



Strategic TrendsTM

Managing the Human Side of BusinessSM



Spoken Here!

Making a Customer ConnectionTM

Inside this issue:

The DiSC® Corner <i>NEW!</i>	2
New Client Web Portal	2
DiSC® Certification Coming Soon!	2
Organizational Alignment (continued)	3
Improve Your Innovation Skills	3
Future Trends	4

Almost every business owner, executive, or manager can tell you about the importance of attracting and retaining Customers. Too often the focus is in the attracting rather than the retaining. And even more often the approach to either of these is through trying to be competitive on price.

The problem with this approach is that just as soon as a competitor comes along with a lower price the Customer will move right along to them. So you accomplished the

attraction, but not the retention. And if you use price as a retention tool you will only lose because there will always be someone else who can do what ever you are doing cheaper.

It's not enough to offer low prices or just good service. You have to make a Customer ConnectionTM. This means creating an emotional connection between the Customer and the organization through its employees and the products and services they provide to the Customer.

The approach to this is to help employees understand the larger picture of how they personally connect to the Customer and the Customer back to the organization and the employee.

We've written an article about this concept titled **Making the Customer ConnectionTM**. You can find it on our web site at the link below.

www.ResourceDevelopmentSystems.com/articles.htm

Organizational Alignment (PART 2)

In the last issue we talked about how important it was to have alignment throughout the organization. We specifically focused on the Senior Executive Team, but alignment can't stop there. Each and every person in the organization must know how their roles and job duties contributes to achieving the overall goals of the organization.

Some of the most stunning research on organizational success has been released over the past few years, all focused on the importance of employee engagement.

Engaged employees tend to be more productive. But sometimes, no matter how engaged or committed an employee might be, if they don't understand how what they are doing helps the organization accomplish it's goals, they might still not be as effective as they could or should be.

A study conducted in 2004 by Blessing-White found that only 18% of employees have a clear understanding of what their organization's strategy is and how their own work supported achieving that strategy. That means that 82% of an

organization's employees are putting time, energy and money into their work, but they may not be focusing in on the right things!

What's worse is that this can cause employees who would normally be engaged to become less and less engaged over time. The first question on the Gallup Q12 Survey, one of the foundational surveys for measuring employee engagement, is "Do I know what is expected of me?" Another question is "Does the mission of my company make me feel like my work is important?" In other

Special points of interest:

- Learn about Making a Customer ConnectionTM
- Learn about the importance of alignment for creating long-term success
- Learn how to make your organization more innovative
- Learn about Future Trends for small business success

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The **Corner**

www.ResourceDevelopmentSystems.com/disc.htm

One of the foundational tools that **RDS** uses in our consulting practice to help our clients achieve success is the behavioral model created by psychologist Dr. William Marston back in 1928. It is a behavioral model that is easily adaptable to just about any situation involving human interaction.

Since the DiSC® Behavioral System™ is such an integral part of what we do and since we have several clients who are also using this system, we've decided to start devoting a column in our newsletter just to the applications of DiSC®, including the sharing of recent research on DiSC®, information about resources, tips and techniques, tools, and anything else we can think of that might help people better understand and utilize the System.

If you have any experiences, tips, or anything else you'd like to share with others about your use of DiSC®, please feel free to contact us and we'll gladly share them with the rest of our readers.

One of our consistent experiences concerning others knowledge of DiSC® is that many think it is just a profile. We've encountered many people who say they've had a session on DiSC® and that they loved taking the profile and how insightful it was to them.

But when we talk to them about applying DiSC® to their daily work they tend to look a bit quizzical at us. Many don't know how this one simple model can provide the basis for

creating good managers, providing effective leadership, creating exceptional customer service, helping to close sales, providing a foundation for negotiating, building teams, opening communication, valuing diversity, effectively managing projects, and much, much more.

If we realize that the Human Side of Business is the most important side, then we can quickly understand that having a Behavioral System that can help us be more effective at *Managing the Human Side of BusinessSM* can make all the difference in how successful your organization might be.

We hope you find this column of value in the future.

New Client Web Portal Now Available

We've created a new page on our web site for the ease of use of our current customers and clients of many of our online tools, programs, and courses.

When you go to our home page you will find a button on the left at the bottom of the list that is for our "Client Entrance." By clicking on this button

you will be taken to a page that provides links to all of our off-site products, such as Inscape's Electronic Profile Information Center (EPIC), Vital Learning's Virtual Campus for their online courses, TrainingEvals.com's training assessments, and CRKI's learning management system for their online courses. There are links for you to



access your accounts, as well as user manuals and other helpful information on these products.

DiSC® Certification Coming Soon!

We are pleased to announce that **Inscape Publishing**, the publishers of the original DiSC® Profile, is going to be embarking on a new program of certification for it's distributors and customers and clients of distributors.

In the next few months Inscape will be offering it's distributors the opportunity to attend training, take a practical examination, and then become certified by Inscape as an official DiSC® Trainer. Subsequent training

sessions will allow the certified DiSC® Trainer to become a certified DiSC® Instructor. This designation will allow our Instructors to conduct training for our customers and clients to prepare them to take the DiSC® Trainer certification examination from Inscape.

This is the first time **Inscape Publishing** (formerly known as Carlson Learning Company or Performax), the original publishers of

DiSC® Profiles and training products, will formally offer certification. In the past, any certification has been provided by distributors only. This approach will help insure that a standardization of knowledge and application of the DiSC® Products.

Certification for clients and customers is optional but will be available through RDS.

Organizational Alignment Part 2 (continued from page 1)

words, does the employee know what they are supposed to do and how it helps the organization; are they aligned? Yet, we find that 82% of employees don't know both of these two things that will help them achieve this alignment.

So how do we help our employees become aligned? The key is really simple - communicate. Make sure that everyone in the organization has a clear understanding of what the organization's Purpose, Values, and Vision are, and what the key goals are that the organization needs to accomplish. Discussions need to occur from top down in the organization about how each level contributes to achieving each goal, and what needs to be done to be successful and how success will be measured.

Then each manager needs to have conversations with their employees, helping them discover how what they do is important to the organization and how their jobs contribute to the overall success of the organization.

But the connection can't stop there. Employees need to know how what they do impacts upon the Customers of the organization. It helps them see the larger connection of how what they do helps the organization accomplish its Purpose. It helps them see that their work is actually worthwhile.

By having a clear understanding of what the organization's overall Purpose is, what the Goals are, and how what they do helps the organization achieve that Purpose and Goals **and** how what they do impacts upon the organization's Customers, then the employee can

make good decisions about how they do their jobs and what tasks are necessary to accomplish their jobs.

Now employees are doing things that are in alignment with the organization, and they are working more efficiently and effectively. Even if the employee isn't highly engaged before helping them become aligned, the simple act of helping them to get aligned will help increase employee engagement. And of course, increased employee engagement leads to increased productivity, higher Customer engagement, and higher profits.

Alignment is that first step. Begin with the Senior Team, and then work down from there, insuring that alignment is accomplished at every single level. It will result in a more

How Innovative Are You?

In today's ever competitive marketplace, innovation is a very valuable commodity. Unfortunately, too many organizations don't seem to be able to harness creativity and innovation. Most people tend to think that creativity or innovation is an ability that a person has or doesn't have. Often you will hear people say "I'm just not that creative."

But the reality of the situation is that creativity and innovation isn't just an idea, but a process. And the steps of the process take a variety of thinking styles other than just those that can come up with "great ideas."

Coming up with ideas is only the first step, and belong to those whose thinking style, Creator, allows them to come up with a variety of ideas. But the next step is to look at those ideas

and see which are worth carrying forward. This takes the thinking style of those who are Advancers. From their thinking style, they have an ability to pick those ideas that will have the best chance for success.

Next, Refiners can take those ideas and tweak them so that they can now have the best chance for success. Finally, Executors have an ability to be able to map out a plan so that the ideas can be put into action. After all, this is where innovation pays off for the organization.

People tend to have one of the four innovation thinking styles, or the fifth one, Flexor, which is a bit of all, and helps move the process along or can fill in at one of the stages if a thinking style is missing on a team.

And that is what innovation is all about—it's a team process. It takes more than just one person working alone to be innovative. It takes a team working through the process that brings about real innovation for an organization.

We'll look some more at creativity in the next issue.



Strategic Trends™ Newsletter

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Future Trends

The majority of employees in the United States work in organizations of 1500 employees or less. The number of these organizations continue to grow, and are where the majority of our job increases have occurred in the past couple of years. Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy, and most are operating with less than a couple of hundred people.

The employees needed for such an enterprise tend to be different than those needed for larger companies of tens of thousands of employees. Small business employees need to be more versatile, collaborative, multi-talented, and skilled at multi-tasking. Creativity and entrepreneurship are an essential quality needed for small business success, and is valued as a trait in

Resource Development Systems, LLC is a business consulting firm focused on helping organizations strengthen their cultures, engage their employees, and leverage the talents of their members to create the kinds of environments that lead to long-term organizational success and significance.

**We offer
Uncommon Results to
Common Problems!**

these employees. They are expected to take initiative and actively engage their colleagues in stimulating thought and create high performance.

Finding these kinds of employees is a challenge. Competition is going to heat up between the best organizations to obtain the best talent available. Both large and small businesses will be competing for the same talent, yet for many small businesses this competition for talent could be crucial for the success of the organization.

Retaining the talent that they already have will also be a challenge. Many of the best employees will be offered nice pay packages, bonuses, and benefits packages that many small businesses can't afford to offer.

They will be challenged to try to find a reason for their best employees to remain.

But one of the major competitive advantages that small businesses can offer is a great working environment. Unfortunately, many small businesses try to operate just like their larger versions, which can actually drive employees away. What's worse, the rigid rules and command and control structure found in many larger organizations can actually kill the very nature of versatility, collaboration, and creativity and innovation that is vital for the success of small businesses.

Those small (and large) businesses that understand this and that take measures to create highly flexible organizations that allow for personal responsibility will be the winners.

