

THE CLARITY QUESTION: 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'

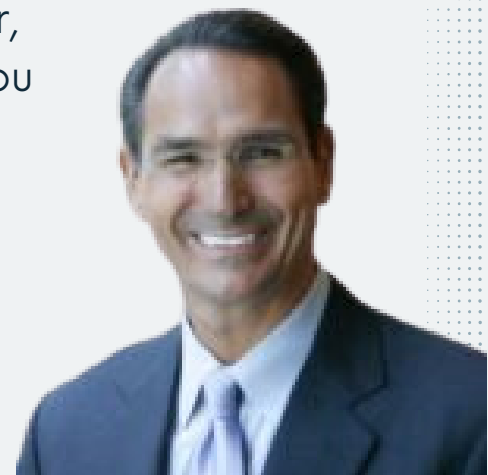


Question 1 by Howard Partridge

Where are you going?

In the previous edition of this series , we shared seven questions designed to help you get from where you are to where you want to go. Unfortunately, many people don't have clearly defined goals. Many people today are just going through the motions.

Yes, you want to do better. You want to have a better business. You want to make more money, and you want to enjoy better health and relationships. However, if you aren't clear on where you'd like to go, you won't make the best decisions in your business.



THE CLARITY QUESTION: 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'



Are you feeling burned out?

For many years, I've shared that your business exists only to be a vehicle to achieve your life goals. Your business can have a dramatic impact on your personal life. If you are like most business owners, your company may occupy your thoughts 24/7. You may feel like your business owns you, leaving you with very little family time and your days consumed with putting out brush fires.

I understand how you feel. I started my cleaning company out of the trunk of my car over 39 years ago. For the first 13 years, I felt enslaved to my business. Then, I realized the importance of implementing systems and understanding that every business decision I made (or failed to make) would impact my personal life.

Eventually, my cleaning business became turnkey, thanks to having people and processes in place that allow it to run by itself. But this transformation started with me getting clear on what I wanted: freedom. I wanted to do whatever I wanted whenever I wanted to do it. I reached that goal and fell in love with helping business owners. Although I work very hard leading my coaching and training company, I still manage to continue fulfilling my life goals.

THE CLARITY QUESTION: 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'



What's your long-term vision?

Far too often, business owners operate based on their immediate needs rather than according to a longer-term vision. In other words, they are just reacting to the day's problems and putting out brush fires instead of planning for their future beyond just making this week's payroll. I once did that, too.

In the absence of clearly defined goals, you will be forced to focus on an activity and ultimately be enslaved to it. If you aren't clear on where you are going, how will you know what team members you need? How will you know how many you need?

And if you have a dream but no team, you'll have to either give up the dream or build up the team. Phenomenal team members don't want to follow someone who lacks a dream, doesn't have big goals, and doesn't know where they are going.

So, where are you going?

THE CLARITY QUESTION: 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'



Five stages of business growth

Even if you know where you want to go, you, like many business owners, might not understand where you are on the field of play in the business game. You see, there are five stages of business growth that we need to know in order to determine our destination.

Stage 1: Survival. First, we have to survive. However, that is not the ultimate goal; it's just the starting point. A rocket ship has to get off the ground, but its destination coordinates have already been programmed and predetermined. The rocket ship's crew knows where the rocket ship is supposed to go. Similarly, business owners should move beyond survival mode, especially when they have a team. Unfortunately, business owners much too frequently micro-manage every move, stifling not just the entire team's potential, but also the company's growth.

THE CLARITY QUESTION: 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'



Five stages of business growth

Stage 2: Stability. Again, the sole reason your business exists is to serve as a vehicle for achieving your life goals. That is the only reason it exists. Any vehicle, whether it be a train, a plane, an automobile, or a rocket, is a group of working parts designed to work in unison for a specific reason: to take you where you want to go. This group of working parts is called a system. You can't get past survival mode without systems. Why? Because without them, your business will always depend too much on you!

Stage 3: Success. Once you have established systems in your business, you can begin to duplicate yourself. This means that you can delegate aspects of running your company to others. This is where leadership comes into play and is crucial. Everything rises and falls on leadership. And the most challenging person to lead is ourselves.

THE CLARITY QUESTION: 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'



Five stages of business growth

Stage 4: Significance. If you want to have a business that runs itself, you'll need to enter the rare but rewarding space of developing leaders. You must go beyond hiring people to do routine tasks and even beyond managing. Now, the objective is to cultivate directors who can run your company (or at least parts of it) for you. You'll need to develop leaders. This requires an entirely different skill set and value set. It demands a different mindset and the adoption of deeply held values.

Stage 5: Scale. At this stage, you have enough infrastructure in place to duplicate your vehicle. You can do that if you want to have multiple business locations, franchise your business, or license it. Or, if you aspire to serve in the ministry, travel the world, spend time with your grandkids, or all the above, you can do so because you now have an organization that supports your biggest goals.

THE CLARITY QUESTION: 'WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'



Where are you going?

So, where do you want to go in life? What role would you like to fulfill in your business? It's up to you, but it won't happen accidentally. We all need clarity to see where we want to go. And we must intentionally build a business that will fulfill our life goals.

You see, your business has a significant impact on your life, but this impact doesn't have to be negative. It can be positive. My mentor, the late Zig Ziglar, said: "If you want to reach a goal, you must 'see the reaching' in your mind before you arrive at your goal."

The first step in reaching any goal is to define the goal clearly. Mr. Ziglar also said, "You can't hit a target you cannot see." You must see the goal vividly. You need to see it and feel it. It's like being in a movie.

As you get clarity of your vision, consider why it is essential. My next article will explore "The Cause Question: Why is it important?"