

Achieving Results With and Through People

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ACHIEVING RESULTS WITH AND THROUGH PEOPLE IN A CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT



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How could you achieve the best results with your team? How could you create goodwill with people – winning with and through them? This e-note gives you a few tips, particularly if you operate in a corporate environment!

1. Hone Your People-Sense

Creating a Welcoming Aura

It is becoming increasingly difficult to operate as a lone wolf in the corporate environment. Greater, and better, results often come from the collaborative efforts of people who are committed to the corporate goals. A beginning step is that you develop the ability to build rapport and trust, the ability to get along with people, even the inscrutable ones. Then, take time during each week to reach out to colleagues, superiors, or even customers, finding out what collaborative involvement you can have with them for the corporate good.

Show genuine interest in people and in giving people respect and approval no matter their level in the organization. Be always ready to offer assistance to others, within the context of a planned interaction that does not jeopardize your job priorities. Be as positive as you could be and as decent as possible in your communication with people and in the feedback you give.

Furthermore, you will go far if you take time to understand and be sensitive to the prevailing organizational culture, knowing what works in the organization and how to get desired results within the corporate culture.

Build your Team for High Performance

If you have people reporting to you they should be collaborating to achieve shared and related goals. Therefore, endeavour to carve them into an effective, high performing team. When your team reaches a high level of collaboration between the members quality in performance will peak. Patience and encouragement are complementary segments of the leadership should demonstrate in your team. Endeavour to always set the right tone and the right example.

Operate an open door, and a freewheeling interpersonal pattern in the team so that everybody can share information, experiences and knowledge and benefit from one another's competencies and ideas. Try to draw your subordinates into the team decision making process through consultation and participation, particularly allowing them to have their say on work issues and their needs.

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Essentially, you will be working with your team on the following key areas to be an effective team:

- **Setting and Clarifying Goals:** The members of your team must understand and accept the goals of organization and the team. You should develop with them the vision for the team success and the organization's vision of excellence. Undertake regular planning and briefing meetings so that you can all operate on the same frequency to attain the targets of the team and contribute optimally to the corporate mission.
- **Clarifying Roles:** Team members must understand their functions as well as know what others expect from them. Emphasis should be on mutual accountability and responsibility for the team mission and goals. As much as possible align key roles within the team to the strengths and competencies of each member, while providing opportunities for team members to grow in their competencies and business outlook.
- **Process and Procedures:** All team members must know the interrelationships in the team process and the procedures that lead to the desirable outcomes for the team and the organization. Furthermore, they must be given the opportunity and the encouragement to make input for improving the team process and work methods. how to get work done together (e.g. decision-making, problem solving, time management and conflict management / resolution.)
- **Fostering Harmonious Relationships:** You should get team members to focus on what can promote harmony, rapport and trust in the team while dealing with and resolving conflicts positively in a spirit of mutual respect. You and your team members should also work on building harmonious relationships with other teams in the overall interest of the organization.

Winning People Over When You Correct Them

Not many people enjoy being corrected by others. Yet, corrections are often necessary in all human experiences. Here are two things you need bear in mind. First, how you correct or criticize others is important; it's for one thing a test of your character. Make it easy to be received. Keep a low profile and be calm. Second, a criticism is useful only if it will benefit the person or get goals achieved. Always work with these conditions.

If you are correcting, do it either in private or quietly. Don't pile up allegations or past faults. Treat only the matter at hand. Don't give a categorical "no you are wrong" reply. Explore the issues and adopt some of the following approaches.

- Use the perhaps / however approach: Don't put the person on the defence. Say something like, "Mary, you are valuable to organization. However, let's examine"

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- Give the person a cover: “Akin, the proposal you prepared last week was good. But this one seems a bit below your usual standard. Is there anything wrong with the terms of reference?”
- Be politely frank but impute a reason: “Jane, this artwork is awkward. You will agree with me that you can’t send this to the Managing Director. I know you can improve it.”
- Let the person be of help: “Tony, this PC you repaired yesterday is not functioning well. What do you want to do about it?”
- Suggest to the person in a question what he or she should do; not what he or she should have done: “Chuks, you are reading newspapers (in the office) at 10 o’clock. It is good to keep –to –date on current events. What about coming back to them after you have tidied up those reports I sent to you this morning?”
- Diagnose without being disagreeable: Carefully listen to the person. Repeat his or her argument by saying, “If I get you right you said...(then, pause for his or her affirmation)...but I think...” Or “In a sense, your opinion runs like this...am I right? (Look at his or her face, and pause for response) But don’t you think...”
- Concede some points to the person: “Yes, I agree with you that.... But consider...”
- Appeal to the person’s quest for knowledge: “I was incredulous at first just as you are now. In fact, I was vehemently opposed to it. But Professor ABX, the renowned nutritional biochemist, reported that...I think you will accept that...”

In all cases, maintain a friendly and conciliatory posture.

Winning with Difficult People

See difficult people as a challenge as well as an opportunity for personal growth. Therefore, first seek to understand the person. Second, resolve not to prove your importance or bruise his or her ego or sense of importance. Never exchange accusations or raise the temperature of your interaction.

As much as possible be low key and conciliatory in your overall approach. Once you adopt this approach, it’s easier to negotiate a win-win situation for both of you. Examine all aspects of the issue involved and explore as many solutions as possible to address the problem.

If the situation is difficult to handle, you may take a break (perhaps to think things through, to cool off or to allow things to calm a little), seek help or decide to accept things the way they are but as much as possible minimize your loss or do a damage control.

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2. ENHANCE YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT STYLE

Get Your Time – Priorities Right

Do you have and understand the performance mandate, the strategic situation, and the strategy of your organization? The better able you understand these and integrate the management of your time towards achieving the high-performance mandate and the strategic thrust of the organization the more will be your value in the organization. Whatever your job is, perhaps to supervise five staff, process reports, analyze proposals, negotiate deals, reconcile accounts or trouble shoot the computer – see it as only relevant if it sustainably helps the organization in its strategic mission. Therefore, when deciding on managing your time always think of the attainment of the overall objective or purpose of the organization.

At the beginning of each week, write down the five most important things you would attain on the job to advance the mission of your organization. At the end of each day's work, write down three most important things you have to do on your job the next day. This in essence means that you should have a "To-Do-List" for each day. In addition, whichever of the most important things you commenced make sure you accomplish before you move on to the next. Keep doing the right things your job demands. Keep doing the right things on your job that will promote the attainment of the organization performance mandate.

It Pays to Be Organized

Organization is the heart of effective time management. You have roughly an eight-hour workday filled with time. How you handle your activities determine where those hours go. Therefore, if you want to use your time effectively, you should ensure that where the time goes promotes your job performance. Have you ever felt time pressured? Believe you me; we've all felt so at one point or another. However, the problem is that we had not deliberately taken time to chart our day, our week, our month, or even our year ahead of time. The truth is that you should link your time management to a well-thought-out plan to accomplish specific goals or tasks in your work.

You may argue that we would not be able to do this in all the time. For example, your superior may affect how you spend your time; fellow employees may need support or attention; the infrastructure may fail you, and so on, the list is endless. The solution to such situation is to plan your time with those exigencies in mind. It is better to plan, and organize your day, than to just coast along with whatever comes up during the day. Doing this, you would have a better control of the activities with which you displace time.

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Take time to think and plan daily, weekly and monthly activities in the order of their importance. Here is how you do this. First, determine the things that mean most to your organization in relation to your job situation. Perhaps, integrity in customer care, punctuality, ability to handle assigned tasks with minimal waste of time and resources, harmonious relationships with fellow employees, teamwork, responsiveness to superior's effectiveness, responsiveness to stakeholders, promotion of good corporate image, adaptability to change, and personal growth. Write them down on paper.

Then, ask yourself. 'On which of them do I spend most of my free time thinking about, planning for, and doing?' If, after doing this honestly, you don't like what it reveals, you may want to change where you are placing your priority. You will not attain much on your job if you allow lesser things to take too large a share of your time.

Some Reasons Why Your Time Management May Not Work

You will find it difficult to complete everything on your "To-Do-List" each day. The important thing is that what you do accomplish are the highest priorities for the organization as far as your job is concerned. The reason you may not accomplish the entire list could be any of the following: -

1. You may be trying to accomplish too much.
2. You are jumping into a task in the middle without sufficient analysis of the task.
3. You may not be paying attention to task priorities.
4. Due to a breakdown in Communication, you may not have all the needed information to complete the task.
5. You neglect to plan because you are feeling pressured.
6. You are not staying with the task because you are finding it difficult or boring.
7. You are allowing a contrary desire to weaken your primary purpose in the Commission.
8. You may not have the capability or competence for the task and you refuse to seek help.

It is important that you schedule one hour of uncommitted time each day to take care of the unexpected or to catch up on a task. This may mean, at times, that you come very early to work or close a bit later than the normal closing time.

Handle Drop – In Visitors Tactfully but Firmly

If you allow visitors to drop-in on you excessively, particularly those who are on personal or social visits, you will have problem doing your job. Here are some of the things you can do to limit the amount of time you spend on drop-in visitors.

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1. If you are senior enough in the organization, have your assistant or clerk or secretary screen drop-in visitors.
2. Meet the drop-in visitor outside your office, if possible.
3. If the drop-in visitor does get into your office, stand up and walk around your desk to greet them. Moreover, walk toward the door as if you are leading them out and briefly excuse yourself.
4. Ask a drop-in visitor to walk along with you on your way to a meeting or another office. They will have to be brief to finish the conversation before you arrive at your destination or make an appointment for a later time.
5. Encourage the use of telephone, email, and written notes when personal contact is not necessary.
6. If a fellow employee asks to drop-in, go to their office instead. It will be easier for you to leave when you have concluded the business.
7. Be frank with people about your time pressures and ask for their cooperation.

Manage Your Boss with Time Consciousness

You may you have a boss who causes you to use your time inefficiently. Here are some ways to handle such a situation.

1. Agree priorities with your superior if they clutter you with many tasks.
2. Let them know your current pressing assignments.
3. Agree deadlines for various tasks they give you. You may find out that certain tasks are not as urgent as they might have conveyed.
4. Take time to discuss your work relationship with them see how they could cooperate with you on your priorities.
5. If you have the authority or are in such a position, ask if you may delegate part of the assignment to a subordinate.

FEEDBACK, PLEASE!

If you've found this e-note on 'Achieving Results With and Through People' helpful, please let us know.

In addition, let us know which topics or issues in the arena of personal growth or personal development you'd want us to cover in future e-notes.'

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