THE INVISIBLE WORKFORCE

HOW DO YOU LEAD A TEAM YOU CANNOT SEE?
Who is looking for their next SUPERSTAR EMPLOYEE?

What managers need most is better talent, and that is what Drake offers. We give you a recruitment process and service that extend your own HR department, saving you the cost of building up an expensive recruitment function.

You will benefit by:

- A recruitment strategy that goes beyond traditional methods
- A permanent staffing solution that adds value to your bottom line
- Top-performer profiling using advanced assessment tools
- Industry-focused consultants with in-depth networks and knowledge
- Staffing solutions without building up your internal recruitment function

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Ok, you can put your hand down now and contact the nearest Drake office, or visit drakeintl.com
CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

The Continuing Evolution of HR

THE TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLOSION HAS changed the way we live and work. With today’s easy access to cost-effective technologies, more and more organizations are driving their operations with a staffing complement made up of those who work within the traditional environment and with teleworkers, a virtual workforce.

A virtual workforce comprises workers who do not spend every day in the same office on the same computer. They may work in another city, another country. They are remote from the core organizational infrastructure.

Having a virtual workforce has many benefits, including lower labour, travel, and facility costs. It also poses challenges. Managers are unaccustomed to working with remote employees and often don’t know how to monitor or motivate their virtual staff. They therefore naturally fear reduced productivity.

Our feature article on page 8, “The Invisible Workforce — How Do You Lead a Team You Cannot See?” by Achieve Global, states that “organizations that focus on growing their employees and helping them build strong relationships at all levels reap the rewards of an engaged and committed workforce.” Be sure to read this article as it provides interesting data on the financial rewards of employee engagement.

DRAKE CANADA

Our last Drake Business Review had a special feature on Drake’s work in Australia. I mentioned in my message at that time that we would continue to highlight Drake’s work around the world. And we are doing so with our report on Drake Canada starting on page 20.

Canada has a long and fascinating history, and it is the world’s eleventh largest economy. Drake International’s roots began in Canada in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1951, so this country has a special meaning indeed. Although our talent management solutions are global in scope, I invite you to learn more about Drake’s work in Canada and how we are working with organizations to help make a difference to their success.

Engaged employees, no matter where they work, are more productive and customer-centric and bring more creative ideas to the table.

THE EVOLUTION OF HR

The contribution to business strategy has given HR the greatest opportunity for impact, and today’s global picture of HR continues to change. Smart leaders and companies now understand the connection between talent and results. Developing a human resource strategy to support the business plan is recognized as a fundamental part of the business planning process.

It has been said that the most well articulated and accepted model for modern HR was presented by Dave Ulrich in his 1997 book, Human Resource Champions. I am delighted that in this issue, Professors Dave Ulrich and Wayne Brockbank, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan share their thinking on “The Six Human Resources Competencies That Matter Most.” They discuss the results of a global study to define what it means to be an effective HR professional and how to build an effective HR department. Ulrich and Brockbank state that “HR professionals think and act from the inside out. They are aware of and able to translate external business trends into internal organization actions.” Their article starts on page 18.

In his 1997 book, Ulrich commented that an HR professional from the 1940s would find it difficult to recognize the HR function of the year 2000. With Drake International, I personally have experienced the exciting evolution of HR around the world, as it moved from a basic functional role to one where it is the ultimate strategic partner. Our company’s focus is always to be ahead on the curve in our talent solutions offerings and to partner with our clients to help them respond to ever-changing external conditions that can have an impact on their success.

Developing a human resource strategy to support the business plan is recognized as a fundamental part of the business planning process.

E. W. POLLOCK, CHAIRMAN
Imagine having the power to shorten a meeting. You would be providing people with what they most want and need—more time.

You would be a hero. The power is within your grasp. Cutting time out of a meeting isn’t magic; you don’t need to be an executive; you just need to try these meeting time savers.

1. **BE PREPARED**
   This appears to be common sense, and yet it is far from common practice. Everyone is too busy to have time to prepare. Leaders don’t develop an agenda, and time is wasted arguing about the process the group should develop an agenda, and time is wasted busy to have time to prepare. Leaders don’t is far from common practice. Everyone is too This appears to be common sense, and yet it

2. **START THE MEETING AT AN UNUSUAL TIME**
   The typical meeting is scheduled to start on the hour or half hour. This makes it easy for people to schedule back-to-back meetings. It also leads to chronic lateness as people grab a cup of coffee, stop at the restroom, or check voice mail between meetings. Time is wasted as participants wait for latecomers.

3. **MAKE THE MEETING PURPOSE CLEAR AND SPECIFIC**
   It’s very difficult for a group to be quick in its work when it doesn’t know what it is supposed to accomplish. The group needs meaning and purpose; if these are absent, members will consume a tremendous amount of time in search of this direction. A clear sense of purpose energizes a group and keeps it focused. Little or no time is wasted pursuing work that isn’t relevant.

4. **SCHEDULE ONLY THE TIME YOU NEED**
   Suppose you are certain you could fulfill your meeting purpose in 30 minutes. Do you schedule a 50-minute meeting? Most people schedule it for an hour to build in a little cushion and use the full hour. The work expands to fill the time allotted for it. If you think you need 30 minutes, schedule 50 minutes. This will force you and the other participants to stay focused and move the meeting along as planned.

5. **USE A FACILITATOR**
   Meetings often come to a screeching halt as the participants struggle to overcome some barrier. This is exactly when a facilitator can help. Their number one job is to prevent teams from becoming or remaining stuck. Facilitators offer a tool bag full of activities and techniques for quickly guiding a group over the rough spots with minimal pain and effort.

6. **USE A TIMEKEEPER**
   Meetings are expensive. Like any other expense, time consumed in meetings should be carefully managed. Timekeepers track time for each agenda item. They warn the group when time is running out and stop the group at the end of the allotted time period. The job appears simple; however, a good timekeeper must have the courage to interrupt a discussion when time has run out.

7. **DON’T SIT DOWN**
   Although it appears gimmicky, it can be effective for routine informational meetings. Think of a football huddle. The purpose of the huddle is very specific: Communicate the next play to everyone on the team. Imagine if the football team ran to the bench and sat down to get the next play. It would certainly slow the game’s progress. Travelling to and from a conference room eats up precious time. It’s not always necessary for those times, a huddle might be the perfect meeting solution.

8. **CREATE A PARKING LOT**
   In meetings, a parking lot is a place to write down ideas, comments, and concerns that don’t fit the topic currently being discussed. It’s an excellent tool because it captures potentially important ideas and keeps the meeting focused and on track.

9. **DEVELOP AND HONOR TIME-RELATED GROUND RULES**
   Ground rules are the practices your group agrees to live by in its meetings. These may help a group better manage its time:
   - We start on time.
   - We never end late.
   - We tackle only topics that we are prepared to handle.
   - We stick to the agenda.
   - We don’t meet without a clear purpose.

10. **DIVIDE AND CONQUER THE WORK**
    Groups often think each person needs to participate in each piece of the meeting. This is not true. Suppose you have a large meeting of 11 people and you want to evaluate the merits of three concepts. Instead of having everyone evaluate each idea, break into three groups. Each group evaluates one concept and then reports its findings to the other groups. You’ll get better results in half the time.

11. **CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE YOUR MEETINGS**
    One management theory states “What you measure improves.” Measuring the length of your meetings will provide baseline information to help you see if you are improving. It’s a good start, but not enough. You also need to think about how to improve your performance. Answering one question at the end of each meeting and applying the answers to future meetings can do this. “What could we have done to be more efficient in this meeting?”

These tips are just a handful of the many good ways to shorten a meeting. Conceptually, each is quite simple. The tough part is finding the discipline and courage to use them. When deciding whether to try them, remember that you have nothing to lose but hours and hours of wasted time.
FEATURE STORY

HOW DO YOU LEAD A TEAM YOU CANNOT SEE?

WORKING FROM A DISTANCE IS BECOMING ONE OF THE GREAT CHALLENGES TO 21st CENTURY LEADERSHIP.

Many of us are familiar with H.G. Wells’s Invisible Man. A twist of science rendered him invisible — real but unseen. He could make his presence known, speak, even move objects, but it was unnerving to everyone because they never knew exactly where he was or what he was doing.

So it is with the invisible workforce — those employees we rarely, if ever, see — who work away from us each day, sometimes in countries we’ve never experienced first-hand. For more and more leaders, this describes their work groups — teams of unseen people dispersed among different sites. And although the virtual team is united by common business goals and facilitated by technology, in interviews with virtual leaders, one theme frequently emerges: “The issue of mistrust — How do I know they’re working? — is huge and not easily overcome.”

CHALLENGES FROM THE VIRTUAL WORLD

Today’s workforce has gone well beyond working from home a few days each week. It is now commonplace for work groups to comprise individuals dispersed among remote locations, and, although they are not invisible to each other, these groups, to the leader, often seem out of reach — an unpredictable unknown. However, the leaders of distance-based teams are charged with achieving the same results as a co-located workforce.

Difficulty with communicating, working together, and producing high-quality, on-time results is typically heightened by distance. Effective leaders need to quickly, confidently, and competently diagnose issues and take deliberate actions to keep project team relationships, productivity, and outcomes on track. There has to be even more emphasis on appropriate communications skills to fit the needs of the people and the situation.

In April 2011, AchieveGlobal conducted interviews with leaders of virtual teams worldwide, and common concerns were evident:

- “You have to be able to trust your virtual employees — that they’re doing what they’re supposed to be doing. But sometimes it’s hard to tell!”
- “When you’re not physically looking at someone, it’s hard to make sure that you’re communicating effectively. You don’t have a sense of their facial expressions and posture. You have a sense of disconnecting.”
- “A lot of work is done because of relationships. And it’s much more difficult to build relationships virtually.”
- “My direct report is seven hours ahead of me, so I have a finite window of opportunity to communicate with him on a daily basis.”
- “When I talk with my remote team members over the phone, I’m not sure if I’m feeling the emotion. I’m not always sure they’re getting the message — or buying in.”

In addition to the difficulties of collaborating from a distance, leaders also felt handicapped by cultural differences and unschooled in drawing upon diverse capabilities and insights.

LEADERS OF DISTANCE-BASED TEAMS ARE CHARGED WITH ACHIEVING THE SAME RESULTS AS A CO-LOCATED WORKFORCE.

LEADING VIRTUALLY

Key findings from both research and best practices across many industries reveal that effective distance leadership includes the typical fundamentals for leading people and managing resources in a traditional office environment — providing feedback, giving verbal recognition, fostering development, and managing performance against business objectives. However, difficulties in the traditional environment can be significantly magnified in the remote situation, and leading virtually requires a broader skill set to productively span demographic and geographic boundaries.

The five core categories of effective leadership skills in virtual project team or distance-management situations are:

1. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Effective virtual leadership relies on individual contributions and team effort. Breakdowns in a dispersed team often stem from lack of planning or from communication that fails to encourage dialogue. Communicating effectively is critical when leading virtual project teams.

In distance situations, effective communication requires careful attention to listening, presenting one’s own thoughts and ideas as clearly as possible, focusing on conveying positive and constructive intent, choosing the right technology to quickly and sensitively express a clear message, and taking extra care to respectfully ensure understanding and expectations for action. It includes important feedback loops and networking, and often requires daily contact especially during fast-changing times.
DIFFICULTIES IN THE TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENT CAN BE SIGNIFICANTLY MAGNIFIED IN THE REMOTE SITUATION, AND LEADING VIRTUALLY REQUIRES A BROADER SKILL SET TO PRODUCTIVELY SPAN DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES.

Face-to-face communication can be used as an antidote to anxiety, loss of group cohesion, and self-doubt, as well as under-performance, alienation from other members, distrust, and burnout.

Communicating effectively also means careful diagnosis of any given situation. It requires deliberate attention to the needs of the project team members and their desire for action, or for a remedy in a timely and sensitive manner.

The importance of face-to-face

Establishing mutual trust between members at the beginning of a work relationship is essential. Trust is fragile and requires clarity of intent. The effective leader should consider an initial face-to-face meeting to purposefully orient the members.

Strategically using face-to-face communication is especially important when the project team needs to establish and build trust and when particularly sensitive news or feedback needs to be delivered to an individual or the project team.

The ground rules, or rules of etiquette, that a virtual project team establishes for itself to work together in harmony often include: keeping commitments, providing feedback in preferred ways, giving everyone an equal voice, sharing important information, and acknowledging preferences for type and frequency of communications.

The perception of fairness is another important element in building community. As members observe day-to-day activity, they naturally form opinions about the fairness of any given situation. An action or situation that prompts members to perceive unfairness can directly affect their desire to contribute effort and support to the project team and its goals.

2. BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Leaders need to appreciate the strong human need for belonging, identifying with a respected group, pursuing a worthy objective or noble purpose with colleagues, and cultivating some level of bonding to overcome social isolation, alienation, and disconnection.

Building a team community includes demonstrating sensitivity to differences, establishing and adhering to ground rules, and establishing project team etiquette or agreement among the members on how the team will work together.

The ground rules, or rules of etiquette, that a virtual project team establishes for itself to work together in harmony often include: keeping commitments, providing feedback in preferred ways, giving everyone an equal voice, sharing important information, and acknowledging preferences for type and frequency of communications.

Three psychological needs

More than 30 years of research by Dr. Edward Deci, Professor of Psychology at the University of Rochester (“Why we do what we do” 1995), Christopher P. Niemiec (“Optimizing employee motivation through support for basic psychological needs: An approach to organizational coaching for front-line supervisors” University of Rochester), and others — Self-Determination Theory (SDT) — confirms that people share three fundamental psychological needs, regardless of culture: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Satisfaction of these needs empowers and engages employees, improving their productivity. When these needs are thwarted, healthy functioning plummets.

Three psychological needs — autonomy, competence, and relatedness — are critical in virtual teams. In organizations, these needs are often unfilled because the traditional environment is constructed at those boundaries. They also often need to diagnose and handle differences, challenges, assumptions, and diffuse potential conflict.

The invisible workforce — how do you lead a team you cannot see?

The virtual team profile

Productive virtual teams need to work as a cohesive unit to meet goals in support of the organization’s objectives. At the same time, team members need to feel valued as unique individuals, committed to do their best work and perform beyond expectations. When possible, it’s advisable to select virtual team members who already demonstrate the following profile characteristics or who are willing and able to develop them quickly.

- Self-discipline
- Goal-direction
- Flexibility
- Ability to collaborate
- Willingness to share and exchange information
- Openness to feedback and change
- Acceptance of differences in people, culture and ways of thinking
- Commitment and connection to the business
- Competence in using technology required for their roles

COLLABORATION CAN BE UNCOMFORTABLE OR DIFFICULT IN THE TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND BECOME EVEN MORE SO WHEN COMPLICATED BY DISTANCE.
A recent survey conducted by Training magazine, American Management Association, and i4i indicated that 63.5 percent of respondents said that managing virtual teams will be an important future competency, but only 36.5 percent believed their managers have mastered it. 4

One study found that virtual workers are “16 percent more productive than tethered counterparts.” 6

How does this apply to the invisible workforce? In many respects, creating the conditions to meet each team member’s needs is more difficult with a dispersed workforce. Recognizing this and implementing strategies and tactics to build cohesion and commitment becomes a critical success factor for the virtual leader.

GROUP COHESION

Provide the structure required to get the work done.
- Build a shared picture of success to make a positive impact on virtual team productivity.
- Make it personal. Help team members at a distance recognize how the work matters — that it leads to meaningful outcomes.
- Communicate clear direction and a consistent message. Set expectations that encourage inclusion and responsibility.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT

Engage virtual team members and support their efforts:
- Provide opportunities for success.
- Take the initiative to communicate often and encourage team members to do the same.
- Empower the group and individuals. Encourage self-leadership. Resist the temptation to micromanage virtual employees.

In essence, make the invisible workforce tangible to the leader and to each other.

VIRTUAL TEAMS CAN OUTPERFORM

Current trends suggest that virtual teams and the dispersed workforce are here to stay and will continue to grow. Organizations are counting on them to provide a level of expertise, diversity, and flexibility not always attainable in co-located teams.

Dispersed teams “can outperform their co-located counterparts when they are set up and managed in the right way.” 6 One study found that virtual workers are “16 percent more productive than tethered counterparts.” 6

We know effective virtual leadership requires working across boundaries; however, first-hand accounts and research indicate a clear gap in the importance of virtual leadership skills and the competencies currently demonstrated by leaders of the virtual workforce.

Leading the invisible workforce is no easy task, but virtual leaders can begin to provide the structure and engagement that has a positive effect. Building group cohesion and individual commitment helps team members work productively from a distance and achieve business goals. It can defuse mistrust of people we cannot see and, ultimately, answer the leader’s question: “How do I know they’re working?”

References:
3. Christopher P. Niemiec, Optimizing Employee Motivation through Support for Basic Psychological Needs: An Approach to Organizational Coaching, the Fort Lee Pressman, University of Rochester
6. Kalbach, “Virtual collaboration and e-mentoring: Is there a difference?”, Performance Improvement, Fall 2005
10 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR STAR EMPLOYEES

1. Empower your employees to shine by helping them own their gifts at work.
   As you interact with employees, see each one as unique and gifted, especially the star employees. Your role is to find their innate gifts — creativity, facilitating, listening, intelligence, intuiting, writing, leading, researching, teaching, developing, strategizing, motivating, evaluating, and so on. Work with your employees to identify their top two gifts and help bring them to the projects they are working on.

2. Identify exactly what tasks or responsibilities bring your top stars career fulfillment.
   Meet with your employees to identify the three aspects of their work they find most fulfilling. You want to understand not only what tasks but also which elements of the tasks and responsibilities are most satisfying. Next, help them bring more of this type of fulfilling work into each day.

3. Encourage your employees to focus more on what’s right with their jobs and less on what’s wrong.
   Highlight the accomplishments of your employees and help them leverage their areas of success. Not only will this improve their profiles in the company and potentially lead to a promotion or a raise, but it will promote a positive view of themselves and their capabilities.

4. Communicate effectively for great relationships at work.
   Guide your employees to accept the co-workers who challenge them, helping them look for the positive instead of the negative in those people. They can learn to step back, detach from their own agenda and viewpoint, and look at the challenging co-worker with new eyes. This new viewpoint can occur when an employee tries to truly understand their co-workers, what they think and feel, and why they behave as they do. After stepping into others’ shoes and viewing things from their perspective, the question becomes: “How can I accept this individual’s imperfections and shortcomings as well as their strengths and talents?”

5. Improve your employees’ morale by showing them how to work smarter instead of harder.
   Spend time with your employees and help them make a list of all their daily roles, responsibilities, tasks, and activities. Help them become aware of how they can simplify their workday. Do more, do it faster, work smarter, and be more fully committed. Then eliminate as much as possible from the list until it reaches a point at which they can’t do any faster and smarter. Employers need to help their employees look at their entire worklife and all that it encompasses, and learn to simplify. When we don’t simplify, our lives become too complicated, and we become powerless.

Help your employees prioritize their activities. Ask them to write down three of their most important tasks and then rank them in order of priority. If employees need help finding the most important tasks, have them ask themselves: If I could complete one activity/task today, what would it be? Is this activity task the best use of my time, knowledge, creativity, and experience? Have them focus on the most important task until it is finished, then recheck the priority list and focus their efforts on the next most important activity.

6. Besides more money, offer quality life programs to help your employees maintain balance between professional and personal life.
   Help your employees create flexible time (flex-time) for work and their own personal well-being. Teach them how to create a working environment that brings their work and life together in proper balance. This can include making sure your employees have enough hours each week to enjoy non-work activities. Facilitate proper balance by helping...
Employees understand how to use flex-time or other creative scheduling alternatives to spend more time on non-work activities that bring proper balance into their lives.

Many employees have difficulty in properly balancing their lives because their worklife is so consuming. When employees begin to gain self-control and equanimity in their worklives, they will have made space for other parts of their lives. To create balance in their work/personal lives, you can help your employees to:

● keep their self-expectations and those of their manager at a reduced level;
● “under promise” and “over deliver”—promising far less than they know they can do or less than the person is asking them to do;
● learn to say no to nonessential tasks and to people who might be inappropriately monopolizing their time;
● take breaks throughout the day to revitalize themselves;
● realize the importance of not taking work home with them on a regular basis to separate their worklife from their homelife.

8. Improve your employees’ overall relationship with their jobs through active involvement and constant praise.

Give your employees the opportunity to make a difference and become more actively involved in the organization by having them volunteer their time to support and help run some of the company’s internal functions and take part in off-site company volunteer efforts.

People need to know that their efforts for the company are recognized. Lack of recognition for performance can cause a lack of involvement and even disengagement. You can greatly help your employees by encouraging them and showing them how to ask for positive feedback and recognition from their managers. They shouldn’t have to wait for their annual review to get positive feedback on the work they are doing. After all, you can’t be proud of yourself until somebody’s been proud of you.

7. Ask employees to identify and focus on what is enjoyable.

Have your employees get together to select and discuss the most enjoyable activity or project in their jobs. Then ask them to make a list of all the activities or projects they need to complete that day or the next. Have them select the one they find most enjoyable, those tasks that excite them or that they find themselves repeatedly drawn to doing. Once they have identified two elements that they enjoy, have them create new projects that incorporate those activities.

9. Open your employees’ minds to the possibilities and reality of loving their work.

Without a clear-cut understanding of what they have to do to advance or succeed, people quickly become demotivated. Explain what’s required for your employees to move forward in the organization based on the company’s or department’s plans for the next one, three, and five years. Provide clear career paths to encourage employees to explore new career possibilities in-house so they can make a lateral shift within the company. A lateral move can help them enjoy their jobs and stay engaged.

Help your employees discover new and exciting opportunities (new projects and new activities) that lie within their work that will bring them a greater sense of love for what they currently are doing.

10. Establish a mentoring or coaching program.

Encourage your star employees to spend time mentoring other model co-workers who enjoy their jobs and are performing well. This allows your employees to observe, study, and shadow the person they most identify with so they begin to understand what they do that helps them enjoy their work so much.

Designate senior employees who will act as impartial, unconditionally supportive guides who ask evocative questions to draw out your star’s wisdom.

© 2005-2012 Joel Garfinkle, all rights reserved. One of the top 50 leadership coaches in the US, Joel Garfinkle has worked with many of the world’s leading companies, including Google, Amazon, Nordstrom, Deloitte, Cisco Systems, Oracle, Ritz-Carlton, Citibank, and Microsoft. He has written seven books, including Getting Ahead. Three Steps to Your New Career or to Repeat Level 1: To subscribe to his Fulfillment@Work newsletter or receive the free e-book, 10-Steps Strategies to Get Promoted Now; visit www.GarfinkleExecutiveCoaching.com or email joel@GarfinkleExecutiveCoaching.com.
THE HUMAN RESOURCE COMPETENCY Study (HRCS), with over 20,000 respondents, is the largest global study to define what it means to be an effective HR professional and how to build an effective HR department. For the past 25 years, it has researched the question. What knowledge and abilities are necessary for successful HR professionals?

The 2012 HRCS produced a clear model of the high-performing HR professional who is personally effective and has a positive impact on business performance.

STRATEGIC POSITIONER
HR professionals think and act from the outside in. They are aware of and able to translate external business trends into internal organization actions. They understand the general business conditions (e.g., social, technological, economic, political, environmental, and demographic trends) that affect their industry and geography.

They also co-create their organization’s strategic response to business conditions and customer expectations by helping frame and make strategic and organization choices.

HR INNOVATOR AND INTEGRATOR
Effective HR professionals integrate innovative HR practices into unified solutions to business problems. To do this, they must be on top of the latest key HR practice areas related to talent sourcing, talent development, performance management, work and organization design, and leadership brand.

They must also be able to turn these HR practice areas into integrated solutions that match business requirements.

CHANGE CHAMPION
HR professionals need to make an organization’s internal capacity for change match the external pace of change. As change champions, HR professionals help make change happen at institutional (changing patterns, initiative (making things happen), and individual (enabling personal change) levels.

To initiate change, HR professionals build a case for why change matters, overcome resistance to change, engage key stakeholders in the process of change, and articulate the decisions to start change. To sustain it, they institutionalize change through the organizational resources, organization structure, communication, and continual learning.

As change champions, HR professionals partner to create organizations that are agile, flexible, responsive, and able to make transformation happen.

TECHNOLOGY PROPONENT
Technology has changed the way in which HR people think and do their work. At a basic level, HR professionals use technology to more efficiently deliver such HR administrative systems as benefits, payroll processing, health-care costs, and other administrative services.

In addition, they need to use technology to help people stay connected with each other—improve communications, do administrative work more efficiently, and connect inside employees with outside customers. An emerging trend is use of technology as a relationship-building tool through social media, thus enabling the business to position itself for future growth.

HR professionals who understand technology create improved organizational identity outside the company and improve social relationships inside the company. As technology exponents, they have to access, advocate, analyze, and align technology for information, efficiency, and relationships.

CAPABILITY BUILDER
An effective HR professional creates a strong organization, not just a structure or process, but rather a distinct set of capabilities. HR professionals need to make an organization’s internal capacity for change match the external pace of change. As change champions, HR professionals partner to create organizations that are agile, flexible, responsive, and able to make transformation happen.

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CREDIBLE ACTIVIST
Business leaders build personal relationships with HR professionals. Effective HR professionals are credible activists. Their credibility comes from doing what they promise, building personal relationships of trust, and ensuring they can be relied on. Being a trust advisor helps them build positive personal relationships.

As activists, HR professionals have a point of view, not only about HR activities, but also about business demands. They learn how to influence others in a positive way. Some have called this “HR with an attitude.”

HR professionals who are credible but not activists are admired, but do not have much impact. Those who are activists but not credible may have good ideas, but not much attention will be given to them. To be credible activists, they need to be self-aware and committed to building their profession.

This study will help shape the future of HR and further define the contributions that HR makes to business success.

Reprinted with the permission of Professors Dave Ulrich and Wayne Brockbank, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan. Dave is also a partner of the RBL Group (www.randlrbl.com), and Wayne spends time working in the real-world on transforming cultures. HRCS is led by Dave and Wayne, the RBL Group, and the Ross School of Business, with the assistance of global research partners.
FOCUS ON DRAKE CANADA

DRAKE TALENT MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Drake Global Tech
YOUR GATEWAY TO GLOBAL TECHNICAL TALENT

Many countries around the globe are experiencing technology talent shortages, especially in key skill areas. Talented candidates are difficult to find and even more difficult to attract, and organizations may find positions remaining vacant for months because they just cannot be filled.

Drake Global Tech makes it easier to hire the technical team you need, when you need them, by leveraging our worldwide resources and expertise to provide the very best in international recruitment and talent management services.

We specialize in recruiting experienced mid-to senior-level professionals, required at any and all phases of a project or program, on a full-time or contract basis.

When you need specific technical skills, or someone with experience in procurement, sales and marketing, or finance, or who can step in as a general manager, help is at hand. In addition to experienced professionals, we also provide unskilled labour for your project needs, both in the following industries:

- EPC/EPCM
- Mining
- Cleantech/Renewables
- Telecom
- Skilled trades

Once Drake Global Tech has a clear picture of your requirements, your workplace environment, and your objectives, we source and screen eligible global candidates and assess their qualifications, credentials, and availability. We also conduct background checks and consider country-specific legal requirements. And we can assist in facilitating the fast-tracking of work permits, if required.

Fulfilling project obligations on time with the necessary skills and expertise is a challenge for companies of all sizes. Drake Global Tech’s worldwide resources and reputation as a leading international recruitment provider reduces your stress and recruitment risk.

Contact Drake Global Tech — your gateway to global tech talent.

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ANYTIME, ANYWHERE ACCESS TO TRAINING

If your organization is required to comply with government or other agency regulations, you may be called upon to prove that you provided training to employees or members.

Drake International’s Exponential Impact Learning Management System (LMS) enables you to offer certifications and training online to help you meet regulatory and other requirements. The learning management module is technology-driven and replaces fragmented learning methods with a single consistent and centralized system. With it, you can deliver streamlined coursework and certification programs, promote collaborative learning, and minimize the time and cost of managing your training initiatives.

By helping you offer certifications and training online, Exponential Impact makes it easy to attract new members and retain your existing member base. It offers members convenient, anytime, anywhere access to training. Based on a Software as a Service cloud model, there’s nothing to download or install, and no hardware or additional IT resources are required. Training is delivered in a secure online environment.

The Exponential Impact LMS increases competencies and performance; tracks progress across all types of training activities, competencies and performance; tracks training. Based on a Software as a Service cloud model, there’s nothing to download or install, and no hardware or additional IT resources are required. Training is delivered in a secure online environment.

The Exponential Impact LMS increases competencies and performance; tracks progress across all types of training activities, and automates tedious administrative and reporting tasks related to training. Our compliance features meet strict government standards, allowing you to:

- Require digital student signatures during training to verify identity
- Enter multiple levels of digital signatures from supervisors
- Track all changes to content and training records via audit trails
- Run audit reports detailing each user’s training record
- Set up content rules to require retraining on a set date or after a period
- Send automated training notifications

Our partnerships with major courseware vendors enable you to offer an extensive catalogue of courses to your employees, partners, and clients. Your course catalogue can also be made accessible through your own website, where members can register for courses or live events. New members can even sign up right on the spot.

Exponential Impact’s Learning Compliance System’s core structure includes ISO 9001 guidelines for electronic records and signatures to ensure that compliance protocols are held to the strictest measurements. In addition, SCORM-compliant content authoring tools offer simplified authoring of coursework and tests.

Whether you’re looking to attract new members to your association, or you need a more efficient way to provide knowledge to members or chapters, Exponential Impact allows you to automate every aspect of training with a single, comprehensive solution.

Health & Safety Compliance
THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB AT ANY WORKPLACE

Every business has a legal responsibility to comply with government health and safety regulations designed to protect the people who are affected by your business activities.

Are you and your organization compliant? Are you even aware of your corporate and personal risks? Preventing work-related illness and injury is the most important job at any workplace. All workers have the right to return home each day safe and sound.

Organizations that maintain the best safety records achieve the highest productivity, maintain the most positive morale, and ultimately deliver the greatest profit margins. Drake’s Health and Safety experts can assist you every step of the way to create a great safety record for your organization.

We offer:

- OH&S program review to identify best practices
- OH&S gap analysis to find weak areas
- Physical hazard analysis to ensure provincial and federal regulatory compliance
- Risk assessment for your particular business
- Hazards assessment to minimize single or multiple-exposure hazards for your company and employees
- Custom-designed health and safety training programs and claims management systems

Drake’s Health and Safety Division is committed to ensuring that your operations are in the highest state of health and safety compliance.

Contact the Drake safety team today to minimize your risks and ensure your workers are in a healthy and safe environment.

TORONTO, CANADA
416-216-1088
drakesafety@na.drakeintl.com

AUSTRALIA
drakesafety@au.drakeintl.com

FOCUS ON DRAKE CANADA
Your HR Help Line
HR EXPERTISE WITHOUT IN-HOUSE COSTS

Why deal with time-consuming government agencies or costly legal counsel when a simple five-minute phone call can save you thousands of dollars in unfair dismissal or poorly managed workers’ compensation claims?

The Drake HR Help Line is a National Telephone Advisory service to assist small to medium enterprises with a broad range of commercially sound, talent-related advice. We offer your business access to a highly trained group of HR consultants who can provide valuable information on any human resources issue.

- Strategic HR advice on implementing induction programs, retention strategies, workforce planning, remuneration, and performance management
- Advice on drafting HR policies and procedures
- Performance management advice including lawful terminations and company restructurings
- Generalist strategic HR advice on any workplace issues

HR Help Line provides practical and commercially sound advice on all aspects of talent management issues, big or small, via a subscription-based email or phone service, which includes:

- Five days a week of advice to assist and manage your people issues quickly and efficiently
- Flexible payment options on a monthly or annual basis
- Exclusive discounted pricing with full access to our entire suite of talent management solutions at a reduced rate if your business needs more than just advice
- Customized telephone line or email address for your organization

How you can benefit from HR Help Line?

- Liability: Avoid personal and corporate legal issues by obtaining a second opinion
- Time: Free up your time to focus on your company’s main business goals
- Cost: Receive ongoing support without the full-time wage. HR Help Line is less expensive than staffing a specialist
- Flexibility: Get remote access, as well as tailored solutions to your individual issues

Contact the Drake Solutions Department to learn more about the HR Help Line.
HR assistance is just a phone call away

CANADA 416-216-1067 solutions@na.drakeintl.com

Hiring and Managing with Drake P3
CLIENTS SHARE THEIR STORIES

Drake P3 is an advanced behavioural and personality profiling instrument and assessment tool that helps organizations improve hiring, enhance coaching, and enable better teamwork. What impact does Drake P3 make on hiring and managing?

Hiring

Hiring is often the first reason companies use Drake P3. Its accurate assessment of personality traits helps them find top-performing stars and avoid costly hiring mistakes.

“I remember one time we were looking at hiring a loan officer, and this fellow looked like a really good candidate,” recalls Gary Gragg, EVP, First Financial Bank in Texas. “He fit in all the boxes of the profile except for one, and that one was conformity. We discovered he was a big picture thinker and not particularly good at dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s. Well, we don’t want our loan officers to be sitting at a desk all day, we want them out meeting customers. But in the loan business, getting the paperwork right is paramount — his job wouldn’t have worked for him. We did him a favour and saved ourselves a headache by not putting him in that role.”

“Drake P3 is easy to use and, for me, that’s really important. I don’t have time to spend on anything complicated.”

Coaching

Drake P3 is an excellent tool to use in promoting employee performance and development. As organizations become familiar with the power of accurate assessment, managers see how it can help with coaching.

Marc Bouver, Bouver Consulting Group in Wisconsin has served in C-suite positions and continues to use P3 in his consulting work. He notes the value of P3 as a coaching tool. “By using the information we get from Drake P3, we have been able to release the potential of employees.”

“People say, ‘Wow, that assessment was amazingly accurate!’”

Team building

Insight into personality traits is essential for team building. “What is exciting here at Boldt is our push to get all the stakeholders on one team: the architects, the subcontractors, the owner’s representatives, and so on,” says Jamie Nenaho, Director, Employee Services, The Boldt Company, which has offices throughout the US. “The insights our people get from the assessment help them do a better job of working with all these stakeholders.”

“The fact we’ve used it for 10 or 11 years tells you we like it. It’s easy for people to understand. We’re big fans.”

Hiring the right people, coaching them to unleash potential, and team building to get the most out of a group are the foundations of business success. Without the right tools, it is hard to be competitive and excel. Organizations around the globe have found the Drake P3 assessment tools easy and accurate, which is why they continue to use it year after year.

Learn more about how Drake P3 can help you hire, manage, and develop your people. Call 1-888-DrakeP3 today, or go to www.predictiveperformanceintl.com.
WHAT’S YOUR LEADERSHIP Bailout Plan?

In today’s tough economic environment, it’s more important than ever for effective leaders to show their ability to lead their teams through tough periods of economic upheaval. When staff fears losing their job or waiting for the other shoe to drop, trust can be eroded. It takes time to rebuild trust within an organization, but trust improves the speed in which results can be achieved over the long haul.

If you hear yourself saying —”They’ll get over it,” “Come on, suck it up,” or “There’s no time to lose”— you’ll need to find some patience and compassion to get through the challenging times. The time you spend on building rapport and reassurance will reap long-term benefits. Author and speaker John C. Maxwell says, “Leaders walk slowly through the crowd.”
What is your leadership bailout plan to help motivate and inspire your team through serious downturns? During such times, leaders need to assist others to reassure them that things will get better, and to solidify trust. This is not the time to bury your nose in work and disregard the hallway chats that may seem like unproductive complaining. Leaders need to be change agents and treat these situations as if their company has just been taken over, rallying the troops and moving forward with confidence. In a negative global economy, leaders must be more like coaches and teachers than drill sergeants and business-as-usual managers.

For most over-achieving Type A leaders, this can be a difficult task. You need to throw out the old adage — the going gets tough, the tough get going — which assumes that everyone left standing is grounded enough to persevere. Usually this is not the case. Often those left standing are shell-shocked and shaken to the core and have the greatest need for reassurance.

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● Develop a strategy and approach that is not realistic. Hold back judgment about their concerns. Listen and consider their input before reacting or changing anything.

● Co-deepen, if necessary, isolate individual needs and concerns that may be affecting the overall team. Be curious about the troubles affecting people. You don’t know what may be taking up energy in their lives — perhaps a spouse has lost a job, or an elderly parent is putting additional financial pressure on their family. Listening and caring, without solving, is usually all that is needed to get someone back on track with more energy than before.

● Separate facts from fiction or hearsay. In tough times, there is a lot of speculation. People create and retell stories based on interpretation and perspective. Now is the time to nip this in the bud and get the facts out before rumors get out of hand.

● Own up to the bad news. Treating people as adults with frankness and respect is critical during tough times. If there is another shoe to drop, be frank and let people know what is forthcoming. Provide as much information as possible and keep communication coming on a regular basis to help ensure trust and minimize further speculation.

While you are making the realities of the business transparent, be sincere. Authentic leaders are real and able to build trust more than those who are perceived as insincere. Be in touch with your vulnerability to ensure that you are speaking authentically.

KEY ACTIONS TO HELP YOU BE MORE VULNERABLE WITH YOUR TEAMS:

● Share your views and concerns. Leaders don’t have to have all the answers. Showing teams your human side is an important skill for gaining connection and trust.

● Tell a story. Stories help people retain messages. They also reveal different parts of us. Tough times require better connections with others.

● Tell them about a time when you felt concern about the future. Having a leader admit to difficult times can be reassuring to others. Highlighting your learning can help others relate to their own challenges.

Even the most effective leaders can feel unsure during tough economic times. The key is to demonstrate compassion, vulnerability, and transparency and to reassure your team that things will get better.

WHAT’S YOUR LEADERSHIP BAILOUT PLAN?

These are the five transparency rules:

1. Repeat your strategy for growth, and repeat it often. Show how, even with the changing tides, your strategy is still relevant and will get the results you and your team need. People want to succeed, and bailout plans require leaders to instill confidence and trust in the plan.

2. Hear your team’s concerns. What barriers and concerns are holding them back? Are they right? Are there areas where the strategy and approach is not realistic? Hold back judgment about their concerns. Listen and consider their input before reacting or changing anything.

3. Separate facts from fiction or hearsay. In tough times, there is a lot of speculation. People create and retell stories based on interpretation and perspective. Now is the time to nip this in the bud and get the facts out before rumors get out of hand.

4. Own up to the bad news. Treating people as adults with frankness and respect is critical during tough times. If there is another shoe to drop, be frank and let people know what is forthcoming. Provide as much information as possible and keep communication coming on a regular basis to help ensure trust and minimize further speculation.

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WHAT’S YOUR LEADERSHIP BAILOUT PLAN?
Employee Engagement is the lifeblood of successful organizations. When employees are deeply connected to their organization, they share the vision of their employer and are not only committed to achieving overall goals and objectives but often go above expectations.

When leaders focus on short-term financial wins, they put long-term investment in employee engagement and overall economic success at risk. If there is no incentive, perceived benefit, or encouragement for strategic, long-term thinking, planners and leaders are likely to aim for quick wins, even if they are not in the best interest of the organization over time.

Organizations that focus on growing their employees and helping them build strong relationships at all levels reap the rewards of an engaged and committed workforce. Yet development is frequently one of the first cuts made during times of economic strain. This Fierce, Inc. white paper excerpt provides data on the financial rewards of employee engagement and details how to build organizational relationships and ultimately increase engagement by targeting, setting expectations, and maintaining continuous support in three key areas: candour, collaboration, and trust.

Why Engagement Matters
- Organizations with engaged employees enjoy higher returns.
- Gallup lists world-class organizations with a ratio of engaged to actively disengaged employees at nearly 10:1 (9.3:1). For “average” organizations, the ratio of engaged to actively disengaged employees is almost 3:1 (3.8:1).
- Employees with the highest level of commitment perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization.
- Engagement hinges on relationships. The best indicator of engagement is the quality of relationships an employee has in the workplace — with direct managers, with co-workers, and with the leadership team. The communication, connections, and understanding that result from these relationships are also key drivers of engagement. Are job expectations understood? Is regular feedback being received? Do employees feel their opinions matter? Are advancement opportunities clear?

Numerous, ongoing conversations do not just create, build, or sustain a relationship; the conversation is the relationship. The inverse is true as well. Relationships are determined by conversations.

Organizations that invest in their employees, specifically in their ability to communicate well, surpass other organizations in engagement and retention. When communication skills are highly developed and candour, collaboration, and trust are part of the overall culture, effective conversations take place — whether the aim of conversations is to resolve conflict, coach others, build team strength and accountability, or negotiate productively.

Myopic Management Practices
Managers often sacrifice overall business achievements, including the engagement level of their workforce, for quick wins. A recent American survey by Duke University and the National Bureau of Economic Research showed most managers are willing to risk long-term negative consequences if it makes managing earnings and financial disclosures easier or more in line with predictions. Surprisingly, 78% admit to sacrificing long-term value to smooth earnings.

Increased turnover in the modern workforce may also affect long-term investments in people. If managers expect to stay with their organization, they are more willing to invest in undertakings that are costly in the short run yet maximize profits and positively affect the bottom line in the long run. If turnover is high, leaders are more likely to expect that their own tenure may be limited; therefore, they tend to focus on quick wins since they believe they will not be around to reap the rewards of long-term planning.

Organizations with engaged employees enjoy higher returns

The Financial Rewards of Employee Engagement
Better Relationships Bring Results

Highly committed employees perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization than less committed co-workers.

Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ)
Empirically organizations understand the importance of relationships; yet very few talk about how to build relationships. They undoubtedly expect employees to be able to read a P&L statement and know about market share; however, they rarely care about whether employees can conduct productive, healthy conversations that lead to real change. Frequently, organizations are so focused on the IQ piece that they overlook EQ, or emotional intelligence, even though EQ makes companies more profitable and less at risk of losing institutional knowledge by having to replace staff.
Studies show companies with great work environments not only make more money, but also are more likely to be filled with highly engaged employees. In turn, highly committed employees perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization than less committed co-workers.³ To build organizational relationships and increase engagement, companies must target, set expectations, and maintain continuous support in these key areas.

CANDOUR: THE SKILL THAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN BUSINESS SCHOOL

When organizations strive to create a culture of candour, they must be prepared to back up their aspirations with honest conversations. This not only ensures the right things are being talked about with the right people, it also affects the bottom line. “Companies rated by their employees as being in the top quartile in openness of communication delivered an average total shareholder return of 179% over a recent 10-year period, compared with 21% at companies in other quartiles,” according to a recent Harvard Business Review study. The Corporate Executive Board tracks seven key indicators in more than 180 companies worldwide, and “the one most strongly correlated with 10-year returns is employees’ comfort in speaking up, even when they have negative things to say.”⁴

Candour also provides much needed transparency in organizational strategies and individual development paths. When people understand organizational goals and their role in achieving them, engagement grows. When organizations are transparent about plans to develop employees and employees have clearly defined paths for growth, progress occurs and retention increases.

Halley Bock, CEO of Fierce, Inc., describes engagement as a key leading indicator for forecasting gains and predicting results. “If you want to know how your organization will perform in a year, measure employee engagement today.”⁵

At the organizational level, employees can be skeptical of large organizations. People learn to trust if leadership is straightforward and upfront about decisions. By setting clear direction and explaining what you’re going to do and why, you allow people to rise to the occasion. Skilled leaders let others know where the turns are, preparing employees with the resources and tools they need to successfully navigate change.

At the individual level, development for developers’ sake does not create engagement. Building relevant skills and having honest conversations about career goals and how to attain those goals: Return on investment occurs when employees feel they have some control over their career path and have advocates committed to their growth.

COLLABORATION: COLLECTIVE WISDOM IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

If organizations see only the value in speedy decisions and immediate results, they miss out on the benefit of diverse perspectives. Collaboration does not need to be a lengthy process, but it needs to be honest one. When seeking input and enlisting the help of others, consider these questions:

- Are the right people in the room?
- Are team members prepared to express thoughts and emotions without fear of retaliation?
- Do team members feel safe questioning the opinions of others?
- Are team members prepared to respond openly without being defensive, if questioned by others?
- Is the overall goal to describe different realities without laying blame?

Collaboration not only results in more knowledge-based and profitable decisions, it also strengthens relationships, builds alignment, and engages champions and sponsors.

TRUST: KNOWING WHEN TO LET GO

Essential to healthy work environments, trust is created through personal and organizational accountability, credibility, leadership, and company-wide practices to treat others with respect and dignity. Trust grows through effective delegation and development — when employees have earned the right to create their own paths to achieving goals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING SUPPORT

Providing employees with the skills necessary to build relationships and conduct productive conversations — whether they are team-building, coaching, delegation, or confrontation conversations — is essential. Yet training is only the beginning. Learning occurs when development is supported at both the managerial and the organizational level.

Without a clear understanding of how new skills will benefit the individual, how they will be incorporated into the way things are done, and how they are relevant to the day-to-day business, transfer of learning is unlikely. Transfer of learning comes down to support, and support is an ongoing process. In the case of establishing strategic, long-term thinking, follow these clear and continuous supportive steps:

- Provide tools, roadmaps, and resources to prepare employees to achieve both short- and long-term goals.
- Model behaviour that instills stated values (candour, collaboration, and trust) and expectations. (Expectations are that employees will have the courage to speak the truth, diverse opinions will be sought out, and people will be allowed to make a difference.)
- Conduct continual pulse checks to assess actual behaviour.

Ongoing support instills learning and builds committed employees who are attached to their work, their colleagues, and their organization.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Visionary leaders understand quick wins may please shareholders for the short term, but long-term investments in people maximize their rewards. Forward-thinking organizations build skills and provide continuous support in these key areas necessary to strengthen organizational relationships:

- Candour — to ensure employees are equipped and encouraged to speak the truth and accept honest insights from others.
- Collaboration — to create an environment of intellectual curiosity where employees understand the value of soliciting differing opinions and enlisting the help of others.
- Trust — to provide work environments and model behaviour that encourage employees to accept responsibility for their own actions as well as trust in others to do what they do best.

The value of engagement is immense. Engaged employees achieve measurable results and realize financial goals. They also create a perpetual cycle of more engaged employees.

References:

2. Graber RS (May 2008) Leadership development and training company that shows results for business education by improving workplace communication. The company has been named a winning one, but analysis com- pany in the area was named to Training Industry.com’s “100 Companies to Watch” list and Seattle Business Magazine’s “Top 20 Best Companies to Work for in Washington” list. www.fierceinc.com

Collaboration not only results in more knowledge-based and profitable decisions, it also strengthens relationships, builds alignment, and engages champions and sponsors.
DECISIONS, DECISIONS
A wise man once said, “If you are already in a hole, it’s no use to continue digging.” The situation that requires a solution will only get worse, and your lack of decisiveness will become your legacy.

Chances are good that right now an opportunity to improve a situation in your organization requires your decision. Perhaps it is a weighty one, potentially with business consequences you’d rather not deal with; or you don’t. You justify the delay with the claim that you need more time, more alternatives to consider, more money or resources before you can take action. The fact is: Indecision is a decision not to act. A wise man once said, “If you are already in a hole, it’s no use to continue digging.” The situation that requires a solution will only get worse, and your lack of decisiveness will become your legacy.

Failure to act can result in the incalculable cost of opportunity lost. Consider Barnes & Noble, the world’s biggest bookseller, which failed to act on the opportunity to tap the marketing potential of the Internet until it became an “also ran,” reacting to the overnight success of industry upstarts, Amazon.com. Or, put yourself in the picture of watching your most talented contributor hand you his resignation out of frustration of watching your most talented contributor become your legacy.

Take these decision-making tips.

Don’t sweat the small stuff: Make on-the-spot decisions for non-crusial things, like what to have for lunch or what time to hold a meeting.

Think on your feet: In a true crisis, stay calm, do a fast triage, use your instincts, and go with what you’ve got.

Narrow your choices: Quickly whittle the list of possibilities down to two or three reasonable options so you have time to explore the realistic pros and cons before deciding on weightier matters, like implementing a new organization structure or selecting your successor.

Face your fears: Write down the action or decision that is keeping you up at night. By identifying the toughest fears and asking, “What’s the worst that can happen?”, you should be able to clear the obstacles and see a straight path to the best decision.

Ask for help: If you are overanalyzing, get an outsider to help you put things into perspective. If you tend to shoot from the hip, quickly initiate a brief survey or bring the team together to request their honest feedback.

Now, back to the elephant in the room... What are you going to do right now about that situation awaiting your decision?

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In his book The Paradox of Choice, USA Swarthmore College psychologist Barry Schwartz spoke about two general types of decision makers: “satisficers” who can determine how much information is enough, to make the best choice possible and move on; and “maximizers” who must examine every possibility and thoroughly analyze each one before deciding, and then worry about and second guess the decision once it’s made. “It seems reasonable to imagine that if some choice is good, then more choice is better, but psychologically, that’s not true,” says Schwartz. "Analysis paralysis sets in. There’s a kind of regret when you make a choice.” Decision makers who are maximizers can worry about the state of things, recognize that something needs to change, and yet avoid making it happen because they don’t feel “certain” about their course of action. It makes sense then to have analyzers as well as “good enough” types in organizations to ensure a balanced approach to decision making.

Waiting until things are perfect can mean failing to take the risk that could lead to a positive outcome or learning experience. General George Patton said, “A good solution applied with vigor now is better than a perfect solution applied ten minutes later.” Take the decision by 3M to go ahead with marketing the “failed to stay stuck” glue that resulted in today’s ubiquitous and indispensible Post-it note. Or consider organizations that encourage and reward employee risk taking as a strategy for growth.

The best decision makers are proactive rather than reactive, and those most adept at decision making use different techniques depending on the circumstances.

Take these decision-making tips.

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“WHAT DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD DO?”
That’s all. Use them as much as you like and always use them when an employee says, “Boss, what do you want me to do about this?” And you’ll reap these benefits:

• Staff will learn to stop dumping problems in your lap
• Employees will start to suggest solutions or courses of action themselves
• You won’t get bogged down in minor detail and minor issues
• You’ll have more time to do what you’re paid to do — manage
• Over time, staff will develop better analytical and problem-solving skills
• Staff will learn to handle issues themselves rather than refer them to you
• Staff will discover that their experience and opinions are highly valued
• You’ll encourage creative thinking among employees
• You’ll have found the perfect cure to “managing upwards”

And you will greatly enhance your capacity to manage employee performance. There’s no doubt that when employees know exactly what is expected of them, their performance will improve. Those seven words will go a long way toward clarifying expectations, both yours and theirs.

SETTING CLEAR STANDARDS IS A PRIME RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGERS. ALTHOUGH EMPLOYEES MAY CONTRIBUTE, THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY LIES WITH MANAGERS.

WHY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ARE THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
MANAGERS TALK A LOT ABOUT GOALS. But there’s a little secret most managers don’t know about managing employee performance. To most employees, performance standards are more important than goals.

When you tell your staff what you expect, clearly and unequivocally, you are setting performance standards for your people. When they know exactly what you expect, you are far more likely to get what you want from them.

Standards provide benchmarks to enable employees to decide how they’re doing. If the standards are clear and definitive enough, both employees and managers can check progress monthly, weekly, or even daily.

BENEFITS

Employee performance standards bring five broad benefits:

1. They tell you how well you’re progressing towards achieving goals
2. They guarantee that you’ll know when goals have been achieved
3. They significantly reduce stress for managers
4. They permit objective assessment of the on-the-job performance of employees
5. They are the foundation of successful on-the-job training

Setting clear standards is a prime responsibility for managers. Although employees may contribute, the ultimate responsibility lies with managers.

If you want to succeed in managing employee performance, standards are essential. When you set clear, measurable performance standards, you gain many extra benefits:

- They clarify exactly what you expect from your staff
- They tell employees precisely what you consider most important
- They let employees know how their performance will be measured
- They provide many opportunities for positive reinforcement of employees’ work
- They generate superior management information to enable managers to make better decisions
- They enable managers to take prompt action when they are not being met
- They remove the need for close supervision
- They form the foundation for successful operating systems
- They provide accurate and relevant information to use in determining rewards and incentives
- They enable formal performance appraisals to be based on accurate and relevant performance-based data, not behaviour, opinion, and hearsay
- They help in managing difficult employees

REQUIREMENTS

Sound performance standards are clearly measurable. If you already have performance standards, check their wording. If they start with “understand”, “appreciate”, “value”, “gain insight”, “hope”, or any other such imprecise words, they’re “fuzzys”, not performance standards.

If you would like your employees to achieve more, look to your performance standards. If they’re not clear, measurable, and definitive, you can’t expect your employees to perform to their potential. Without clear standards, they won’t know exactly how they are performing.

Managers who genuinely expect their staff to perform well on a consistent basis, treat their staff as if they are successful. They do everything they can to ensure this, including providing the resources that are needed.

In the end, your job is to set the standards, provide the resources, and monitor and measure. You can have excellent standards and superb resources but only measurement will turn these into genuine expectations. If your staff knows that their performance won’t be monitored and measured against previously stated standards, they’ll also know that you’re not serious about expectations.

Visit us online at DRAKEINTL.COM or contact the Drake office nearest you.
BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING REAPS REWARDS

What is business process outsourcing (BPO), and what drives companies to outsource?

BPO is delegating back-office business functions to reliable and experienced outside vendors who can get the work done more cheaply, quickly, and efficiently. All companies want to reduce operational costs and achieve their business objectives in a shorter time; by divesting themselves of non-core activities, they can focus on core processes that directly benefit them in generating revenue and growing the business.

Identifying core and non-core processes

Business processes can be divided into three categories:

- Core activities that are the essential and defining activities of an organization
- Critical but non-core activities that must be performed extremely well to avoid putting the company at a competitive disadvantage or at risk
- Non-core, non-critical activities that supply no competitive advantage

Core activities are best kept in-house, while non-core processes are those that are best outsourced. Although all activities are important, outsourcing non-core processes has many advantages. It enables companies to:

- Focus on core competencies to grow the business and generate revenue
- Minimize operational costs by eliminating the need to hire additional staff and purchase equipment
- Access innovative technology through outsourcing firms that are equipped with the latest technology and experienced professionals
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To be competitive in today’s global environment, organizations must optimize every process to achieve the best possible business performance. Outsourcing non-core activities enables companies to keep costs streamlined and their core processes functioning competitively.

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A P P R E H E N S I O N IS A C O M M O N reaction to the prospect of change. No one questions that change is scary, but how you manage fear is a strong indicator of how you will manage change. Whether you’re a leader charged with creating and implementing change or an employee who will feel the effects, doing something new, different, and out-of-the-ordinary takes hard work, determination, and a little bit of faith.

All too often, leaders buckle under this pressure. Managers climb the corporate ladder, seeking more responsibility — and more compensation — but have never actually been trained in navigating the challenges they will face. And all of a sudden, hard-working smart people are at the top rung saying, “Now what?” In walks their boss who says, “We’re going to start doing things a bit differently around here, and I want you to implement it.” Talk about instilling fear! Your chances of dissipating fear increases dramatically if you become aware of the pitfalls in managing change before you embark on your new strategy or plan with your group.

Author and extraordinary thinker John Kotter wrote a book Leading Change, in which he points out that, while we strive to focus on the positives and the “what you should do” tactics, it’s also important to look at the potential mistakes that can take place. Kotter delineates the eight critical missteps that people make. If you could reduce the error rate from the start, it might make the process of change a bit less painful — perhaps even invigorating. Let’s look at what Kotter believes are the biggest mistakes and how you can avoid making them.
HOW TO AVOID EIGHT COMMON MISTAKES IN MANAGING CHANGE

1. Forgetting that the change must happen quickly.
If you don't spark that fire in your employees or customers, they won't be motivated to chip in, and your efforts will fall flat. Make sure you create a sense of urgency for the need for change. Showcase possible consequences if change doesn't happen now so that your team fully understands them.

2. Not building a team that will guide the change.
Creating change is hard work, but many companies assume the opposite. If you don't have a guiding coalition to institute the vision, you will fail. This team must believe in the vision and keep moving forward to create the necessary changes.

3. Lacking clear vision or foresight.
You can't get people on board and believe in what's taking place if you don't have a clear vision of what's needed. And worse, if you have a fantastic vision but don't communicate it, your employees and customers don't know what's happening. Without clear vision, your tactics and strategies for change will be confusing, and your efforts will lack direction. Be clear about what you want to happen so that others understand as well.

4. Forgetting to communicate the vision.
If you have a great vision but don't communicate it to your team, your efforts will fall short. Unless you have everyone on board helping — even if it requires pointing out short-term sacrifices for long-term gains — you will never create change. You will only create the fear of the unknown. People want leaders to guide them, and communication is essential to achieving the vision.

5. Letting obstacles get in the way of the vision.
Don't be set on using old structures and standards to fulfill a new vision. Whether it’s a middle manager who isn't buying into the plan for change or an organizational structure where current jobs don't encompass enough responsibility to make change, you must remove obstacles — potential or actual — that could stop the process from happening.

6. Failing to make plans.
You need short- and long-term plans for reaching your goals. If you plan to meet short-term goals, chances are you'll meet them. If you only talk about and hope to meet them, you're taking a passive approach to creating change. Be proactive. Look for ways to establish obtainable goals throughout the year and then put plans and strategies in place that will achieve those goals. Ultimately, all of the small goal wins should contribute to the larger, long-term plan.

7. Prematurely celebrating victory.
Make sure that even though you praise achievement of short-term goals, the game really isn't over until you've solved your bigger problems.

8. Not establishing the new way of doing things into the company's culture.
It's one thing to successfully solve and meet your goals; it's another to live by them. Change has not truly been successful until you've engrained it in the culture of those you do business with.

Reprinted with the permission of Michelle Kabele, a dedicated marketing professional who has been helping technology companies develop award-winning channel partner programs and marketing strategies for over 10 years. Michelle has worked extensively with small businesses throughout North America. She has an MBA from the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management. Visit her blog: www.mkabele.wordpress.com
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