

Last month's newsletter produced a variety of responses that I would like to share with my readers.

- First, many of you confirmed that employees, even those employed by the most successful companies, are beginning to explore greener pastures. People want employment opportunities with organizations that offer far more value than just a paycheck.
- Second, there will be no more eye tests in this and future newsletters.

Last month's newsletter outlined the five key elements of the value proposition offered to employees or the **Employee WIIFM** (What's in it for me?). These elements are the primary reasons why employees choose to join and remain employed with your firm. The five elements include: clear goals, opportunity to influence, learning & development, recognition & rewards and culture & environment. Inadequate value, from the employee's perspective regarding any or several of the key elements, may prompt unwanted turnover.

The purpose of this month's newsletter is to expand on practical tips to develop the first element: clear goals. I invite you to share your ideas on how you effectively connect employee goals and contributions with those of the organization. With your permission, I would like to include your ideas in our next newsletter to the benefit of all readers.

*6 Top Ways to*

## **LINK EMPLOYEE GOALS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

By Carol Bergeron



A quick review from last month's newsletter:

***Clear Goals** – People want challenging responsibilities at work. They want to understand what is expected of them and how their goals and contributions align with those of the organization. Through frequent conversations, clearly communicate individual goals and how they fit into organizational objectives. **Message: We expect great contributions from you and they matter to us.***

### **6. Articulate objectives using a simple framework.**

The scorecard format works well because you can quickly illustrate the following four categories: business objectives, their performance targets, indicators used to measure progress and initiatives on how you will go about producing desired results. The same framework can be effectively used for articulating division, departmental and individual objectives. Use one format and stick to it. Objectives will change and how you achieve them will change, but don't lose valuable time explaining new frameworks to employees. Time is best spent on discussions regarding how to meet objectives not new ways to illustrate them.

### **5. Make the most of existing group communication forums.**

Invite senior leaders to small group meetings so they hear what is on the minds of employees and answer their questions. Prompt leaders to talk about how the division or department is contributing to the company objectives. Recognize how individual and team projects are contributing to the department or division's objectives. Solicit ideas from employees on alternative ways to achieve goals.

I am **not** suggesting more meetings! Make use of the ones you already host and keep them frequent and short. The employees of a small firm I work with dine together daily. Talking about goals and progress happens naturally each day at

lunch. Another firm I work with hosts a one hour “all hands” meeting each month which always includes a question and answer period on how well business strategy implementation is going. A weekly employee communication session works quite well for another firm I work with. The sessions occur at a time when most employees are already taking a mid-morning break. The well attended sessions are attributable to:

- the content
- conversational style
- brevity (15 minutes each)
- a meeting time convenient for employees (natural break)

The result: there are always more attendees than chairs. It is amazing how standing room only produces more efficient meetings and increases demand for information on progress, contributions and challenges.

How an organization goes about achieving its objectives reveals a lot. Often implementation discussion is another way to reinforce company values and set expectations for behaviors that are consistent with those values. Use story telling, case studies and cite examples to make key points. Integrate your message into your new hire orientation program and training & development workshops whenever you can.

#### **4. Complement group forums with the written word.**

There are many vehicles to share the written word such as newsletters, emails, electronic displays and bulletin boards. Some of my clients have video or graphical displays located in their lobbies and cafeterias. Intranets are more the norm and allow for greater flexibility in how information is presented and when it is available to employees. Written communication serves an important function in reinforcing group forums. Further, it can be referred to at a later date. Create opportunities for employees to ask questions and share relevant experiences in future editions of written communication.

#### **3. Give performance management conversations a face lift.**

The content of performance management discussions is often limited to individual objectives, results and how the employee went about producing the results. Performance management can be a much more powerful tool if the content of those conversations is expanded. Consider introducing the topic of departmental, divisional or organizational objectives into your discussions. Use performance management discussions to make connections at a personal level. Match up what matters most to the employee with what matters most to the organization.

#### **2. Mix and match approaches.**

No single approach mentioned in this newsletter is the silver bullet. It takes a combination of approaches to communicate to employees: *We expect great contributions from you and they matter to us.* People receive and internalize communications in different ways. For some, the group forums will be well received. For others the performance management discussions will be most effective. In all instances send a consistent message and remember that your credibility hinges on how well your actions match your words. Be patient and persistent as you pilot new techniques and adjust them based on feedback.

And, **the number one way** to link employee objectives and contributions with those of the organization is:

#### **1. Leverage the power of one-on-one conversations.**

One-on-one conversation is the most powerful approach to effectively communicating with people. Whether you want to help employees see connections between what they do and how they contribute to the organization’s success, confirm their understanding of everything from the business objectives to strategy, clarify performance expectations, solidify organizational values and what they look like on the job or gather great new ideas: conversation is instrumental. Every day you interact with dozens of people even if only in two-minute snippets at a time. As a leader, you must develop the talent and finesse to listen, understand what matters most and help people see that their values and efforts do fit into organizational context. Make the most of those conversations using a simple approach. End each conversation with an

affirmation of why the employee's work is so important to the organization. Getting into this habit will add about one more minute to each conversation. That is a small investment for a very high return: an engaged and motivated employee.

Regular, convenient communication vehicles will always be more effective than one splashy communication event. Once you have established some consistent and convenient communication venues then it becomes easier to roll out and implement new business strategies. Engage employees in conversation; get their feedback and ideas on how to proceed further. This leads into discussion on practical ways to develop the second element of the Employee WIIFM or Opportunity to Influence – a topic for a future newsletter.

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## TAKE THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

If you are not currently using one or more of the 6 Top Ways to link employee goals and contributions with those of the organization, start doing so over the next thirty days. Let us know how you make out. Phone me at 781-376-4071 or send email to: [carol@bergeronassociates.com](mailto:carol@bergeronassociates.com)

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## RESOURCES

Kaplan, Robert S. & Norton, David P. **Translating Strategy into Action – The Balanced Scorecard**. Boston, MA. Harvard Business School Press, 1996. – *how to implement scorecard approach at your firm*.

Pearce, Terry. **Leading Out Loud**. New York, NY. Jossey-Bass, 1995. – *ideas on speaking with groups as a credible leader*.

To read earlier editions of Bergeron Associates' newsletters, click this link, scroll down to the "Newsletters" and select the edition you want to read. [www.bergeronassociates.com/publications.htm](http://www.bergeronassociates.com/publications.htm)

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## INVITATION FOR FEEDBACK

Again, I invite you to share your ideas on how you effectively link employee goals and contributions to those of the organization. With your permission I would like to include your ideas in our next newsletter so all readers can benefit. Be sure to let me know what I may disclose such as your name, your company name or industry. Phone me at 781-376-4071 or send email to: [carol@bergeronassociates.com](mailto:carol@bergeronassociates.com)

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## ABOUT BERGERON ASSOCIATES

Bergeron Associates provides talent strategies and solutions to prepare your workforce to effectively execute business strategy. We develop and implement talent solutions designed to attract, develop, reward and retain the talent you need.

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

[carol@bergeronassociates.com](mailto:carol@bergeronassociates.com)  
[www.bergeronassociates.com](http://www.bergeronassociates.com)

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