



The Advisor

Organizational Effectiveness News & Trends

March 2008

New to the Game: Balancing Task & Relationship



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Email Jeff

(858) 292-5361

www.clearpathalliance.com

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Getting to know your staff and what they expect is essential to hitting the numbers this quarter and sustaining future growth. When was the last time you made a genuine connection with someone on your team? Read on if you want to learn a powerful way to accelerate your success and achieve results.

New to the Game: Balancing Task & Relationship

The Challenge

A busy executive on a career rotation in a Fortune 100 company engaged ClearPath Alliance to help them quickly onboard in a new role. They also wanted input on the key business drivers for their new area of responsibility, and feedback on an action plan to drive results in their first 90 days. At the same time, the company was preparing to down-size after years of sustained growth. The dilemma was balancing collaboration, communication, and timely action.

Relationship Precedes Results

Enduring employee loyalty and discretionary effort is, in large part, driven by the emotional connection we have with each other, and the relationship we build over time. In this case, two things had to occur: 1) the newly appointed leader had to establish genuine trust and rapport with his team, and 2) timely, actionable ideas and recommendations were needed to address needed organizational changes.

Our agreement with the client was to push his thinking, provide honest feedback, and accelerate his learning process. Based on our coaching sessions, they were able to clarify their vision and chart a course of action. In a staff meeting they said, "Our goal over the next three months is to assess where we are, determine where we want to go, and decide what we will do differently. Our success will come through noisy debate, a willingness to try new things, and defining the real work to be done."

Focus Leads to Results

Since the leader was new to the team, he requested ClearPath Alliance meet separately with each direct report. The purpose was

ClearPath Alliance partners with executives faced with complex business challenges who want to accelerate their success.

We bring process-thinking, tools, and experience to help you get work done.

to solicit feedback on desired outcomes and gauge the team's needs and expectations. A series of half-day, facilitated working sessions were then co-designed with the leader, including a New Leader Assimilation. Each session built on the prior one, and covered a range of objectives, including: assessing the organization, determining restructure criteria, and engaging in candid dialogue about specific changes.

Action Drives Outcomes

The team's rich dialogue resulted in a thoughtful review of people, core processes, and structure. They identified specific changes, critical timing, and interdependencies. The team also raised serious concerns about direction during the second session. So, we paused, sent the team on a break, and met privately with the leader. After a quick assessment, he wisely decided to focus on the team's dynamics and solicit candid feedback rather than continue the planned discussion. This led to a real-time overhaul of the agenda to better meet the team's needs and produce the desired outcomes.

The change paid off with a thoughtful 90-day tactical plan the team owned, and a list of potential key risks based on a review of a down-sizing tool-kit from ClearPath Alliance. The leader later said, "I think there was an epiphany that really changed our thinking and subsequent work. We got farther, faster too!"

Actions to Take Now!

To recap, ClearPath Alliance helped the client take five key actions, which you, too, can take today to:

- 1) Effectively onboard new leaders and accelerate their success
- 2) Clarify future direction and chart a course of action
- 3) Engage direct reports and inspire out-of-the-box thinking
- 4) Balance speed with managed risk
- 5) Proactively address potential derailers

Summary

In today's tightening economy, competitive talent marketplace, and multi-generational workforce, some fundamentals remain the same. It is important to remember staff are people first, a workforce second. As such leaders can get more done, in less time, with better outcomes by listening, soliciting feedback, and addressing both their own and their team's needs. Start today!

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Next Steps

If you are ready to improve your organization's relationship with customers and employees in pursuit of improved business results call us at 858-292-5361 for a consultation.

The "Organizational Survey" is another great way to quickly determine the health of your business. Click on the link below to download a free survey and conduct your own self-assessment.

