The Secrets to Building a Strong Culture That Catapults You to Success

Danielle Sabrina, founder and CEO of Tribe Builder Media, shares how she built a high-performing team.

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Every year, we publish The Entrepreneur 360 — our list of the 360 most well-rounded companies in America, based on an evaluation of impact, innovation, growth, leadership and business valuation. Our 2019 list debuts on Oct 1. In advance, were checking in with some 2018 honorees, including the one below.

You can have a brilliant idea, but if you don't have a high-performing team, you could be dead in the water. And that sort of strength comes down to a strong culture.

Danielle Sabrina should know. As the founder and CEO of Tribe Builder Media, a firm focused on public relations, content marketing and business development, her company boasts an over 97 percent placement rate in major publications for its clients.

"Having a strong team and culture absolutely drives our success. We all really care about each other and that extends to the people we interact with," Sabrina told *Entrepreneur.* "We truly care about sharing our client's stories, and we're dedicated to getting [them] out there."

This mentality is also a reason she made it into the top five of the 2018 Entrepreneur 360 list, a ranking that looks at five metrics — impact, growth, leadership, valuation and innovation — to determine business success. *Entrepreneur* caught up with Sabrina to chat about success, team-building, leadership style and her advice for aspiring entrepreneurs.

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This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

How do you define success?

I hate to admit it, but I've been that person that gets so hyper-focused on achieving the next thing that it can be tough for me to slow down. But today, for me, success is more about balance; it's about creating systems and structure in my business that gives me a peace of mind, so I can disconnect and be fully present in other aspects of my life.

How do you build a strong company culture?

I promote, perhaps even demand, a culture of positive and uplifting energy, because we never know what other people are going through. So kindness first, always. I'm also big on efficiency. We're always looking for ways to work smarter so we can truly put our focus into the creative side of things while at the same time allowing us to manage our lives better.

I let my team tell me how they best work, what times work for them to start and end their day, and we work together on how that can be successfully integrated into the company. I don't want one of my members stressed out all day because their child has been in daycare for more than 10 hours, or they have to get up at 4:00 a.m. to be able to get a workout in before they start their day. I feel like the old traditional models of a 9-to-5 schedule is a breeding ground for complacency and offers little incentive for people to go above and beyond; I never want anyone on my team dreading they have to work.

For aspiring entrepreneurs who are looking to start a business, the landscape is competitive. What are some of your go-to strategies for standing out?

Forget about standing out or go-to-market strategies; learn how to generate revenue as quickly as possible. I see so many new entrepreneurs or small businesses fail because they don't know how to promote or feel comfortable promoting their own products or services. But if you do, you'll get to know what the demand is, as it's often a little different than what you might have thought it was. Once you have a stream of revenue coming in, you'll have more flexibility and a very good grasp on what your target markets are, so you can then try different marketing strategies.

What's the one trait that helped you get to where you are today?

Perseverance and determination. I'm always convinced there must be a way, [even if] I just haven't found it yet. I can stay the course as long as it takes, but I also remain flexible to course-correct as needed.

To people on the outside, it can look like I have the ability to create or get something up and running almost overnight, but I always remind them that they don't see all the years, months, days and hours I devote to teaching myself and dissecting how others have gotten from one point to another. If I'm interested in something, I won't leave a stone unturned and will find the best, fastest and most efficient way to get there.

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