



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Creative Catalysis

In a world where business happens at the speed of thought, the challenges that the external environment heaps on the enterprise are numerous. Globalization, intense competition, technological changes and political turmoil are the most prominent. Coupled with internal pressures and tribulations, these external challenges complicate the working of the organization.

Leaders must take on the internal challenge to ensure the smooth working of the organization. They might often have to traverse the road less traveled. The problems listed are definite and employees face them at some point in their career. Here are certain ways to take up such challenges, differently.

Challenge 1: Lack of a sense of ownership and organizational commitment

As an employee goes up the ladder in Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of needs, he feels a need for recognition, a sense of achievement, autonomy and a good work environment that would motivate him. The employer's inability to fulfill such needs dissatisfies the employee. As a result, he does not respond positively to his employer. Harboring dissatisfied people in the work environment creates 'toxic workplaces'.

Stopping employees from working is no solution. Instead, they must be made to work for themselves. Executives must treat them as volunteers or partners in business, i.e., as people who have a stake in the organization. Generating greater involvement and excitement in the organization brings forth new ideas that could lead to greater success.

Clear communication is a crucial need. It helps to punctuate communication with 'Thank you', 'Please' and 'May I help you?' Senior executives must be amiable, genuine, and have the ability to talk their way to happier and more committed employees.

Challenge 2: Lack of sense of purpose

There is nothing more de-motivating than being unaware of one's goals. This situation possibly arises because employees are encouraged to have 'SMART' goals and objectives ---*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound*. Breaking down the organization's vision into goals and objectives, so that they become innumerable, is a not-so-smart proposition.

Challenge 3: Lack of trust

Employees meet different types of people at the workplace. They belong to different levels of hierarchy, different departments, cultures and value systems. Therefore, each of their goals and motivations will be different. It is impossible to trust them with anything that might affect the manager's job. Distrust, breeding among employees, is a sign of poor organizational health.

To build trust, employers and employees must practice the 'law of reciprocity'---'what you give is what you will get'. The boss must start trusting his subordinates with work.

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After having delegated, superiors must let their subordinates have fair try at handling responsibilities. Even if it is not the 'right way', they refrain from going beyond making suggestions. The faith that they have reposed in them will energize them to work harder and perform better.

Challenge 4: Focus on non-performers

In the zest to keep all employees satisfied, a lot of time and effort is spent on listening to the woes of non-performers. Such employees always tend to be grumpy, complaining about their work and the treatment meted out to them. As the old adage goes, "What you invest in is what will grow." Spending excessive time on 'complaining employees' would be interpreted as encouraging them. Managers must thus not focus on 'disgruntled' employees.

However, these employees must not be completely ignored as well. Good bosses use an approach that Rob Goffee calls "tough empathy". Tough empathy is about giving people what they need, not necessarily what they want. It is tricky to achieve since it demands giving selflessly to people around and knowing when to pull back. This emphasizes how much the boss really cares besides conveying the message that he cannot be taken for granted.

Challenge 5: Unethical conduct

Misappropriation of financial accounts, providing substandard products and services, manipulating internal working, and insider trading, are examples of unethical conduct and causes for the downfall of big companies. Nearly forty-four percent of the employees surveyed have been witness to immoral behavior or have been pressurized into it. Less than three out of five employees report satisfaction with the way their complaint was dealt with.

Ethics and values are non-negotiable. Managers must communicate them to their subordinates and hold onto them steadfast. They would then be able to create a difference in the way people work. It may be possible to win all the time, but doing it the 'right way', will definitely build sustainability.

Leadership in action

It's noteworthy of managers to think of doing things differently and changing the way organizations function. However, in an environment where employees have strong values and beliefs, pre-conceived notions and unshakable mindsets, managers must brace themselves for a rough ride. Leadership is about influencing, about leading people to believe that the actions undertaken by leaders are genuinely going to do them good.

The following checklist should help complete the process quickly.

- Analysis of the organization and its culture, self-analysis (manager's strengths, weaknesses, style) and employees analysis (their strengths, weaknesses, values, beliefs, etc)
- Exploration of the problem, preferably, with the help of trusted subordinates



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- Examination of the tactics, and approach to be employed
- Employee 'Buy-in'
- 'Adapt and adjust' stage for employees
- Final review, during which identification of process failure may lead to repetition of the first two steps.

A sense of ownership, purpose, trust, and commitment to the organization are therefore the major prerequisites for successful organizations.