Human Resources Management

Creating the environment for success.

To ensure that your team performs according to expectation, management has to fulfill key responsibilities. Management has a responsibility to inform the team of what is expected of them - not only as individuals but also as a group.

A recognised tactic is to create a mission for each of the departments or teams in your business. The mission could be in the form of a formal mission statement, a mission for the week or month or all of the above. Mission statements don't always have to be extravagantly worded. They can take the form of a simple outline of a project with both a qualitative and quantitative element.

The Key to Successfully Motivating Employees and third Party Service providers.

It is a fact that businesses around the world are being restructured and re-engineered just to stay ahead of break-even. If any business cannot become leaner, more agile and ever more adaptable, they cannot hope to remain competitive.

What about the impact on employees? Restructures and outsourcing can leave employees feeling increasingly insecure about their careers, dubious about any promotional opportunities and with no job satisfaction. This potentially leaves a business with an unmotivated, unenthused and inefficient workforce.

So how do you find harmony between your businesses becoming a lean goal orientated organisation while maintaining your employee's job satisfaction, lifestyle, and introducing out-sourced providers into the team? The answer is effective COMMUNICATION of goals, expectations and performance. Not just once a year, but every day.

The key is to find out what makes your service providers and employees get up in the morning. Understanding their behavior has been a subject that has been extensively written and discussed as a driver for profit improvement. Meetings at the beginning of each week form the platform for employees to contribute to making key decisions. Motivation will also be improved where team leader supplies regular feedback on performance and deadline importance while asking employees for their opinions and input into key projects or tasks.

Get to know your employees

When was the last time you took any interest in your employees' lives? Just asking your employees what they want out of their working life is a powerful motivator. Get to know your employees and find out what makes them tick. You will soon find out how to best reward each individual to maximise performance.

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Human Resources Management:

Provide your employees and third Party Providers with the best tools and environment
Nothing is more de-motivating than working with old machinery, old technology or in a dingy environment. Investing in top line equipment improves efficiency, creates an atmosphere of optimism and pride and reinforces to employees your long-term commitment to the business.

Have presence
Employees need leadership, which requires the presence of the leaders themselves. Throughout history leaders like Winston Churchill, Napoleon and William Wallace all recognised the importance of being with the troops or the people at the coalface. Frequent contact with their managers, however brief, communicates that the employees' efforts are important and recognised by management.

Encourage a passion for deadlines
Many businesses write annual plans with well thought out commentary, detailed goals, action plans and deadlines. However, in many cases the day-to-day business activities take over, meaning deadlines come and go or are totally forgotten and not measured.

Deadlines must be supported from the top of the business down. Management must provide systems to ensure that a company-wide planning system is in place. Every activity that is delayed or forgotten costs the company money.

The "Making a Loud Noise" principle
A recognition and review process must take place. This is referred to as the "Making a Loud Noise" principle. Management and team leaders must display an interest and level of concern in meeting deadlines. If you do not comment on a deadline being missed, then you cannot expect employees to be concerned. Team leaders must be vocal in expressing satisfaction or dissatisfaction otherwise the corporate culture of "it doesn't matter" starts to creep. Excuses such as "I was too busy to get it done", or "You do not understand how much I have to do," are offered every time a deadline is missed.

The whole team must view the process like a game of football. Every time points are scored, the business should congratulate its employees. If a business drops the pass before the goal line and does not achieve a set objective, the business and the team involved should feel a sense of disappointment. Every time a deadline needs to be postponed, all members of the team should feel passionate that they are not performing well, and attempt to get back on track.

No excuses, no procrastination
Don't let excuses and procrastination dominates your organisation. Implement effective management systems to allow you to overcome these two productivity barriers.

Are the team members and managers lazy?
Both managers and employees can lose focus. Lack of focus can be caused by laziness, but more often, it is the result of ineffective management of time and tasks. Even in organisations that regularly do not meet targets, you will find that people are busy. It is just that they are focusing on the wrong things.

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There are three basic ways to become more effective:

Adopt a "Can Do" attitude;
Accept responsibility (i.e. not passing the buck);
Prevent distractions by less important priorities.

In addition, managers and team leaders need to:

Not accept excuses;
Focus on deadlines and regularly communicate them to team members;
Develop a reward and recognition process;
Develop consistency in rewards and incentives.

If you look around most offices, you see a group of dedicated, highly motivated, hard working people. However, if left to their own devices, three quarters of the staff would be relatively ineffective by the company's documented standards. As unfortunate as it may sound, the reality is people require leadership and guidance. Even your top managers at times need to be given direction.

In some organisations, even if all the staff has a "Can Do" attitude, problems may still occur because of distractions by less important competing tasks.

A popular analogy is two teams on a football field. One team beats the other but both walk off the field exhausted. Physically, both teams worked as hard as each other, yet one achieved its goal and the other failed. The only difference was that one team was more focused on the priorities of getting the ball across the line…and that is the difference between success and failure.

The "Excuse Culture"
In order for an organisation to be successful, the excuse culture must not be tolerated. An excellent book on the subject is "Let's Get Results, Not Excuses" by James Bleech and David Mutchler. This provides a great level of detail into the "Excuse Culture" that the author's claim dominates corporations. A culture needs to be developed which supports action, not excuses. It is also believe that the "Can Do" attitude and creative problem solving are linked.

Deadlines will blowout if people do not have the ability to focus and solve problems in a creative manner. In a situation where a person is asked to complete a task before the next meeting, they will often wait until the actual meeting to mention something like, "I couldn't do it because…" If that same person knew an excuse would not be accepted, there would be greater incentive to complete the task or creatively solve the problem.

How to get things done! - A reminder system
Businesses need a reminder system. Business priorities and plans can be overshadowed by the day-to-day activities of the operation. 'Fire fighting' often absorbs us to the extent that major deadlines can be missed and forgotten.

In the perfect world, a business should develop a reminder system to help with deadlines. This would constantly remind people of the tasks at hand (e.g. launch a new product or book some advertising). A reminder system keeps everybody focused.

Management in a nutshell

Successful management is not only coming up with the ideas but also ensuring that the organisation implements the plan.

Sign-off on priorities

Well-managed organisations involve their staff and service providers in the planning process. There is no point in telling your staff or service providers what to do if they do not agree to do it. Tasks should always be established in agreement with your employees and providers. Once agreed, they should then be documented and signed off by each party.

Winning back control of the organisation

A performance management system is not designed to create 'Big Brother syndrome'. It is a scheme that if implemented in the correct manner could constitute a great deal of encouragement of employee achievement levels.

Performance Reviews.

In any typical organisation there needs to be some appraisal of employee effectiveness. While naturally the measurement criteria are different in different businesses, essentially a good employee is someone who focuses on the priorities and makes sure they are successfully achieved. A good employer is someone that communicates clearly what is expected and fairly allocates resources to achieve the organisation's objectives.

Problems

The major problem in most organisations is that there are limitations in the formal systems for ensuring employees know the priorities of the organisation. Communication about what is expected and what is achieved are often confused. Morale problems can occur as a result.

Problem solved using a performance management system. The performance appraisal process is going to benefit from:
Listing employee priorities each week and monitoring progress daily;
Having a comments section in the program so that performance observations can be recorded.

Incentive Programs.

Employee incentive programs are popular motivation tools. Incentives include for example offering a $200 cash bonus to the employee of the month or on a larger scale, offering a trip around the world at the end of the year for the highest achiever.

Problems

Incentive systems only work to motivate if employees understand exactly what is required of them to earn the reward. The criteria must be communicated and understood by participants and the measurement system must be fair, objective, and achievable within a reasonable time frame.

Human Resources Management:

If the program is totally unachievable, not understood or subjective with too long a lead up, not only will no one be interested, it may actively have the opposite effect and lower staff morale.

Monitoring different departments
A typical larger organisation has multiple departments such as sales, marketing, production, research and development. Like any organisation, they have objectives to achieve to keep the business moving forward that are made more complicated by the number of different departments - each with their own plans, objectives and priorities.

Problems
In complex organisational structures, senior managers often have difficulty monitoring different departments to ensure they are achieving their objectives and contributing overall. In addition, data provided by different areas may not be in a format that can be reviewed and accessed easily.

Communication
In many organisations, communication is either confused or non-existent. Let us take an example of an organisation experiencing problems of low morale and negativity amongst the employees. This can often be because the employees do not feel adequately informed of what their objectives are and do not feel they have good two-way communication with their team leaders.

Problems
Having no communication system in an organisation can cause negativity as employees and managers alike do not know what is going on in and outside the business.

Scorecard
Any organisation that exists must have data that relates to its development. For instance, a scorecard in the sales department could be the number of direct mail letters sent out, number of follow up telephone calls made, number of appointments made, and number of sales converted or total amount of sales in dollar terms.

Problems
The problem in most organisations is that people forget that keeping up the activity levels within an organisation should lead to more sales, more customers and more products that are new. In short, more revenue and innovation.

How to increase the level of commitment from your people!
In our research of businesses, we have established that in many cases the level of commitment by employees is dynamic and ever changing. This means that on occasions it will be above expectation and on other occasions, below. As part of our experience, we have also established a number of key elements that will allow us to influence our peoples' level of commitment.

Supervisory authority - It is crucial for employees to be shown leadership and on occasions for management to exercise their authority, although not in the "big stick" sense. Human nature will dictate that it is easier for subordinates to accept an assigned goal or responsibility from a recognised manager or leader than it is from a peer of equal status. This can easily be facilitated through the development of an organisational chart that will allow management to map clear levels of authority and communication.

Fighting for the same cause - When all efforts in a team are channelled to achieve the same objective, it is a lot easier for people to feel as if they are part of the team, hence increasing the level of motivation.

The enthusiasm shown by a team working together will become infectious and is certain to improve the levels of commitment throughout the whole business. Through the Company Milestones, we can keep track of the major causes we are fighting for.

Public display of commitment - Recent observations have suggested that commitment levels are generally higher when commitment to the goal or activity is publicly made in front of a group of people. This can be promoted through the facilitation of weekly or monthly meetings. This is a time when individuals can not only voice their achievements but can also proclaim their objectives and current projects, setting an inspiring platform for the meeting.

Expected success

People who are committed to their goals generally believe in their own ability to achieve success. In some instances, belief in your own ability is not enough, it will also take the encouragement, belief and support from management. The key is in a high belief of expected success. Team leaders can foster these expectations by training employees in how to achieve these milestones. An individual who lacks self-belief or lacks the expertise to achieve the expected success is less likely to feel committed to a goal or target.

Knowledge to exceed expectations - Some questions to ask yourself:
Have you ever-addressed self-development programs for employees?
Do you foster coaching sessions for team members?
Do you practice the much-proclaimed exercise of visualisation?
Have you ever actively tried to encourage your staff to attend seminars?
Do you support your team members in their efforts to further their education?
Do you promote role-playing exercises?

If the general answer is no, then we would encourage you to reassess the way in which you contribute to your most important asset in the business - your people.

The above exercises are all practices that will contribute to the team member's belief in their ability. Since "information is power", why not empower your team to succeed? Your subordinates will respect and feel inspired by a leader who is covertly investing in the success of his/her business and overtly investing in the careers of his/her team member.

An inspired team is less likely to abandon ship when it hits an iceberg. They are more likely to stay and contribute to the ship's survival.

Human Resources Management:

Involvement in goal setting - be it a business or marketing plan, a sales budget, a production quota, or even an expected work behavior, in order to engender a higher level of commitment it is necessary to involve the individual in the implementation process. Sometimes involving all of the people who are part of these tasks is virtually impossible. In this case, it is important for your people to have a clear understanding of why you have taken that particular avenue or set particular goals, otherwise the level of commitment is in jeopardy.

The importance of effective communication channels in business cannot be underestimated.

Contact Us Today

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