

Life at Nuance, Professional development

At the end of the day...we must empower people

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We all seem to want more empowerment. In this edition of “At the End of the Day,” Brenda reflects on what it means to empower people and how to get there.

As we continue to transform into one Global Marketing organization at Nuance, it has become obvious to me that the key to our success is to empower each person in the organization. And so, I began to reflect on what creates empowerment.

I know empowerment takes time and focus. Empowerment also requires give-and-take from both the individual and the leader. The “give” and “take” have 3 characteristics as I see them.

1. **Courage: we must be willing to manage a fear of failure**

As individuals willing to take intelligent risks – and as managers and leaders, we must support the courage to try new ideas that are in alignment with our priorities. In support of this characteristic, I found this amazing quote from Teddy Roosevelt (1907):

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose

face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strived valiantly; who errs, who comes again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.

As we courageously take intelligent risks, we will have failures, which means we need resilience. Resilience is the ability to maintain a core purpose and integrity among unforeseen surprises. Andrew Zolli wrote a book on why things and people bounce back, and he outlined three tenants:

- *Belief that one can find meaningful purpose in life (optimism)*
- *Belief that one can influence one's surroundings and the outcome of events (confidence)*
- *Belief that one's positive and negative experiences will lead to learning and growth*

2. Aligned destination: we must have agreed-upon goals for our work and projects

We must align around the destination – this can be how we work in the future or can be project-specific. It can be a project that we've done ten times, but there might be a new vision for the future that will change the destination of that project. It takes communication to align around a destination. We are in start-up mode, and start-ups discuss everything. Leaders will need to give of their time, and leaders and individuals will need to keep an open mind to new ways of doing things. Why don't we always have an open mind? See #1; it's often from fear of failure.

3. Ownership: we must allow each other to be responsible and take ownership

Part of ownership is an achievement orientation where an individual owns achieving the result. And to achieve the result, it may require practice — and possibly many versions of the work. As an owner of the work, you cannot say you are responsible and then explain why you were dependent on someone else, and it wasn't your fault if it didn't work out. Why do we blame others? See #1; it's often about fear of failure.

We must give and take ownership.

We all seem to want more empowerment. What is needed to get there? Maybe a bit more courage. More discussion to understand the destination. More responsibility?

I know Nuance will be more successful if I can empower my team. To get there, I need to clearly define where we are going and leverage their talent, courage, and determination along the way. It's an exciting time!

At the End of the Day... is an expression meaning an assessment of essential facts and truths. It's a summation of the pros and cons of any situation and a straightforward statement of what really matters. It's also the title of this blog series by [Brenda Hodge](#), Nuance's Chief Marketing Officer, with insights about leadership, empathetic customer relationships, and marketing techniques.

Tags: [Leadership principles](#)



About Brenda Hodge

Brenda leads all aspects of Nuance's marketing function working to develop the go-to-market approach, building the Nuance brand to drive growth, and expanding client relationships to increase loyalty. She joined Nuance from Optum where she most recently served as Chief Marketing Officer for the Provider Market segment. Brenda's career spans multinational sales and marketing leadership roles at companies such as GloStream, Allscripts/Misys Healthcare Systems, and SAS Institute.

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