



Blue Swift Consulting’s Alyssa Cox Concludes IABC DC Leadership Series with “Leading Through Vision”

by Eli Natinsky | Jun 16, 2023 | Chapter Updates, Events, Learn



Alyssa Cox of Blue Swift Consulting discussed the importance of setting a path that speaks to how an organization drives progress toward its overarching mission at IABC DC Metro’s “Leading Through Vision” on May 17. The webinar was the second of the chapter’s two-part leadership series.

“Vision helps us articulate what we need to be working on and it gives us guidelines for making strategic decisions for how we spend our time, where we deploy resources, and how we define success,” she said.

Categories

Chapter

Updates

DEI

Events

Featured

Learn

Members

Newsletter

Uncategorized

Volunteer

Recent Posts

Blue Swift

Consulting’s

Alyssa Cox

Concludes

IABC DC

Leadership

Series with

“Leading

Through

Vision”

The webinar built on the first portion of the chapter's leadership series, "Establishing a Leadership Brand," which Alyssa conducted on April 19. Click [here](#) for an overview.

An outline of "Leading Through Vision":

1) What is Vision?

Alyssa quoted [Simon Sinek](#), an author and inspirational speaker, who said: "There are leaders and then there are those who *lead*. Leaders hold positions of power or authority. Those who lead *inspire* us."

Building on Sinek's thought, she noted it's crucial that managers help their employees understand how the work they do fits into an organization's larger goals. Once they grasp this, it will help drive success and achievement.

2) Directive Leadership vs. Influential Leadership

A) Directive Leadership: Alyssa referred to directive leadership as "stop light leadership" in that tasks are distributed, activity is controlled, and decisions are made. When we work with directive leaders we like, we call them "perfectionists." When we work with directive leaders we don't like, we call them "micromanagers." But it comes down to the same idea: decisions are concentrated on the leader. And the best that you're likely to receive from a directive leader is a task list.

B) Influential Leadership: On the other end are influential leaders. These are people Alyssa calls "traffic circle leaders." The objective of a roundabout is to get drivers through safely. Whereas a directive leader puts up a stoplight and directs traffic, an influential leader sets up a system where people can determine their own outcome. There are no stoplights at a traffic circle — you know the direction and the goal, and it's up to you to make the right decisions.

June
Newsletter –
Board
Elections,
Pride, ESG &
More

Blue Swift
Consulting's
Alyssa Cox
Discusses
Leadership
Branding for
IABC DC

May
Newsletter –
So Many Ways
to Connect

April
Newsletter –
Get Involved!

Archives

June 2023

May 2023

April 2023

March 2023

February 2023

January 2023

December
2022

October 2022

September
2022

3) Vision:

"Your vision should go beyond tactics," Alyssa said. "How do we articulate a plan for your team? It starts with a vision for your whole organization. And it's not about profits — it's about the larger social good that your organization is trying to achieve."

For example, the mission of **Unilever**, a multinational producer of consumer goods, is: "To make sustainable living commonplace with high-performing brands that are a force for good, taking action for a more sustainable and equitable world."

While Unilever's holdings include Dove, Ben & Jerry's and Hellman's, their mission doesn't mention soap, ice cream, or mayonnaise. Instead, it speaks to how the company wants to contribute to the world, and their products are what allow them to arrive at that place.

4) Your Organization's Purpose:

How does your team service the customer? Who do you interact with and how do you create a human chain to the client?

Every organization has a path that leads to the customer whether you work for a for-profit, not-for-profit, or government enterprise. Depending on where your team sits in the operation, this chain can be shorter or longer; some employees interact with the customer directly and others are a layer or two removed from the client. As you distill your organization's purpose by role, don't start with your own work. Instead, begin with those who are closest to the customer and work your way backwards.

5) A Sample Vision Statement for Unilever's HR Comms Department:

A) Unilever's mission: "To make sustainable living commonplace with high-performing brands that are a force for good, taking action for a more sustainable and equitable world."

These teams drive the organization's purpose by...

August 2022

July 2022

June 2022

May 2022

April 2022

March 2022

February 2022

January 2022

December

2021

November

2021

October 2021

August 2021

June 2021

May 2021

B) HR Comms: ... ensuring the people responsible for designing, manufacturing, and delivering our products understand the organization values them and know what resources are available to help them be successful, both at work and at home.

C) HR: ... ensuring the people responsible for designing, manufacturing, and delivering our products have the resources they need to be successful, both at work and at home.

D) Frontline Employees: ... designing, manufacturing, and delivering the high-performing products that make people's lives better every day.

E) Customer

6) After Completing Your Vision Statement:

A) Refine:

- Sleep on your answers
- Add personal stories

B) Audit:

- Sense check your vision
- Update as necessary

C) Socialize:

- Communicate with your team
- Incorporate your vision into communication with your direct customer collaborators

"As you're looking at your goals and evaluating your performance throughout the year, speak to this vision, as well as people's ability and willingness to work toward it," Alyssa said. "That's how it starts to come to life and begins to become part of the cultural fabric of how we work and what we believe."

Thank you to Alyssa for imparting her expertise. IABC DC Metro looks forward to collaborating on future events.

To learn about Alyssa's organization, **Blue Swift Consulting**, and the services it offers — consulting, workshop facilitation, and keynote

speaking — visit: blueswiftconsulting.com. You can also email:
alyssa@blueswiftconsulting.com or call: 919-610-1595.



Blue Swift Consulting's Alyssa Cox Discusses Leadership Branding for IABC DC

by Eli Natinsky | May 3, 2023 | Chapter Updates, Events, Learn



Your leadership brand is an ad for why people should buy what you have to offer, advised **Alyssa Cox of Blue Swift Consulting** during IABC DC Metro's **"Establishing a Leadership Brand"** on April 19. During the gathering, the first of the chapter's two-part leadership series, she discussed the key dimensions of a leadership brand. Guests also completed a guided exercise to craft their leadership statement.

"Memorializing your brand in words makes you accountable to that brand," Alyssa said. "If you articulate what you mean to do, you're much

Categories

Chapter Updates

DEI

Events

Featured

Learn

Members

Newsletter

Uncategorized

Volunteer

Recent Posts

Blue Swift Consulting's Alyssa Cox Concludes IABC DC Leadership Series with "Leading Through Vision"

more likely to actually do things that way.”

Here’s an overview of the webinar:

1) Define your leadership brand: Alyssa noted the importance of being intentional. Everyday, multiple times a day, we have opportunities to be deliberate about how we behave and how we’re perceived. Intentionality shapes your reputation, as well as people’s perception of your brand.

Alyssa shared an anecdote about her former supervisor who advised that she learn who she was as a leader. He said: “If you don’t figure it out, other people will figure it out for you — and you may not like what they decide.”

2) Reputation vs. brand:

A. Reputation is what people *see* you do. It’s the narrative that *other people* craft about you.

Ask anyone who’s worked with you, and they’re going to have some kind of opinion about who you are and what you’re like. Your reputation is what people say, or don’t say, when they’re asked to describe you. Reputation is about other people’s observations, experiences, and perceptions of you. “Another way to think about your reputation is as a form of organizational equity,” Alyssa said.

B. Brand is what you *mean* to do. It’s the narrative *you* craft about yourself.

When it comes to leadership, you need to define your brand in terms of value. It’s both what you value, and how you drive that value for others.

As far as driving value in a team or organization setting, your leadership brand and your personal brand may be slightly different. They should be congruent, but they will speak to different aspects. When we talk about a leadership brand, it’s about how you drive value through others in a professional environment, as opposed to a broader personal brand that you may take into your interactions with your family, friends, and social

June
Newsletter –
Board
Elections,
Pride, ESG &
More

Blue Swift
Consulting’s
Alyssa Cox
Discusses
Leadership
Branding for
IABC DC

May
Newsletter –
So Many Ways
to Connect

April
Newsletter –
Get Involved!

Archives

June 2023

May 2023

April 2023

March 2023

February 2023

January 2023

December
2022

October 2022

September
2022

settings. However, these elements should correspond as they are both based on your values.

3) Your leadership brand is made up of three components:

A) What you work on: This is basically what you do for a living. This portion of your leadership statement is intended not to be a summary of your work to-do list (eg, write press releases, lead an internal comms teams, etc.), but it's about the worth you bring. Who is your customer, and what value do you drive for them as a communicator?

B) How you work with others: You can lead subordinates, peers, superiors, clients, and customers, and it comes down to values when we talk about how we work with others. Some sample words that might characterize your merits are: educate, listen, consistent, and innovative. These traits reflect your leadership style.

C) How you define success: This is an audience's objective reason to buy from you. You are selling yourself to your boss and your boss's bosses to promote you from within the company. Or maybe you're selling yourself to a new employer, asking them to hire you. Or you might run your own communications firm, and you're conveying to your clients why they should buy from you today and purchase more tomorrow.

Further, increasing revenue is how you define success. It's about how you influence KPIs (key performance indicators) for your firm, customers, and company. One of the functions your leadership brand is doing is serving as a pitch to others to invest in you. It could be whether your subordinates invest their time to collaborate cross-functionally, or whether your boss and your boss's bosses agree to invest time and energy to promote you or give you new and different responsibilities. "Money is a common language that we use to evaluate the relative merit of dissimilar investment opportunities," Alyssa said.

Sample metrics for communications professionals might be:

- **External communications:** If you work in public relations, you might look at the number of pickups of press releases by various media outlets. These public perception metrics could have a positive impact on share

August 2022

July 2022

June 2022

May 2022

April 2022

March 2022

February 2022

January 2022

December

2021

November

2021

October 2021

August 2021

June 2021

May 2021

price or revenue.

- **Internal comms:** As far as employee comms, you could gauge your work as it relates to employee satisfaction surveys and employee turnover.

4) A leadership statement might be:

For (key customer)

Internal communications department at Company XYZ,

I drive value by (kind of work you do)

Delivering interactive multichannel communications programming that helps our organization of 200 people understand the connectivity between what they do on a day-to-day basis and the larger mission of the enterprise.

I drive success through others by (your leadership style)

Educating, listening, being consistent, and offering innovative ideas and solutions.

I know I'm successful because (how you influence KPIs):

Employee satisfaction scores have increased and employee turnover has gone down. As a result, less revenue has been spent hiring new workers and this provides cost savings for the organization.

5) After completing your leadership statement:

A) Make your statement your own: Ensure your answers feel real as opposed to what you think you're supposed to say. For each sentence, add personal stories that demonstrate how you live your brand.

B) Audit your statement: Once you're happy with your declaration, find people in your life that are going to tell you the truth. Talk to people who know you, such as friends, colleagues, and mentors, who can point out areas where you're not living your brand. You can then identify ways to close those gaps.

C) Socialize your leadership brand: Review your resume and LinkedIn

profile and update both to line up with your leadership brand. Share your identification and narratives with your customers. Start to get comfortable with self-promotion using the language with which you've aligned. "If nobody knows who you are as a leader, then nobody will think of you as a leader," Alyssa said.

Thank you, Alyssa, for sharing your expertise with our chapter. The second portion of her program will be "Leading Through Vision" on May 17 at 12 p.m. ET. Alyssa will explore the importance of setting a vision for your team that speaks to how your group drives progress toward your organization's overarching mission, as well as the role vision setting plays in increasing engagement on your team. The cost is \$10. Click [here](#) to register.

To learn about Alyssa's organization, **Blue Swift Consulting**, and the services it offers — consulting, workshop facilitation, and keynote speaking — visit: blueswiftconsulting.com. You can also email: info@blueswiftconsulting.com or call: **919-610-1595**.