

Getting the Best from Your People

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A Few Reminders from Last Month

- ❑ In today's business environment, you have to get the best from your people. You can't do it alone.
- ❑ The most effective way to encourage people to expend that discretionary effort is to create a workplace climate that encourages workers to perform at their best.
- ❑ Workplace climate can be simply defined as "*what it feels like to work here*"—as experienced by members of the workgroup. It is important because this perception determines how engaged and motivated each person is to give her best.

Two Climate Factors for This Month

In this newsletter I'll address an additional two factors that impact climate as identified in the research of David McClelland.

Enhancing Clarity:

Clarity is defined as *everyone within the organization knows what is expected of him or her*. It has been shown to have the strongest relationship to employee productivity.

To enhance clarity you have to do two important things:

- ❑ *Make plain the organization's mission and direction*
- ❑ *Spell out a person's role and job expectations*

Here are a few questions and suggestions to help you take action to provide your team the clarity they require to do their job and give their best:

Question: To what degree do people know that there is an overall organizational and work unit vision with clear plans to reach it?

Suggestions:

- ❑ Explain to employees which customer or target market they are meant to serve. Make sure they can describe the needs of this customer with great vividness.
- ❑ Invite and seriously consider employee ideas about strategic direction and priorities for serving their customers

Question: To what degree does the organization have an understood structure, efficient processes, clear roles and job expectations?

Suggestions:

- ❑ Make sure that each person understands what they were hired to do and what outcomes they are supposed to achieve. This needs to be revisited on a periodic basis. It is easy to lose that clarity as new priorities and crises emerge. As a leader it is critical to keep each person focused on who they are serving and the contribution she is expected to make to deliver that service.
- ❑ Monitor breakdowns and glitches in how the work is getting done to adjust processes and technology to maintain the productivity of the work group.

Enhancing Standards:

Standards are *challenging but attainable goals that are set for the organization and its employees*. This dimension of climate is a measure of the emphasis that the organization places on doing one's best. As the leader of your team it is critical that there is a good match between your expectations of quality performance and the capability of the individual and the organization infrastructure to support that level of performance.

There are two important factors to address in enhancing standards:

- ❑ *Improvement*-encouraging continuous performance improvement
- ❑ *Excellence*- setting high standards and challenging goals

Question: To what degree do you encourage performance improvement from the people that you lead?

Suggestions:

- ❑ With a critical eye, keep reviewing the results of your team's performance. Engage members of the team in this effort as well. Increase the expected level of solutions to meet the requirements of your customers and the changes in the market place.
- ❑ Ensure that the resources (e.g., money, people, technology and information) are in place so people can realistically improve their performance.

Question: To what degree do people in your organization believe that you have high standards and set challenging goals?

Suggestions:

- ❑ Sort through the many things that can be measured and identify *one core score* that your people should focus upon. People need this focus from a leader. Many leaders are vague, imprecise, or, most damaging of all, complex when it comes to defining this key measure and specifying the level of excellence expected for that score.
- ❑ Address mediocre performance quickly. Don't let a person's performance undermine the standards of the team. Meet with the person. Seek to understand. Problem solve with the person. Continue to affirm the standard of excellence. Search together for a solution. Take action.

Final Thoughts

I hope your awareness of what an energizing and motivating work environment is heightened. Creating these conditions is critical for your success as a leader because you can't do it alone. Next month I'll provide information on the specific behaviors and management styles that are important to create a motivating climate and get the best from your people.

I have been using a climate survey instrument with my clients to assess how you and your direct reports experience the work environment. We are able to measure how each of the factors outlined in the last two newsletters are perceived. This gives a lot of leverage to taking action with your team. Please give me a call when you would like to explore this application for you and your team.

John Cronkite works with leaders faced with the challenge of implementing change that will be sustained over time. Sustaining change requires effective leadership and top performing people. John will provide you with practical, hands on coaching and consulting to build your confidence and effectiveness at providing this leadership and bringing the best from your people. To contact John send an email to cronkite@dirigoconsulting.com and for more information about John and his work visit his website at www.dirigoconsulting.com.