

LEAD PEOPLE – MANAGE THINGS

Managers

Deal with the optimization of an already existing working system.

Leaders

Break new ground; motivate self and inspire others to expanded goals and heights. Leaders need to be skilled in both leading *and* managing, knowing when each is most needed and appropriate.

7 OBSTACLES TO CHANGE

Resistance to change is natural. When we notice our resistance, it can contribute to our success if we choose to pause, explore and learn from the situation, and proceed consciously with discernment. When we allow resistance to overcome us and start ‘running the show,’ it is destructive. Listed here are 7 Obstacles to Change and ways to resolve them.

When considering the discussion questions listed with each of the Obstacles to Change, conduct a positive, non-judgmental exploration of where opportunity resides. Consider the *cause* of obstacles to assure your solutions can have lasting impact by addressing the cause, rather than only the symptoms. Appreciate that we are each part of every challenge and its solution.

1. Over-Managed and Under-Led

Over-emphasis on 1) control versus discovery, and 2) utilization of existing systems which may need to be further optimized or replaced to more effectively meet the needs of the future. Results in the erosion of morale, creativity and innovation.

To Resolve

- Overcome fears to change
- Optimize working systems
- Stretch boundaries beyond the known

In order to optimize the balance of maintaining a functional, contributing existing system and the need to stretch boundaries, we need first to overcome our fears of change. To do so it is often helpful to look at some things we have been doing, but do so at a deeper level. We must be willing to look honestly, or we are wasting our time. Ask yourself:

Discussion Questions

- What existing systems have the potential to contribute even more effectively?
What is the potential benefit of optimizing them?
- What's my biggest concern that until now has kept me from optimizing this system?
What might be the worst that could happen by optimizing the system?
What might be the worst that could happen by *not* optimizing it?
- What am I currently trying to control versus optimize?
- What systems/ways of doing things do I need to let go of to be more effective?
- In what areas am I stretching boundaries?
- In what areas am I currently over-managing and under-leading?
Or under-managing and over-leading?
- What one action could I take now that would make a significant positive difference?

2. 'We're Successful' Syndrome

Being enamored with 'what's worked in the past.'
Can result in a blindspot to the needs of an evolving future.

To Resolve

- Focus on your evolving future
- Bring from your past only what serves the future

To avoid being seduced into the potential liability of the 'We're Successful' Syndrome, ask yourself:

Discussion Questions

- What do I think our organization is doing simply because it worked in the past?
What might be the result?
- What are the ways our organization is exploring new frontiers, innovating, taking risks?
What might be the result?
- What one area do I suggest our organization further explore, innovate, and take risks?
- What specific thing can I do, or stop doing, that would resolve any 'We're Successful' Syndrome in my area of responsibility?

3. **The Numbers Are Up'**

Keeping dysfunctional executives who produce positive financial numbers.

Results in a downward spiral to 1) inefficient use of resources 2) repressed communication 3) decreased morale, and 4) loss of best and brightest.

To Resolve

- Balance financial and non-financial factors
- Value long term motivation and development of team equally to business results

Discussion Questions

- Have I ever mistaken an upswing in my or our financial numbers for success?
- Besides numbers, what other indicators help me determine if what I am doing is effective and successful?
- In which of these areas would my additional focus bring me stronger, more sustainable results?
- What specific action in this area will produce positive results?

4. **Mind Reading Required – Lack of Honesty and Authenticity**

Partial truths – outright lies – needing to read between the lines – holding or being on hold for decisions that are already made. All result in frustration, loss of trust, and inefficiency.

To Resolve

- Recognize that the benefits of honesty and authenticity outweigh any discomfort. Personally own that truth.
- Recognize those areas where you fear being honest will have limiting consequences for you. Realize that until confronted, they will continue to have limiting consequences. Therefore, also realize they offer opportunities for growth and empowerment when you are ready to confront them. What specific loss do you fear? Feel that in your body and look it in the eye.
- Assess how you can honestly communicate your viewpoint/concern(s) for positive effect. If you see you cannot assess this, is it because of your lack of communication skills/credibility etc., or because of chronic rigidity/reactivity of the other party?
 - If it is the former, confront and do what you need to confront and do to gain the skills, experience and/or credibility to be effective.
 - If it is the latter, find another position.
- Wherever you are maintaining your integrity, be and model honesty, authenticity and candor. Honor those who do so.

Discussion Questions

- How authentic is my communication with my supervisor, peers, subordinates and family members?
- How would I describe the quality of communication in my immediate work group?
- How authentically do I think my supervisor communicates?
- How have I dealt with what I perceived as inauthentic communication in the past?
- What authentic communication (positive or negative) am I aware of that I am not saying out loud? What might be the benefit of sharing it?

5. 'But I Intended to Do It'

Appears as a gap between intention and observable action. Includes not delivering on a promise. Results in weakening the organizational foundation and lost potential. Not addressing the 'gap' leads to a downward spiral of morale, creativity, and performance.

To Resolve

- Identify and resolve the cause of the difficulty. Ask yourself, "Am I/or is the other person:
Equipped with the needed skill?
Overwhelmed? Insecure?
Experiencing an emotion causing resistance, possibly fear, grief, or apathy?
Experiencing a limiting belief?"
- If you are the key contributor to the gap, resolve the cause of your difficulty, acknowledge what occurred, and now consistently deliver on your promises.
- If the other person is creating a gap, talk with them directly to discover *their* sense of the cause of the difficulty. Check out your perceptions with them, versus thinking you know the cause and resolution of their difficulties.
- Ask the person if they want to change.
If yes, assist them in resolving the cause of the difficulty.
If no, invite them to find a new position.

Discussion Questions

- In what instance was my stated intention different from my results?
- What actions did I take that resulted in my producing something other than what I intended?

- Was I conscious of taking these actions?
If yes, why did I choose to do so?
If no, what was the first action I took that started producing results different from my intention? What was I avoiding?
- How did I communicate with others throughout the process of my producing something other than my stated intention?
- What was I reluctant to communicate, acknowledge, address or confront?

6. The Double Bind

Authority figure creates contradictions and deems the contradictions ‘un-discussable’.
The ‘undiscussability’ is the most troubling difficulty.

E.g., Authority figure says, “If you want a promotion make sure I know everything that’s going on!” AND THEN says, “You’re always telling me the problems. I want solutions, not problems. You had better start getting it right!”

Results in confusion, frustration, demoralization, stalled progress, lost potential.

To Resolve

- Recognize you are in a Double Bind
- Discuss the contradiction
- Meta-communicate: Communicate about your communication

Discussion Questions

- To whom might I be sending contradicting messages, and blocking communication about the contradiction – at work, home, or in myself?
- What do I see as the result of this contradiction and blocked communication?
- What am I feeling or thinking that might be causing this?
- What action would resolve this difficulty in me? And between me and the other person?

7. **Silo Effect**

Lack of communication and interaction among groups. Indicates an avoidance of responsibility. Results in limited potential synergy of strategic and functional alignment, and wasted resources.

To Resolve

- Discover the cause of the difficulty
- Develop senior management team of secure, self-confident leaders
- Provide skills-based programs for spontaneous, authentic communication
- Utilize Communication Clearing Process to resolve resistances or conflicts

Discussion Questions

- How prevalent is the silo effect in our organization?
- Between which groups is it most notable?
- What do I see as the lost potential in those groups?
- And the result of that on the organization?
- With what group could I improve my synergistic interaction?
- What might be the business and interpersonal result?
- What are three key steps I can take to make a difference?