

Keynote Speaker & Worskop Facilitator



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Newsletter - March 2004

WORK PREFERENCES AND YOUR TEAM - PART 1

One of the key aspects of working together with other people in a team is understanding why they do the things they do and learning to accommodate their preferences so that you can work together better. It is easier to understand people and their work preferences if we use a measure of preference. In the Team Management Profile (TMP) Margerison and McCann identify four work preference measures. They are:

1. How you relate to others at work
2. How you gather and use information
3. How you make decisions
4. How you organise yourself and others

In this four part article I will examine each of the work preferences and identify ways for you to work better with people who have different preferences to you

HOW YOU MAKE DECISIONS

Have a look around you in the office. There are two kinds of people experienced in this work preference, extroverts and introverts. These two preferences are situated along a continuum so some people may be very strong in their preference and be situated at one end, while others may be more even in their preference and be based more toward the middle of the continuum. Extroverts are people who enjoy interacting with others and feed of those interactions. They often do their thinking aloud and enjoy a variety of tasks and activities. They are sometimes subject to "foot in mouth disease" and are regarded as impulsive. At a team meeting they may often dominate discussions and if asked will speak with little or no notice about current projects or issues.

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Introverts are the kind of people who value time to themselves to get on with things. They do not have a high need for interaction with others and can often be off in a world of their own concentrating on their computer or report. At a meeting they will often sit quietly at the end of the table absorbing the conversation. They may contribute the solution to a problem or issue toward the end of the meeting as they have been quietly pondering the issue in their mind or they may come up with the solution later that night after they have processed the details. They are more likely to concentrate on a few tasks at a time and will be annoyed if their time is interrupted by a thoughtless person who did not make an appointment.

IN THE TEAM

I worked with a team recently where the discussion was dominated by the same few people for most of the morning. I noticed that there were others who followed the discussion carefully and at times seemed ready to contribute, but couldn't get a word in between the extroverts of the group. When I intervened and asked one of the introverts directly to contribute, they made many useful observations and points toward a solution.

COACHING TIPS FOR EXTROVERTS AND INTROVERTS

If you are a team leader be careful to observe the interaction between your team members. Make sure the introverts have equal airtime to share their observations and opinions. Be aware that if you interrupt and extrovert they may appear to be listening until a break in conversation comes and they simply jump in again with their opinion. Extroverts have also been known to fill any available air space simply because they can.

Recognising the two types in the team allows you to work the resources of the team for the benefit of all. Use the extroverts to break the ice at a meeting or workshop. Be mindful that you may have to ask for the introvert's opinion and make sure that they get the airspace to get it all out without interruption. By gate keeping both preferences in this way you will draw on the full resources available to the team.

NEXT MONTH

Next month I will examine the next workplace preference, "How to gather and use information".

People - The Most Unpredictable Element Of Business, Master This Challenge and Success Awaits You

Choosing and managing staff within your business can be one of the most difficult tasks business owners are faced with today. If you are contemplating employing staff or have staff in your business you need the Five Stage People Management Model.

The 5 Stage People Management Model in Overview:

1. Select the Right Applicant

Choosing the right person is about getting clear on the role and function they will play in your business. If you want someone for a sales role for example, make a list of the duties you expect him or her to perform and write them down. Next make a list of the desirable characteristics the person should have. Do they need to relate well to people, or perhaps need to be a good team worker? Dot points are fine as the purpose of the list is to jog your memory. Compare applicants against these points when you interview them for the vacancy.

2. Establish Performance Expectations

Once you have appointed someone to the position talk with them about what it is that you expect from them in their new role. Develop a performance plan that clearly sets out the targets that you have agreed upon during your conversation. These targets should underpin the objectives of your business plan. Establish a regular review process to check progress against the targets.

3. Invest in Employee Development

To make sure your employees perform at their optimum it is important that they have high-level training and support. Identify individual training needs and develop a plan that enables them to obtain their identified training needs. Perhaps you could employ a coach to work with them one on one. Employers that invest in their staff reap the rewards many times over.

4. Provide Appropriate Feedback

Feedback is rarely done well in Australia . If you see your staff doing a good job, tell them so, on the spot. Practice one-minute feedback made famous by Kenneth Blanchard. If you identify someone doing something less than desirable, stop him or her in their tracks and tell them. Make sure you follow this up with emphasising how you would like

it to be done in the future; again this will only take a minute. It is important to reinforce with positive feedback when they do it right.

5. Choose the Right Pathway

Who is the most important employee in your business? Actually they should all be if they are contributing to achieving the objectives in your business plan. Look within your business to identify staff that are showing potential for promotion and provide training and support so you can move these people up through the ranks. Provide an incentive for people to stay with you. Find out what motivates your people and give them a reason to work hard and stay loyal to you for the long term. Beware - money is not the only motivator. Finally, never be afraid to part company with undesirable employees, but a word of warning - make sure you do it lawfully.

CREATING YOUR OWN SUCCESSFUL TEAM BUILDING EVENT

Taking time out together as a team can have a huge beneficial impact on the team. A well structured and facilitated event can create greater team focus, alignment and motivation.

To create interest in the coming event, choose a theme or inspiring title that engenders interest and enthusiasm toward the event. Announcing the event as our team building day will hardly inspire enthusiastic participation. Announcing the "XYZ Company Team Challenge" will create some interest around what the challenges might include. Another group I worked with recently announced to staff that they were to keep two days free for "An Off Shore Adventure". The event was held at an island resort just off the coast. The reaction and discussion among staff about this event was amazing.

For this event staff were progressively informed about the event through a teaser campaign. They were given a small bottle of sunscreen four weeks out, a hat three weeks out, a pair of sunglasses two weeks out and a treasure map with the location marked one week before the planned event. By the time the event arrived everyone was primed and ready to be part of the fun and learning.

It's important wherever possible to run the event away from the office. Nothing stifles focus more than having people come and

go from the event simply because they are accessible to the rest of the office. Planning for the event off site allows everyone to focus just on the action at hand. The next most important thing to do is ban mobile phones from the room whilst the group is in session. Again this creates focus.

In the planning of the event it is important to make sure the day is a healthy mix of fun and hard work. Plan to have the discussion or detailed work sessions followed closely by a high energy game or activity. Make sure where possible to make these activities link back to the theme of the day or even better to the current point of discussion for the group.

It is important to have time to plan and create actions after discussion. Some groups get wound up talking and fail to build in the action steps to make things happen after the event.

Plan to have a mechanism to record good thoughts or ideas that are not relevant to the current discussion. I usually call this the "Fridge Door". In most peoples homes today we use the fridge door to post notes, bills and children's art. I use the same concept and designate a piece of flip chart paper exclusively as the "Fridge Door". This is where good ideas can be recorded and actioned at a later time by the group. This ensures the event stays on track and focused on the issue at hand.

As the day progresses be sure to reinforce that everyone present makes up the team and their actions as individuals and as a team reflect on their ability to create success.

Finally celebrate the achievements of the day by listing the major agreements of the day and list who is taking responsibility for driving them further.

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