

Critical Business Conversations

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What we'll talk about

Conversations drive all business...

But conversations can be messy and uncomfortable – so you need a plan

Learn the right conversations to gain needed insights and work through important misunderstandings, uncomfortable truths, and conflicts

In this webinar you'll learn:

1. Conversations to engage and motivate people
2. Conversations to say NO to work you can't do
3. Conversations to test your strategy
4. Conversations about pay and performance
5. Conversations about missed expectations & performance

The right words

- Too many managers (at all levels) shy away from conversations which are necessary and important because they are uncomfortable
- Mentors helped me when I had to face a difficult conversation for the first time
- The first time you face a difficult conversation, it can be very helpful to have a blue-print
- The strongest leaders foster real conversation. Conversation moves the business forward

1. Engage & Motivate

Unstructured Conversation: What do you think?

Don't settle for transactional:

“Here's what I need, please submit your input or plans”

Instead, wade into the potentially messy version. It's worth it

- What do you think? Really...

Sure these conversations can become personal and emotional, but –

Don't you want your employees engaged on a personal and emotional level?

You can't get that through formal, transactional conversations

Example Conversations

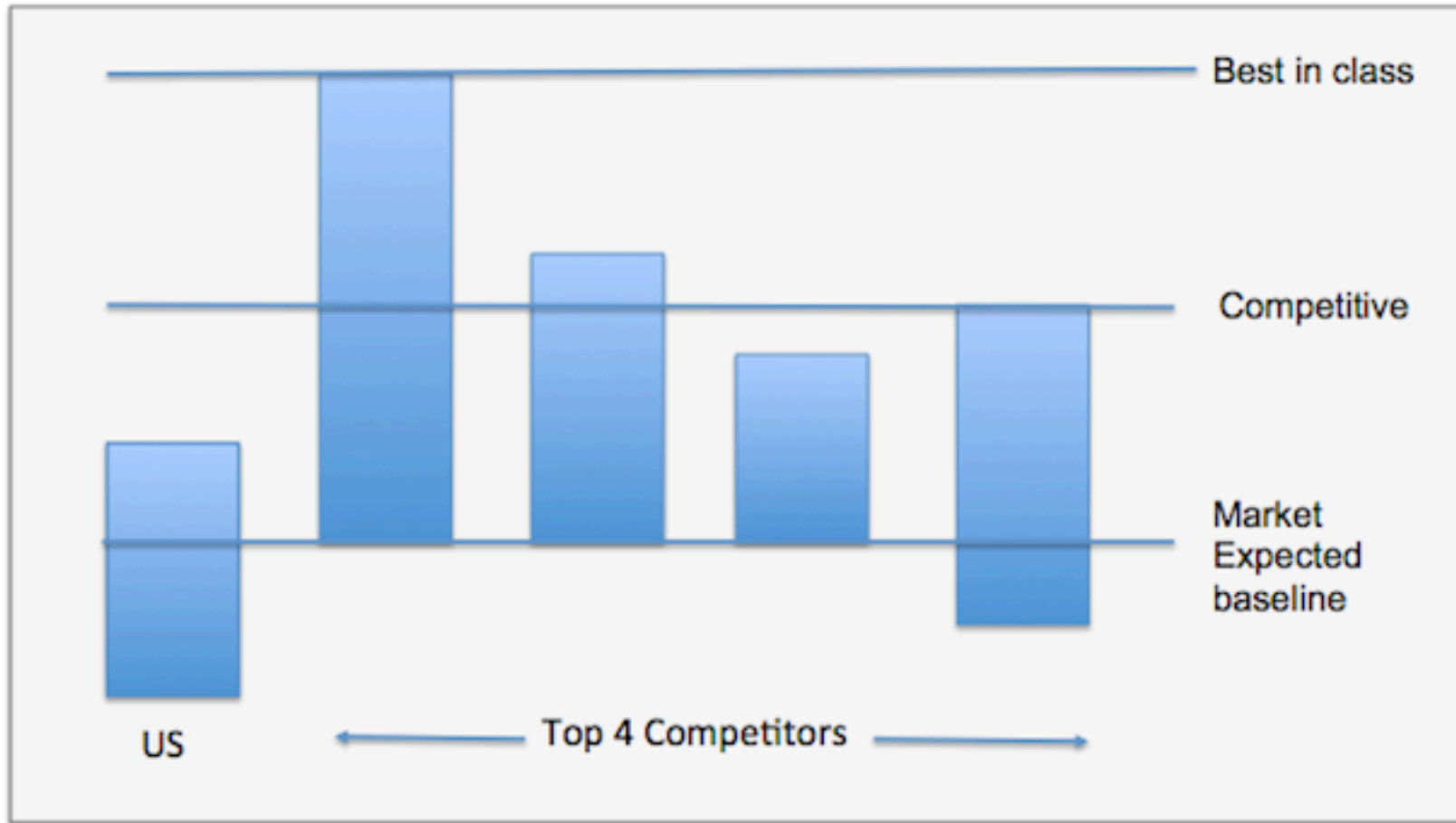
- What should we do better or different?
- How am I doing as your manager?
- When I worry about you, what should I be worried about?
- What is most important for you in this job/business? Or in general?

2. Saying NO with credibility

Conversation: We need to talk about reality

- Don't pretend that you can do something that you/your team can not deliver
- Talk about your Ruthless Priorities
- Avoid "Turtles all the way down"
- Have the conversation about reality. Commit to reality. Even if reality is bad news, make a strong commitment to what you CAN do
- Talk about the cost difference between OK and great

What is the current state?



What can you do realistically?

Plan	Budget	Staffing	Timeline
Fix the worst 2 problems that are killing us now	Similar budget as before I got here	No additional staff	Fixed within 6 months
Get to a less embarrassing baseline	10% more budget	Add 1 hire	Fixed within 12months
Get competitive in 2 key areas	50% more budget	Add 3 new hires	Fixed within 12 months
Get to best in class performance across the board	100% more budget	2 new managers	Fixed within 18 months

3. Your Strategy

Conversation: What do WE think?

- You can't just broadcast a strategy
- You need to create a conversation with your team
- You need to create a conversation with your whole org

For this strategy to succeed:

- What do we need to believe must be true, and do we believe it?
- Do we think this plan is realistic?

Conversations about Strategy

- Do we have this plan resourced sufficiently?
- Are there other groups inside the company who don't want us to do this? What should we do about it?
- How do you think our competitors will respond?
- Will our existing customers have any issues?

Have these conversations 1-1 and with the group

4. Missed Deadlines

Conversation: This is not OK

You don't always have to fire someone, but you do need to have a conversation

This should be uncomfortable, you missed a deadline

- What did we learn from this?
- What is your recovery plan?
- How will you/we avoid this in the future?

Late to meetings, address it:

- Did you not understand that starting at 9:00 meant 9:00? It's 9:04. You are late. Don't do that again

5. Pay and Performance

With your boss, or with your employee:

YOU make sure there is never a surprise

Drive the conversation with your boss if your boss isn't doing it

Conversation: Are we aligned on goals expectations?

- What are your career goals?
- What are your compensation expectations?
- What are your performance objectives? And how are you doing?
- How are you viewed by stakeholders in the company?

Three things to take away

1. Don't be afraid of messy, emotional, creative conversations
2. As a leader it's important to uncover what people really think and how they feel about the work
3. Good conversations remove risk and move the business forward

Final thought:

Remember, what you think and believe and broadcast and request is only personally meaningful to you until you bring others into a genuine conversation about it

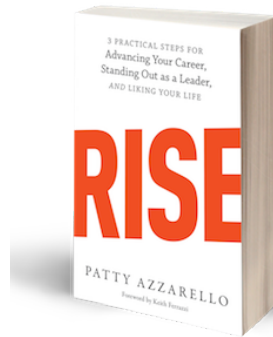
Azzarello Group Resources:

FREE Resources

- Career Success Quiz
- Patty's Business Leadership BLOG

Career Resources

- Patty's Book *Rise...*
(on Amazon)
- Career Workshop on DVD
- Career Year of Action Guide
- Workbooks:
 - Personal Brand
 - Authentic Networking
 - Make More Time



Business Programs

- Strategy into Action™
- Leadership Support
- Employee Development

Executive Resources

- CMO Survival Guide
- CIO Survival Guide

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