

How To Chart Your Business Course

...and get your employees all 'rowing' in the same direction

According to millions of Gallop poll* participants:

Only 29 % of employees are engaged at work

54 % are not engaged in their job

17 % are actively *disengaged*

If this causes you pause, you may be asking yourself, “*What percentage of our employees are actively engaged?*” and “*What will it take to engage those who are only doing enough to get by, or who are not performing to their full potential?*”

In today’s busy and complex business environment the key to success is getting everyone in the boat rowing the same direction. With labor being the single largest organizational expense, it is essential to tap into your most valuable asset, the people. If you’re looking for a way to get everyone in the boat, actively engaged in the organization, there are six key questions people need answers to:



1) What is this organization all about? Whether you have a formal Vision, Mission and Values or a more informal method for identifying and communicating where the organization needs to be and what the organization stands for and believes in, answering this question begins building a foundation for employee, customer and vendor understanding.

Articulating where you see the organization 3-5 years from now, clarifying the fundamental purpose for the organization’s existence and sharing those beliefs and guiding principles that set the tone and shape the behaviors expected from all stakeholders, are the building blocks for getting everyone in the boat rowing the same direction.



2) Where is the organization going, and how is it going to get there? The answer to this question comes from identifying and communicating the organization’s critical few priorities or strategies for the next 3-5 years along with their respective goals.

In addition, current year objectives, or outcomes needed to move toward achievement of those goals become the basis for the development of plans and actions that can be implemented throughout the organization.

Typically less than 5% of people know what the organizational strategy is. In order to get everyone in the boat rowing the same direction, they need to understand where the

organization is going and what priorities have been established for members of the organization to focus on.



3) How and where do I fit? Once everyone knows what the organization stands for and where it needs to be, they can begin to understand how what they do contributes to the overall success of the organization.

By cascading the critical few strategies with their respective goals and objectives throughout the organization, departments and teams can begin developing and implementing plans and actions that support attainment of the organization's success.

It is important to have a method for measuring progress and success against the goals and objectives, and regularly sharing that performance with employees throughout the organization.



4) What's expected of me? People want to do a good job. In order for them to be actively engaged, every person needs to know the role they are expected to play and what the organization is paying them to accomplish.

Organizational commitment to a sound performance management process is of utmost importance. Everyone needs a line of sight that allows them to understand how their contributions support individual, team, department and organizational achievement.

A performance management process geared to developing employees to be the best they can be, begins with setting clear expectations and sharing how employee performance will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.



5) How can I make a difference? With a clear understanding of where the organization is going, how it's going to get there, plans and actions developed at the department and/or team level and performance expectations in hand, everyone should be in the boat rowing the same direction.

As people execute their plans and actions, and strive to meet and exceed the expectations set out for them, providing coaching and feedback is essential to people performing their activities consistently well.

In addition, encouraging employees to find new and innovative ways to continuously improve how things are done and how performance is achieved will lead to highly engaged people who actively challenge themselves to contribute even more to organizational success.



6) How am I doing? Employees need to know they are valued, and how what they do contributes to the success of the organization. A performance assessment process that includes regular reviews of how individuals are performing against their expectations is an effective way to let employees know that their contributions are supporting overall success, or if course corrections are needed.

Everyone in the boat needs to individually and collectively understand the progress and success that's being made along the way to achieving team, department and organizational success.

How effectively does your organization provide answers to these key questions? Take a minute to imagine an organization...

- ...Where every employee is in the boat actively rowing the same direction.
- ...Where people are utilizing effective processes and systems to consistently delight customers while delivering a profitable business.
- ...Where people are proud to be part of a winning organization and are convinced that their contributions have made a difference.
- ...And where everyone is celebrating the swiftness and the speed at which the organization is successfully approaching its destination!

Chart the course, get everyone in the boat rowing the same direction and enjoy the journey!

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