

Strategic Trends™

Managing the Human Side of BusinessSM

Achieving a High Performance Culture

Inside this issue:

RDS Becomes Distributor for TrainingEvals.com (sm)	2
On-line Training Management System	2
FREE Telecourses	2
Organizational Alignment (continued)	3
Improve Your Listening Skills	3
Future Trends	4

There have been several research studies into the characteristics of a High-Performance Culture. We've discussed them in a separate white paper titled *The Dynamics of High Performing Organizations*.

The Seven Elements of High Performance™ are pretty clear. But how do you achieve them? That part isn't quite so clear. Because all seven of the Elements are interrelated, it becomes tricky on how to establish them in your organization.

Where do you begin? How do you build Personal Responsibility? Where does Leadership come from? How do you create Trust?

These are just some beginning questions to ask, and often the answers are elusive. Granted, many organizations have achieved their High-Performance Culture without a clear road map to success. They started on a journey and 5 or 10

years later ended up with success.

But what about those organizations that don't want to leave success to chance? We believe that there are steps that an organization can take that will help it achieve its success in a significantly shorter time-frame.

We've written an article about these steps titled *The Seven Steps to Creating a High-Performance Culture*. You can find it on our web site at the link below:

www.ResourceDevelopmentSystems.com/articles.htm

Organizational Alignment (PART 1)

In the February 2003 edition of *Fast Company* magazine there was an article about Carly Fiorina and her taking over as CEO of Hewlett-Packard. At the time, most readers were probably focused on the issues surrounding the merger with Compaq. But there was a deeper lesson for all CEO's contained in that article.

In a single paragraph on page 70, you can find where Fiorina had to deal with alignment in her organization. In the early days right after becoming CEO, even before the Compaq merger was on

the screen, Fiorina would seemingly win approval for her ideas and goals, but when it came time to have those ideas and goals implemented, things happened that sidetracked their success.

It wasn't as if people set out to sabotage the new initiatives, it was just that the day to day issues seemed to take precedence, and timelines slipped, and goals were softened. The old ways of doing things were still ingrained, and when there was a tug-of-war between the old and the new, the old won.

The issue was that of alignment, from the top executives down through the rank and file employees. While support was given in the form of words, support wasn't given in the hearts of the managers and the employees.

Alignment is a critical issue. Whole initiatives have failed because people weren't in alignment with where the CEO wanted to take the organization. More often than not, the failure of alignment is just because people don't understand the importance of what's being done and the

(Continued on page 3)

Special points of interest:

- Learn how the steps to creating a High-Performance Culture in your organization
- Learn about the importance of alignment for creating long-term success
- Learn how to be a better listener
- Learn about Future Trends in employee engagement

Training Evals

Resource Development Systems, LLC is proud to announce that it has just become a new distributor of TrainingEvals.com Services (sm), a partnership between Science Applications International Corporation, a major Federal Governmental computer contractor, and Advanced Management, Inc., a training consulting firm located in Oak Ridge, TN.

With organizations spending billions of dollars annually to train employees, it is about time that they were making sure that their investments were paying off. In ASTD's 2003 State of the Industry Report, less than half of all organizations are conducting evaluations to insure that knowledge transfer has occurred,

and only about a fifth of all organizations are conducting any kind of evaluation to insure that actual behavior change has occurred once the employee has returned back to the job.

TrainingEvals.com Services (sm) is a unique approach to conducting training evaluations to help any organization begin to track and evaluate the Return on Investment that they are receiving from their investment in training.

Internet based, participants can register for courses, and then upon completion they are e-mailed a reminder to fill out their Level 1 evaluation form. This captures the typical information that most organizations are already capturing. But in about a month, the participants are asked to fill out a separate evaluation, asking about the ability for the training to deliver

to them the knowledge that they needed to do their job better (Level 2).

Finally, about two months after the training an evaluation is sent to the participant's manager asking them to evaluate how well the employees have implemented the training in their jobs (Level 3).

A variety of reports are then available to help analyze the effectiveness of the training, all for the cost of just \$3 per student per course. That's a small price to pay to insure that the larger dollars are spent wisely.

In addition to providing this service to our clients, RDS has also implemented the use of TrainingEvals.com Services (sm) in our own training programs.

Contact us for more information.

Online Training Management System

By combining our newest product, TrainingEvals.com Services (sm) with our online courses from CRKI and the Electronic Profile Information Center, we can offer any small business a fairly comprehensive online training management system, complete with online registration, online training delivery, online profile delivery, and

online training tracking and reporting.

All systems are hosted on secure servers, so your IT departments don't have to get involved with creating and maintaining space for you on their servers. Just go to the web sites on the internet, enter your user ID and password, and you are

Bring the Power of Online

Training Management and

Delivery to your Organization!

on your way. For a limited time there is no set-up fee for this system. Just pay for the services you use; that's all.

FREE Telecourses! - Who's Working in Your Organization?™

That's right! Resource Development Systems, LLC is hosting a series of FREE telecourses on a variety of subjects revolving around the issue of employee engagement. Entitled Who's Working in Your Organization?™, the series will look at a variety of issues surrounding this much talked about issue

of engagement.

The first course, The Impact of Employee Engagement to the Bottom-line of Your Organization is intended to provide you with a understanding of just what is employee engagement. We will then explore some of the research surrounding employee engagement, and just why it is so

important to your organization's success.

The program is being offered at various times, so please visit our web site to check out the schedule and to register. Just click on the Events button on the left side of our home page of our web site.

Organizational Alignment (continued from page 1)

connection between the changes and their own financial consequences.

On the other hand, efforts have also failed because some people just flat out disagree with the new direction or initiative, subtly, but actively working to insure failure. The problem is that these efforts are often missed by the CEO, even when they are being conducted by members of the executive team.

While insuring alignment at all levels of the organization are important, it is imperative at the senior level. A CEO **must** know that their plans are supported by their top level executives, and that everyone understands the importance of the success of those plans. The only way resistance that is just inherent in any culture or system can be overcome is to have the full support of the senior team.

But all too often a CEO doesn't take the steps to insure this alignment at the top. They just assume that their senior team understands and agrees with where and how things are moving along. All too often they are wrong.

It doesn't matter if you are a new CEO, or a long-time CEO, anytime you undertake a new direction for your organization you should take the time to make sure that your entire senior team is on board. And that isn't just going around and asking people face to face. Our recommendation is a carefully conducted survey that looks at some very specific issues in a confidential manner. This way your team will feel more relaxed and willing to share their true feelings about the direction and the issues.

Of course there will always be some senior team members who

might be skeptical of a new direction. That's fine. Those who are skeptical but willing to learn more about the initiative are always welcome. They provide a reality check for the ideas.

And there will be those who don't agree at all, and are willing to leave on their own. A CEO should take great measures to help these people find new jobs, as their honesty just saved the organization countless headaches.

Then there are those who don't agree but stay quiet, and those that might actively work against the success of the initiative. These people can't be allowed to stay. They need to be found out and asked to leave immediately. While healthy skepticism is welcome, sabotage isn't.

Once the executive team is on board with the new ideas, now you can begin to move forward and get the rest of the organization in alignment. We'll address that task in the next issue.

Improve Your Listening Skills

Time and again we see evidence that effective communication impacts positively on performance, both individual and organizational. But on the individual level, where relationships are built, it is just as important for managers to listen as it is for them to speak and share information.

Too often we think that listening is just listening, and that if we just work harder on being quiet then we can listen better. This just isn't the case.

Each person has their own natural tendencies towards how they listen. This is called our preferred listening approach, and it may not be appropriate for every situation. There are five listening approaches on a continuum from "Feeling Orientated" to "Fact Orientated." These listening approaches are:

- Appreciating - want to be entertained and for enjoyment.
- Empathizing - offers support and are patient, listening to feelings.
- Comprehending - wants to understand, often summarizing and clarifying.
- Discerning - wants to make sure they get all the information, often taking notes.
- Evaluating - looks for facts to support what the speaker is saying.

- Feeling Oriented or Fact Oriented -

They both have a place in Listening

Each of these listening styles has an appropriate time for their use. Unfortunately, we too often become "stuck" in our preferred style, often missing important information because the style we are using isn't appropriate for the setting in which the communication is occurring.

Understanding our own preferred listening style is a first step. Then being aware of the setting in which we are listening and making a conscious decision on our listening approach can help us be better listeners.

**Resource
Development
Systems, LLC**

934 Falling Creek Dr.
Macon, GA 31220

Phone: 478-254-3155
Email: info@rds-net.com
www.ResourceDevelopmentSystems.com

**Managing the Human
Side of Business SM**

Strategic Trends™ Newsletter

Resource Development Systems, LLC helps organizations create and implement strategic plans for dealing with the change and innovation that is needed for them to be successful, including the tools to help them to manage the human side of their business: shareholders, customers, management, and employees.

We offer

**Uncommon Results to
Common Problems!**

Future Trends

As the economy continues to improve unemployment numbers will continue to drop. Currently at 5.6%, while not as low as we have seen in the past decade, it is still relatively low. "Full employment" is often considered to be achieved when unemployment levels reach 6% or less. The reason for this is that the majority of potential employees that are highly skilled and talented have already been taken.

The resulting pool of potential employees often have lower skills, including lower literacy levels, as well as lower motivational levels. In the boom of the 90's, many of these people found jobs, but employers were quick to let these employees go when the economy hit a downturn. Even before then, employers often complained about

the lack of qualified applicants, grinding their teeth at the thought of hiring yet another person who essentially drug productivity levels down.

Those days are about to be upon us again. There is soon to be a frantic scramble for talent, as employers try to attract the best of the best. The savvy organizations that are focused on being high-performing have already been doing what it takes to attract and retain the best.

Even while they were laying current employees off, they were still looking and hiring the best talent that they could find. But that isn't all. They found ways to engage their employees so that they are now committed to the organization and are willing to stay, even when the economy heats back up again.

With almost one-third of the average organization ready to

leave at a moment's notice, and another one-third feeling trapped, but would leave if they could, those organizations that haven't taken the extra steps to engage their employees will see a mass exodus followed by a continual cycle of turnover in their organization in the months to come.

Organizations that understand the principles of employee engagement realize that you can't buy your employee's engagement. It takes strong leadership, open communication, and a foundation of trust to begin engaging your employees. Those organizations that master this will reap the rewards now and in the future.

To help educate organizations about the issue of engagement, we are offering a series of free telecourses on the subject. To register or for more information just go to our web site and click on **EVENTS**.