



Dave Fleck, President and Principal Consultant

MORALE BOOSTING PROCESS

Our last three Leadership Briefs examined the topics of listening and attitude. This Leadership Brief will build on these topics and explore the theme of how best to support employees to move past the effects of lean economic times, business cost cutting and organizational downsizing.

1. Establish a Clear Vision/Mission, Key Drivers and Goals - The first step is for leadership to establish (or re-establish) a vision/mission for the organization (or their part of the organization). The vision/mission should be a clear, concise statement of the purpose of the organization and what leadership wants the organization to become in the future. The vision/mission needs to focus on how the business will serve its customers. An example is the Vision/Mission from the former McCaw Cellular "To develop a reliable wireless network that empowers people with the freedom to travel anywhere - across the hall or across the continent - and communicate effortlessly". The next level that must be developed are key drivers. Key drivers represent the critical factors that will enable the organization to fulfill its mission and reach its vision. An increase in employee commitment, improved customer satisfaction, effective business operations are all examples of key drivers. Finally, leadership needs to develop long term as well as short-term organizational goals in the key driver categories that will stretch the organization towards achievement.

2. Dialogue - This step requires small group sessions that allow employees to process the vision/mission, key drivers and goals presented by the leaders of the organization. These sessions afford leadership the occasion to understand and appreciate what employees believe are the opportunities and barriers to goal attainment. This will require effective listening skills, as well as a proper attitude, to successfully collaborate with employees to hear new ideas and to discuss and address concerns. It is also a very necessary step that needs to be taken in order for all parties to commit themselves to the vision/mission and goals. This open-ended process allows leadership to share their passion for the future direction with employees while at the same time to listen to and integrate employee input. This cooperation sets the foundation for the organization to move towards its vision. Adjustments to the key drivers and goals will be necessary to incorporate what has been learned from employees; the people who are always closest to where the results are achieved ... the customers.

3. Facilitation and oversight - We firmly believe based on our years of working these "Morale Boosting" processes in business that an external Consultant/Facilitator is critical to a successful process. They create an environment where both sides can be heard ... ensuring impartiality in the process and modeling effective listening skills. They also track progress and coach participants on the steps that need to be taken to ensure success. Through an effective implementation of this process, a higher level of trust is developed between all levels in the organization which allows for the organization's secrets and taboos to be openly discussed and resolved. Once resolved, commitment to the vision/mission and goals can be firmly established.



Dave Fleck, President and Principal Consultant

4. Communication - Continuous communication with employees throughout the process via email, newsletters as well as direct two-way communication by employees' management and organization leadership is vital. This means valuing and incorporating differing perspectives and acknowledging those who are making a contribution. It also means addressing (and not ignoring) specific employees who are skeptical and bring down others with their resistance and negativity. This is done by having open and honest discussions with those who do not appear to be supportive and helping them get on board to support the process. The vast majority of employees will embrace the vision/mission and commit to organizational success if the process to get people on board is done in a collaborative and respectful fashion.

The Objective - The true objective of this whole endeavor is to build a culture of appreciation and trust that will enable the organization to meet its goals and ultimately become the organization that the vision describes. It is a process of building for the future, not a focus on the immediate results. Organizations that are consumed by short-term results allow for the deterioration of vital organizational qualities that are the underpinning of long-term organizational health. It is critical to balance a review of daily operations and financial numbers with an assessment of other organizational attributes such as employee satisfaction and morale, customer satisfaction and other longer term indicators. This balanced style of management supports the continuous improvement in organizational effectiveness that leads to long-term success.

The Objective - The true objective of this whole endeavor is to build a culture of appreciation and trust that will enable the organization to meet its goals and ultimately become the organization that the vision describes. It is a process of building for the future, not a focus on the immediate results. Organizations that are consumed by short-term results allow for the deterioration of vital organizational qualities that are the underpinning of long-term organizational health. It is critical to balance a review of daily operations and financial numbers with an assessment of other organizational attributes such as employee satisfaction and morale, customer satisfaction and other longer term indicators. This balanced style of management supports the continuous improvement in organizational effectiveness that leads to long-term success.

Reprint permission granted in part or whole when the following credit appears: "Reprinted with permission from Dave Fleck's Leadership Briefs (Copyright, Dave Fleck, (www.northeasternconsulting.com))". Please send comments, thoughts or to subscribe to this free newsletter send an email to mail@northeasternconsulting.com.