

Accelerate Execution of the New Game Plan

By Carol Bergeron



Whether you lead a company or department, you need a solid game plan to realize your vision. Beyond that you need talented people who are well versed in the game plan and motivated to implement. Very few leaders get the opportunity to start entirely from scratch. Even at start-up firms, previous employment experiences of the workforce influence what and how work gets done. Try this proven approach to getting everyone on the same page. Add your own leadership practices to the mix to maximize the performance of your organization and each person in it.

1. Clarify the game plan

Common direction combats workforce fragmentation and ultimately organizational underperformance. Employees, regardless of the jobs they perform, should be so well versed in the game plan that it rolls off the tip of their tongues. They should not only understand the vision, goals and strategy but they should be able to explain it in fewer than five minutes to friends and neighbors at a cocktail party. Use all venues to get the word out including newsletters, emails, announcements, all hands meeting, cascading performance goals and the most effective technique of all - conversation. Validate understanding through impromptu exchanges.

2. Get people psyched

Nothing says "motivational match" like connecting individual passion to organizational vision and values. The highest performing organizations purposely hire folks when there is much overlap. Motivational matching usually starts one-on-one and often goes back as far as the initial job interview. The interview is where you catch a glimpse of what makes someone tick, how self-motivated she is and what his aspirations are. Your understanding of each team member's personal motivation is especially important when rolling out a new game plan. Help the employee see how his interests and goals align with those of the organization.

3. Revise the work

Given your new game plan, brainstorm the work that should get done. Review the work that currently gets done. Then eliminate the stuff that no longer supports the goals or delivers value to customers. Explore technology, process improvements, best practices and individual knowledge and skills development with the intent to prepare people to work differently, overcome obstacles and threats and maximize on strengths and opportunities. Deepen commitment by placing decision making into the hands of the employees doing the work and investing in their development.

4. Recognize and reward achievement

There are some leaders who believe thanking employees for a job well done is just plain wrong. Why? Because they believe you shouldn't have to thank employees for doing their job after all that is what they get paid to do. There are two significant cons with this philosophy: people left in the dark operate in a vacuum, which may contribute to a disjointed workforce, or people only hear from you when something's wrong which can be demotivating. In both instances individual

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and organizational performance may suffer. So, keep the feedback flowing, positive and useful. Nothing says "keep up the good work" and encourages repeated contributions like "thank you", recognition and rewards.

A clear game plan, employee commitment and development, opportunity to influence what and how work gets done and the recognition and reward of successful people and organizations all make a convincing argument to "follow me".

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Bergeron Associates
101 Middlesex Tpke, Ste 6, PMB 326
Burlington, MA 01803-4914
781-376-4071

carol@bergeronassociates.com
www.bergeronassociates.com

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