



*We exist to serve others so they may better serve the world.*®

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## **Lead Me: Help Me To Become More Than I Realize I Can Be**

Everyday there are many employees who go to work, and are looking for one thing. No, the one thing I am referring to has nothing to do with compensation. The “one thing” is more intrinsic in nature. These employees are looking to be *inspired*. Tony Zseigh, CEO of Zappos.com, made a very interesting statement that really resonated with me. He said, “At Zappos.com, we stopped looking for ways to motivate our team and started looking for ways to inspire them.” The connotation is that being inspired resonates on a much deeper level and tends to last longer than being merely motivated, which may not be as enduring.

On a personal note, I know that my greatest contributions at work almost always happened after I felt inspired to do more than what was expected. I’ve been fortunate to have had multiple mentors throughout my career. These mentors guided me, challenged me, and yes, inspired me to see more, do more and become more. The purpose of this article is to shed some light on what it takes to inspire your team to become more than they realize they can be.

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**So, here are six things that inspire people at work (from the employee’s perspective):**

1. **A compelling vision:** Much has been written about vision statements. Truly, the vision is the primary tool that great leaders use to influence (not mandate) others to follow them. The vision should clearly explain where the leader expects the team to be years from now.  
  
*\* Voice of the Employee: “I want to be on a winning team. I need to know where we are going. Please tell me. After all, if I know where we are going, I will be more inclined to help us get there. Lead Me.”*
2. **Clearly articulated mission:** The mission should easily show what your team does, how your team does it, why it does it, and who it does it for. The central purpose of why your team exists should be readily found in the mission.  
  
*\* Voice of the Employee: “I want to be clear about what we do. Even more than that, I want to be proud of what we do. I want to brag to my family and friends about the great team I am on. Lead me.”*

3. **Alignment between the vision and mission:** One of the biggest gaps many companies have is that there is no clear connection between where the company is going (vision), what the company does (mission) and individual employee job performance. When employees can see how their specific job contributes to the organization's success, they are more likely to put more effort into their work.

*\* Voice of the Employee: "I need to know how I fit into the bigger picture. Is my specific job even that important? The vision and mission both sound good, but I don't know how I can possibly help fulfill them. Lead me."*

4. **Connect to a greater purpose** (*Special Note.. This point is especially relevant for Generation Y and Millennials*): Even beyond your company's vision and mission, why is your company's existence a benefit to society? Why is the world any better because your company is in it?

*Even beyond your company's vision and mission, why is your company's existence a benefit to society*

*\* Voice of the Employee: "I need to know how this company contributes to the well-being of society. How does the service and/or product we provide help to improve people's lives? Are we volunteering our time, donating to charities and being environmentally responsible? Lead me."*

5. **Learn both personal and professional goals:** Beyond the daily work that your staff does, take the time to learn each of your employees' professional and personal goals. As the old saying goes, people buy into the leader before they buy into the leadership.

*\* Voice of the Employee: "I need you to know me, and understand me. Take the time to learn both my professional and personal goals. Challenge me to achieve them. Mentor me, coach me, and follow-up with me. Lead me."*

6. **Uncompromising leadership:** One of the fastest ways to de-motivate your best staff is they see you accepting mediocrity from the rest of the team. Do NOT compromise your high expectations. If you do, one of the first ramifications is a once-great employee will decide to either quit-and-leave OR quit-and-stay.

*\* Voice of the Employee: "I need you to set high expectations and commit to them. Please don't compromise them. As easy as it is to look the other way when a team member doesn't pick up that piece of paper, please say something. I love my job and I love this company, but I don't want to be a part of a losing team. I want us to win. This team deserves to win and winning teams have winning leaders. These leaders do not tolerate foolishness. My only professional dream is to work for a team AND a leader who are both committed to excellence. Have I found them? Lead me."*

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