

People Development: A Strategic Advantage

By Tom Northup September, 2006

All organizations are perfectly designed to achieve the results they are now getting. The culture of the organization is the framework that sets the tone for high performance.

Research using data from over 100,000 managers identifies the "Developer" as the highest achieving management style. Developer CEOs build a culture where people want to be and want to do their best. Personal development is the key to continuous organizational improvement and one product of an effective culture. Thus building a performance culture becomes a key high payoff activity of CEOs.

Many individuals strive to regularly improve their performance. If we improve our effectiveness by only 1% a month, we will double our effectiveness in about five years. The same holds true for organizations. If the management team can similarly improve its effectiveness, the organization's performance will improve as well.

CEO developers build a performance culture and assist their employees to continually improve their performance. The combination creates a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Development Process

How many of your employees wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, smile and say, "I can't wait to go to work today?"

Henry James, called the father of American Psychology, identified appreciation as one of the most basic human qualities. Observe your employees. You will notice that all of them have the letters "MMFA" emblazoned on their foreheads: "Make me feel appreciated."

Follow that question with, "Who do your employees work for?"

A sophisticated view is that you are paying your employees to work for themselves. Your most effective employees understand that they really work for themselves. You want these employees because of their positive attitude. They have a positive belief about work and continually develop their capabilities.

John Maxwell says that people follow a leader because of what the leader can do for them.

Many leaders forget a basic adage of leadership, that is, their success depends on the success of others. Developer leaders understand that they contribute to the success of their employees by making it easier for them to do their jobs, by making them feel that their jobs have significant value and by treating them as individuals with valid opinions and suggestions.

Research shows that the organizational culture, the way people think about working for an organization, has a significant impact on human performance. The way employees perceive the leader and his management team drives organizational culture and employee performance.

Successful people work for themselves, want to feel appreciated and follow a leader for what he can do for them. A developer CEO understands that he needs to have significance in the lives of his employees. He understands the connection between performance and development and builds a culture that promotes and rewards personal growth.

Results of Development

Dramatic results can be achieved when we develop a performance culture focused on employee growth. When employees realize their personal goals as they help meet organizational goals great results are possible.

The impact on employees is impressive. As employees reach personal success they become positive and energized. Success breeds more success.

The effect of their success on the organization is infectious. Employee success leads to outstanding organizational success. The loftiest of company goals are reached more quickly and with less effort.

Many organizations struggle with change as they try to adjust to the realities of their competitive environment. Successful people are impatient with the status quo. They understand how to effect change and proactively lead the organization to regular growth in revenue and profitability.

Developer CEOs understand that small improvements in personal effectiveness generate a much larger improvement in profitability. They understand that their personal involvement and leadership is required to ensure the positive return on their investment in people.

A Caveat

To build a development culture takes a leader with a positive belief in the basic nature of people. He believes people are motivated to achieve, desire self-fulfillment and seek responsibility. He hires to these attributes. He sets a culture where these individuals are able to perform and expand their personal effectiveness.

In contrast a leader who doesn't have these attitudes may take personal control over tasks, be rules oriented and use punishment for control.

The developer leader understands the attitude that is required to build a performance culture. He becomes a leader with a "Servant's Heart," dedicating himself to the success of those who are helping him achieve his success.

An effective developer leader lives as a role model. "Do as I say not as I do" is not effective. Show the way by regularly increasing your effectiveness and celebrating your successes.

Summary

In today's pressure-packed business environment, management must quickly react to rapidly changing market conditions. A management team that works together to proactively effect change is a major organizational strength.

A key attitude of the CEO is to believe his people have a basic desire to improve themselves and to achieve at a high level. This "Developer" leader builds a performance culture.

The way people think about their company has a significant effect on their performance. There is a positive connection between the culture of the company and employee performance.

The developer CEO understands this. He builds a culture where people can perform to their high standards and reach their personal goals. As they reach their goals, the company has equally outstanding success. Culture has a measurable impact on performance.

The culmination of a performance-based and employee-focused culture is competitive advantage in your marketplace.