

The CEO's Role in Creating a "Winning Team" Culture & Executing Change

The Major Responsibilities of a CEO

- Creating, communicating, and executing the company's vision, mission & strategy
- Hiring, leading, and evaluating senior management
- Establishing a "winning team" that achieves stated team goals and performance
- Soliciting advice and guidance
- Overseeing the complete operation in accordance with established plans
- Evaluating the financial success of the organization
- Exploiting the competitive landscape, opportunities for expansion, customers, markets, new industry developments and standards
- Attracting the "best" people---winning attracts winners
- Making changes in the culture to improve the probability of winning

The Role of a CEO in Creating a "Winning Team"

- Business is not a game, but companies compete with one another every day.** Creating a "winning team attitude" is essential to the success of any organization. It sets the tone. It's not a description of arrogance, but a description of self confidence that one can succeed through hard work and perseverance regardless of the circumstances or challenges.
- An effective leader is genuine, authentic, and demonstrates that confidence to his colleagues.** He's accountable and takes responsibility for the tough decisions and grapples with the failures of the organization. He seeks answers from his team members who know the subject matter better than himself. He builds trust, respect and loyalty—essential building blocks for a winning team.
- He surrounds himself with experienced team members that challenge each other in determining the best decisions.** He provides opportunities for each team member to contribute to the success of the team and achieve greater personal satisfaction than previously thought possible. He pursues innovation by exploring "outside the box" solutions with his colleagues. He commits energy and provides support to organizational change that emphasizes teamwork while empowering individual accountability and respect.
- His role is not to "know how to play every instrument", but to assemble, conduct and insure every team member is on the same page providing the best input in formulating the company's strategic direction and achieving the company's goals.** A "can do" attitude is not optional for a leader and this is transmitted in his communication throughout the organization. When mistakes are made, he accepts organizational responsibility and makes decisions that mitigate the negative consequences.
- He inspects rather than expects performance.** He knows "non-malicious fudging" when he sees it and takes appropriate and immediate action. There is no "I" in the word team and there are no winners on a "losing" team.

How a "Winning Team" Value Statement Impacts Performance

- Values are the core of what a team is and what a team cherishes.
- A "Winning Team" value statement creates a positive self-image of the team.
- When the team wins, everybody wins.

- A Winning Team places the team's achievements ahead of individual happiness or productivity.
- If a "winning team" attitude is a core value of the corporate culture shared by all team members, then underperformance is unacceptable to everyone on the team.
- People, regardless of industry, skill set, or position, want to be on a winning team.
- Winners attract more winners.

When a Change in Direction or Culture Is Warranted

- Usually a change of direction is required **when there is a failure to adjust plans to rapidly changing market conditions.**
- Another change of direction is required **when there is not a clearly defined business plan that is shared with all staff members** and individual key performance indicators are either non-existent or inconsistent with that plan.
- A change in culture is usually required **when overly optimistic financial forecasts are continuously missed** and significant projects miss deadlines or is not implemented throughout the group.
- The last significant reason for a change of culture is **when an organization experiences difficulty in hiring talented individuals** and/or the organization experiences higher than normal turnover or poor morale.

There are three major reasons for this:

- **First, talented individuals want to be part of a winning team that provides the opportunity for advancement, not just a job.** In a service organization, the development of human capital is an organization's #1 goal or it stagnates.
- **Second, higher than normal turnover is largely caused by a mismatch between the expectations of the hired team member and the hiring manager.** Group interviews with peers and specific individuals in other departments that possess the "winning team" value add value in selecting other winning team members.
- **Third, the organization must demonstrate a commitment to developing talent by providing the proper education and training.** Personal development nurtures team loyalty and individual confidence. If properly and regularly monitored, this produces consistency of performance and personal accountability within the organization at every level.

Roadblocks to Improving Performance Through Change

- Culture Matches Comfort and Style of Senior Management.** Culture is formed over years of interaction between participants in the organization and the actions of senior management. Culture frequently echoes the style and comfort zone of the previous CEO or prevailing management style.
- Managers Tend to Hire People Like Themselves.** Since managers tend to hire people just like themselves, the established organizational culture is reinforced.
- People Resist Change.** People are comfortable with the current culture. For people to consider change, usually a significant event must occur. A CEO change is such an event.
- Change Can Be Messy But Necessary.** Only when people in an organization realize and recognize that their current culture needs to transform to support the organization's success and progress, can change occur. That's the job of a CEO.

Changing the Culture: How to Get There

- **Understand The Current Culture.** Describe current behaviors and assess performance results. Define desired new behaviors or behaviors that need changing.
- **Determine Where You Want To Be.** 1) Decide what the culture should look like to support success, and 2) What goals does the organization have for its future.
- **Demonstrate Executive Support.** Executives must support the cultural change. Executives must lead the change by changing their own behaviors. It is extremely important for executives to consistently support the change.
- **Train New Behaviors.** Cultural change is not about slogans or statements. Only behavioral change creates cultural change. It's serious. It sets the tone for the entire organization. Members of the team must clearly understand what is expected of them, and must know how to actually do the new behaviors, once they have been defined. Training can be very useful in both communicating expectations and teaching new behaviors.
- **Use Departmental Focus Groups to Create Value and Belief Statements.** This exercise gives all team members a common understanding of the desired culture that actually reflects the actions they must commit to on their jobs regardless of position.
- **Practice Direct Communication.** Keeping all team members informed about the change process ensures commitment and success.
- **Measure Results.** Changes in behavior must be measured. Also, the more frequently you measure, the greater likelihood of achieving the desired objective or goal. A leader will measure results vs. plan at every level holding every team member accountable.
- **Review Organizational Structure.** Changing the structure of the company to align it with the desired culture may be necessary.
- **Redesign Human Capital Rewards and Recognition.** Team member selection, promotion, compensation and evaluation systems must be aligned with the desired culture. A "Winning Team" culture rewards the team for achieving stated goals, not the individual. There are also no winners on a losing team. Winning attracts winners.