
Management Counsel

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Results and Organization Effectiveness

Have you ever been asked to demonstrate results? Of course – it's a very common request. Results are the consequences of actions – some see them as outcomes, the end product.

When asked to “demonstrate results” there is an inherent expectation that results will be evidence based. And, many organizations thrive on presenting results from individuals, or perhaps groups, often tying advancement and bonus pay to these “results”.

Management by Results has been around as a concept since at least 1961 - Schleh, Edward C.

”Management by Results: The Dynamics of Profitable Management”. Management by results, rather than focusing on what needs to be done, is based on what needs to be achieved. More than activities to be done, one talks of results to be achieved. It can be seen as a process clearly defining inter-related steps to know in a measurable way what is to be achieved; defining realistic paths that point to what is sought; and having a follow-up mechanism that will detect any deviation.

Managing by results is only one part of achieving a truly effective organization. In addition, one needs to remember that an organization is comprised of many teams and working relationships which must be successful for organizations to be effective.

A recent book by Patrick Lencioni “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” puts managing by results into perspective.

Lencioni sets forward the proposition that unless 5 potential dysfunctions are managed, teams cannot be truly cohesive, and organizational effectiveness will suffer.

Team dysfunctions are:

- absence of trust
- fear of conflict
- lack of commitment
- avoidance of accountability
- inattention to results

Building effectiveness demands attention to all of these possible dysfunctions.

Weakness in any one will mean less effectiveness. Hence, while focusing on results is important – it must be done in the context of the other dimensions of effective team work if the organization is to be effective.

Finding Your Voice

Stephen Covey is famous for “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”, so it is somewhat surprising to see a book by him entitled “The 8th Habit”. Did he forget something all this time!

The sub-title of this interesting book says “from effectiveness to greatness”. It is about knowing who you are – so that you can truly inspire others to discover themselves, and in so doing develop the energy and commitment to truly excel, personally and organizationally.

The 8th Habit is “*find your voice and inspire others to find theirs*”.

Finding your voice is finding

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your meaning, your contribution, your difference. In a world where many are frustrated, not clear about where their organization is headed, or what is a real priority, finding your voice is essential to finding fulfillment. Think of all those people who “cannot wait to retire” because they have no meaning in what they do. Instead the destination should be to retire from your job but not from meaningful projects, purposes. Dr. Covey points out that to have a long life, one needs *eustress* [the pleasant, curative form of stress], a deep sense of meaning and of contribution to worthy projects and causes.

You may find the book a bit uncomfortable – its language is inspirational, as it addresses the spirit in us all. The message is worth the discomfort. To quote Kevin Rollins, President of Dell Inc., “Getting results in large companies is a very rare skill and this book captures how to do it. The guidance provided here will prove invaluable for leaders who are trying to drive tighter execution in their organizations.”

Ground Rules for Success

Four agreements for successful living are described by Don Miguel

Ruiz in “The Four Agreements”:

- Be impeccable with your word
- Don’t take anything personally
- Don’t make assumptions
- Always do your best

The first agreement needs a bit of explanation – but essentially it means don’t gossip, don’t use words in a hurtful manner, but speak truthfully and directly.

Overall, the four agreements have offered a wonderful short-hand for establishing in teams and groups the basic ground rules for working successfully. The Agreements complement leadership methods, performance agreements, and all manner of organizational management processes and practices.

For example, consider the importance of not making assumptions. How many times do we hear something stated by a colleague, and think we know what they are saying when we are really making assumptions that could be very wrong? Or, when we have asked for something to be done, do we assume that our request has been understood?

It may seem trite to “always do your best” but how many times when you are working with a team on a problem, and time is short or people

are busy or tired, do you make “less than best” decision?

Taking things personally – of course we know that we shouldn’t, but it is so hard not to. Plus, when we look at what motivates us, we often seek to achieve our own goals first – rather than looking to the betterment of the team and the organization.

The four agreements can make us better listeners, more compassionate, and greatly enhance the quality of work product – and our sense of worth in participating in it.

A Thought...

“Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgment will be surer. Go some distance away because then the work appears smaller and more of it can be taken in at a glance and a lack of harmony and proportion is more readily seen.”

Leonardo Da Vinci

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