more than tools; they are people who deserve to work with a sense of pride, purpose, and passion.
- *Deliver value even when customers don't buy.* Don't wait for people to buy your brand to give them a brand experience.
- *Do something different.* Forget the idea that professional means boring. Logic stimulates thought, but emotions create *action*. Fly your flag high in any color you choose and let like-minded people rally around it.

CREATE A PURPOSE FRAMEWORK

It's better to ask the question: “How do we activate our NSP?” than to ask, “How can we make more money with our existing model?” Business models based on the traditional 5 Ps (profit, process, products, promotion, and

people) are inferior to those based on the noble purpose model. This approach uses a 6-P system which adds your NSP as the central point that the traditional 5 Ps support. Structuring your business model this way allows you to involve your customers in all aspects of your organization.

BE FOR, RATHER THAN AGAINST

If you rely on a “kill the competition” mentality to try to inspire those around you, you will experience two possible outcomes:

1. *Short-term thinking.* If your main sales pitch comes from the idea that your product or service is superior to your competitors', you're missing the point. The best way to approach consumers is by focusing on their needs.
2. *Loss of long-term value.* When teams focus on destroying the competition, they seldom develop positive innovations. Product and service innovation originates from a deeper understanding of consumer needs. This understanding is gained only by devoting time—not to crushing the competition but to gaining insight into your customers.

The ethos that you as a leader exhibit determines the atmosphere that permeates your organization.

DON'T CONFUSE CULTURE WITH COLLATERAL

The term for organizational spirit is *ethos*. The ethos that you as a leader exhibit determines the atmosphere that permeates your organization. Ethos is connected with purpose. Employees at Whole Foods, for example, know that their purpose is to promote health; this ethos is the cornerstone of their company. Culture in any organization is determined by employee experience. A purpose-driven culture is founded on the following principles:

- *Operationalized values.* Systems are sometimes necessary to ensure that operations remain consistently focused on purpose.
- *Personal recognition.* Workers and teams thrive on personal recognition. To inspire continued engagement, use a reward such as an honorary dinner or simply an honest, spoken compliment.
- *Overcommunication.* Workers need to know what is happening behind the scenes. Be careful to never hoard information.
- *Transparency.* Be open and willing to share your true self with your employees.

NAME YOUR NOBLE SALES PURPOSE

An effective leader resets the negative by transforming a “yes, but” into a “yes *and*.” Instead of saying, “Yes, purpose is a good idea, but we still need to focus on profits...” a noble leader says “Yes, purpose is important *and* it's good for profits.” Many leaders rely on the phrase “We make a difference” to serve as their statement of purpose. Unfortunately, such a statement is too vague to motivate workers. To create a noble sales purpose that inspires, answer three discovery questions.

1. *How do you make a difference for your customers?* Answering this question defines the value that you offer for customers.
2. *How do you do this differently than the competition?* Answering this question clarifies the points of competitive differentiation between your product or service and others.
3. *What, on your best day, do you love about your job?* Answering this question provides the grounds for emotional engagement.

THE DNA OF A NOBLE PURPOSE LEADER

Many leaders adopt an impersonal style steeped in corporate speak and impersonal professionalism. This approach fails to inspire trust or engagement. To lead with noble purpose, you must choose a more personal and intimate approach by divulging your personal back story and making your motivations transparent.

A leader with a noble purpose is open with his or her intentions and believes in the dignity and purpose of the business. The following points summarize the elements needed to lead with noble purpose:

- *Clarity about your NSP.* This is the foundation of your business and the basis of your leadership. Use clear language and compelling narratives to focus on your NSP and create customer-impact and competitive differentiation.
- *Rally for customers.* Meet with customers, invite them to meetings, and organize your entire business around helping them and meeting their needs.
- *Save space to say “no.”* It’s not necessary to please everyone. A noble purpose leader is never afraid to say “no” when doing so preserves his or her NSP.
- *Be all in.* A noble purpose leader engages at all levels—emotionally, logically, and personally—to inspire others.

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PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

CLAIM YOUR NOBLE PURPOSE

To claim your noble purpose, begin by answering three big discovery questions to determine how you make a difference, how you stand out from the competition, and what is the best thing (on the best day) about your job. Declare your NSP and avoid corporate speak. Use “we” to frame your purpose and make your NSP succinct.

PROVE YOUR NOBLE PURPOSE

After crafting your NSP, create a narrative to tell your personal story. Be sure that your story is connected intimately with your inner self. Provide transparency by being personal, organized, and real. Find an immediate action item, such as changing meeting formats or sharing customer-impact stories, to act as an accelerator for a few quick wins.

LAUNCH YOUR NOBLE PURPOSE

Establish your NSP in every department of your organization. Once internalized, ensure that your NSP remains vital and fresh by continuing to share customer impact stories on a regular basis. Avoid arguing with internal or external cynics. Instead, offer them a chance to personally experience your NSP.

OPERATIONALIZE YOUR NOBLE PURPOSE

It’s vital to now bring your NSP to life in the daily operations of your organization. Use customer testimonials, photographs, and quotes to represent the fact that the customer is front and center. Customers should also be present in product development meetings. Include your NSP in all training protocols and have periodic celebrations to mark when your NSP has made positive customer impacts.

EMBED YOUR NOBLE PURPOSE

Ideally, your NSP will become so integrated into your organization that it naturally seeps into all systems and operations. Most organizations fall short of this goal. By maintaining your NSP as the focal point of hiring,

evaluations, annual reports, and the corporate board, there is a stronger chance that your NSP will become the essence of your company.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When it comes to the workplace, **Lisa Earle McLeod** is passionate about two things: competitive differentiation and emotional engagement. She is a globally recognized strategy consultant, executive adviser, and keynote speaker whose clients include Google, Hootsuite, Novartis, and Roche. McLeod's best-seller, *Selling with Noble Purpose*, was a game-changer in the world of sales.

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