



The Leaning Tower - Part II

The Leaning Tower of Pisa wasn't built on bedrock. The initial lean forced building to continue at an angle to compensate for the tilt. A leaning structure with a bend in it. Its potential height limited by its foundation, built out of alignment.

Many service contractors are similar to the Tower of Pisa. Missing their bedrock, leaning, and then building at an angle.

In last month's article, Part I , we identified business bedrock by 3 characteristics: The Customer Experience, The Promise Kept, and Employees are Customers Too.

And gave 3 intersecting signs for finding bedrock: Look for What Customers Value -and- Identify What You're Good At -and- Find a Unique Place in the Market.



In this second part, we'll look at efforts to build vertically true for maximum height.

Regards,
Chris Arlen, President, Service Performance

Building for Maximum Height

When business bedrock is revealed, a contractor can build from a solid foundation. When all efforts align vertically true over that bedrock, a contractor can build to maximum height.

Business Building Tools

Equipment, office space, and computers are not building tools. They're productivity and efficiency tools. They're the ante to get in the business game.

People are what businesses build with. Not standing-around, collecting-a-paycheck people. But focused, enthusiastic, energetic, creative, knowledgeable, friendly, and loyal people.

Businesses need tools that attract, direct and motivate people. Here are the most common, and they're often underutilized:

- Mission Statement
- History
- Tagline
- Vision
- Strategic Goals
- Logo
- Values



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Here are some uncommon ones, and they're very powerful:

- Strategic Role - business category +
- Principle - unique approach to mission
- Personality - company's voice & character
- Association - symbol of what company stands for
- Positioning Statement - 10 second company pitch

All tools are based on your business bedrock. But tools have two major caveats, or tool tips.

Tool Tip #1 - It Takes More Than One

"If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail". Building requires more than one tool, ask a carpenter.

Different tools are needed for different situations. A logo doesn't help service reps deal with an angry customer. Nor does a tagline create the next service offering, or design employee incentive programs.

Tool Tip #2 - They Must Be Actionable

Here's an actionable acid test. What do you hear when you ask your:

- Receptionist to recite your company mission?
- On-site employees what your company values are?
- Payroll clerks how do they make a decision in a new situation?

Mission statements and strategic sayings are etched in marble on many a lobby wall. Unfortunately, no one can remember them, or use them.

Put mission statements in marketing materials and what's the point? All your customers know mission statements can't be used, because they have their own hanging in their lobby too.

Aligning Vertically True

With tools and bedrock identified, it's time to build. Here are three levels to align efforts vertically true.



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1st Level - Messaging

Make all external messages consistent with each other. Simple, not easy. It means the look, the language, and the feel of anything that speaks to customers is aligned.

Everything; brochures, letterhead, web site, proposals, invoices, uniforms, vehicles, signage, business cards, and did I mention email signatures?

Getting messages in line with each other => **nice win**

Aligning all messages with your Customer Experience bedrock => **priceless**

2nd Level - Serving Customers

Align all customer interactions with the promise of your Customer Experience bedrock. This means customers are experiencing your promise when they:

- Call your office
- Talk to your site employees
- Review your invoices
- Receive emails from you
- Ask for the unusual
- Have a problem you caused
- Have a problem they caused, but you can help
- Make unreasonable demands

And how are customers experiencing all of the above? From your employees. But it takes more than training. See the next level.

3rd Level - Serving Employees

This last level is aligned when your employees are experiencing your Customer Experience promise themselves.

Avoid the hypocrisy of asking employees to provide exceptional service when their own needs and requests are ignored.

Everything in your company runs directly from bedrock, through your employees, straight and true, to serve customers.



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This means your Customer Experience promise is:

- Integrated into all internal policies & procedures
- Incorporated into employee training & orientation
- Removing bottlenecks that stop employees from delivering
- Guiding each employee's individual actions

Thanks again to Lynn and Joe of [Parker LePla](#). Their work is bedrock for my contractors' version of the above.

Summary

Build on bedrock with the right tools at all levels, and there's no limit to how high you can build.

- Common tools: Mission, Vision, History, Values, etc.
- Uncommon tools: Strategic Role, Principle, Personality, etc.
- It takes more than one tool to build
- Tools must be actionable by every employee
- 3 Building Levels: Messaging, Serving Customers & Employees

About Service Performance

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