



Management and Performance Associates – September 2012

To do more with the same

There is no other way! In the age of knowledge, the sky is the limit! Organizations that want to stay competitive depend on their ability to generate and retain every bit of knowledge they are able to. How do we do this? The answer isn't simple, but it is possible to create the conditions for an environment of constant learning. Here are some ways:

Hire talented people

Our purpose here is not to remind you how to conduct an interview, but to remind you that talented people will not stay in environments managed by individuals who block their development and do not value their potential.

Develop talent – in house

People are creative, they have internal resources, and to a large or small extent, they have potential to be developed. Therefore, create development conditions by: coaching them; providing on the job and formal training; delegating challenging assignments; and including them in cross functional projects, among other methods.

Create synergy

Synergy happens when a group's outcome is superior to the one which could have been produced by the most prepared and talented person of that group.

This concept comes from Chemistry: the combination of two elements producing a result which would be impossible to be achieved by each element alone. In chemistry, it is easy to observe synergy. There's no need for a laboratory, just pay attention to what happens when you go to the kitchen and prepare a meal. But, how do you observe synergy in the workplace?

Or, even before that, how do you create the conditions for synergy to occur? The following three conditions need to be present in order for synergy to happen, when two or more people are interacting:

1 | Proper team structure and organization

How many times have we attended meetings that should never have happened? A big chunk of this ineffectiveness is due to the lack of minimal organization and structuring, such as: a previously defined and agreed upon agenda; well defined roles; the presence of key and needed people to reach the proposed objective; punctuality; adequate facilities; agreed upon rules about seeking alternate solutions, decision making, relating to each other, etc.

2 | An environment of mutual influencing

Having a well organized and structured meeting is not enough. People also need to find the space to express their ideas, compare different perspectives, and include a different approach to deal with the challenge or problem. The more talented people that you have present, the higher the potential for synergy. It is also critical that in addition to talent, these people are mature enough to appreciate different ideas and suggestions, so that they can be influenced when someone comes up with a better idea or suggestion. In other words, leave your ego outside the door.

Without a mutual influencing environment (and we do emphasize the word mutual) the potential for synergy is reduced to a dispute of vanity.

3 | A favorable Interpersonal climate

A favorable interpersonal climate is related to the level of respect among members of the



team and to what extent they are willing to see existing conflicts as a learning opportunity.

Back to the question: how do you observe synergy in the workplace? We can say we have achieved synergy when, after an interaction, people are committed to the implementation of the decisions that were made, they feel capable of replicating the solution in similar situations, they seek other opportunities to challenge the status quo and they feel motivated to do more and to do better.

To end this newsletter on a different tone, we invite you to click on the link to the left and enjoy the synergetic result produced by very talented people. We hope you enjoy the performance of the four talented dancers on the stage. We also invite you to try seeing beyond the scene, reflect upon the behind the scenes performers, who have a relevant contribution to the synergetic result: the orchestra, honoring Tchaikovsky's notes; the conductor, establishing the rhythm of the scene; the set decorators, defining the context; the other dancers, waiting for their performance, without interrupting their colleagues' performance; lastly, the lighting, focusing on the priorities. The Moscow Ballet created synergy with pleasure...do you take the challenge?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nyfq_d18_o&feature=related

See you next month. Suggestions are welcome.

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