

Reignite the Passion in Your Team

Brenda called us because [the team she was managing seemed to have lost some of the passion for their work](#). She wanted us to conduct a workshop that would help her to reignite their passion for community development and ignite her passion for leadership.

Two years ago the team opened a community centre to great fanfare and high expectations. The community worked hard to raise funds required to build the centre and stock it with top equipment. An exhaustive recruiting campaign was conducted to find the best people to lead and run the facility. They were tasked with creating award winning programs that inspired participation, education, commitment, health and development among community members of all demographics.



In the first few months participation numbers exceeded projections. The community responded to programs with anticipation and positive feedback. The facility was kept clean and the equipment was maintained at peak performance levels. Leadership conducted training sessions and meaningful mission, vision and value statements were created that described the difference staff wanted to create in their community.

Over time the bloom started to fade from the rose. Gradually the facility began to get less clean. The equipment started to break down and didn't get repaired. Staff began to run out of ideas for new programs. Participation numbers started to fall. Staff forgot what the mission, vision and value statements were. Community leaders started to complain. *"What happened to the wonderful facility we built two years ago?"*

Brenda was still in her probationary period when she called us. She took over leadership of the team two months ago and knew that things needed to turn around - **and fast**. She knew that the people she managed cared about community development – that they had a passion for the cause. But she sensed that they weren't passionate doing it any more. It seemed like obstacles, routine and lack of direction had overpowered them.

We provided Brenda and her team with a two day [passionate teams workshop](#) and followed that up with one day of [passionate leadership training](#) for Brenda. Over the next six months we'll coach Brenda to help her implement the commitments her team made during their workshop.

What we discovered with Brenda's team reveals a trend we've seen with many teams in a variety of sectors. It's one thing to be passionate about your business – many people have that. It is quite another to sustain that passion while doing the work over time in the face of recurrent obstacles, routine work, misaligned purpose and unclear values.

Here are three steps you can take right now to reignite the passion in your own team.

1. **Combat the Dreaming Phase.** Ask your clients and/or funders what progress they want to see in the next two months. Document the obstacles that stand in the way of your team creating that progress and ways to eliminate them. Create an action plan that paves the way forward to create the desired progress and hold people accountable for implementing the plan.
2. **Beat the Griping Phase.** Start publicly measuring the progress your team is making towards goals that everyone agrees are meaningful. Every Friday celebrate the progress your team has made in the current week. Repeat every week.
3. **Conquer the Coasting Phase.** Revisit and rewrite your mission statement. Make it meaningful and advertise it relentlessly. Ask every member of your team to commit personally to doing everything they can within their role to make this mission a daily reality. When everyone's effort matters on a grand scale, coasting isn't an option.

Have Compassion for Yourself!

In the last week, we coached a number of people in need of self-care. Why? Because people are commonly pushing themselves to their limits. It is one thing to take action in service of meaningful goals; it is another thing to “light the candle at both ends” and burn away your natural resources – time and energy. And what happens when things start to slip because we have been in over-drive for so long? Well, many of us beat ourselves up for it! The expectations we place on ourselves and on others is often unhealthy and unrealistic.

Our time and our energy are precious. Whether we like to admit it or not, they are also limited resources. Most of us participate in a culture that does not encourage us to set boundaries around our commitments and activities. Usually, the opposite message rings through: “Work smarter not harder.” So there is constant pressure to do more with less. What has been the impact of this approach?



Take a look at pre-recession stats from the American Psychological Association (2007):

- One-third of Americans feel they are living with extreme stress.
- About half of Americans (48%) feel that their stress has increased over the past five years.
- Money and work are the leading causes of stress (mentioned by three quarters of Americans).
- About half of Americans (48%) report lying awake at night due to stress.

At PassionWorks! we know that Rest is fundamental to sustainable energy at work and to long-term PassionFlow. There is no way around this. Rest must be a component of each day, for each of us. Instead, many of us tell ourselves we will “catch up on our sleep on the weekend”; or, “we just have to get through this project at work and then we can take a break” but then another project is waiting and we jump right in; or, “I’ll just power through this task and eat later.”

What our research has taught us is that Rest needs to be a daily practice and for many of us, a discipline. Sure it’s okay to have the odd day where we can’t take a break; but, more and more this non-stop activity is becoming the norm, not the exception. Our data tells us that Rushing and Obsessing are on the rise globally – cannibalizing our healthy PassionFlow.

Our work needs to rejuvenate, not deplete. If our work is stealing our energy, then we need to take a hard look at our work habits and commitments. Why? Because our health and our lives are worth it!



1. Assess your commitments & set boundaries. Which are your true priorities? What can wait? Organize yourself around your top priorities and you will ultimately benefit! Create a transition plan, if you need one; but, remove yourself from the dance of over-committing. At work, meet with your manager and create an action plan for the best use of your time and energy.
2. Ritualize Rest. Make sure you are looking after your physical-self. It’s a myth that you don’t need 8 hours of sleep a night. Study after study shows that people need a minimum of 7 hours. And, take your vacation days! In Canada alone there are 32 million unclaimed total vacation days annually.
3. “Keep your head where your feet are!” A senior executive once said that her work/life balance came by following this one rule. She never thought about work when she was at home. This discipline gave her sanity and helped her set limits.