

Management and Performance Associates – January 2015 Five paradigms to be reexamined to start a *really* “New” Year

“The protectors of the past never create the future. And the creators of the future never stop questioning the past. You've got to ask—and keep asking” ~Umair Haque, consultant, author and director of Havas Media

Start questioning the following five paradigms if you don't want the future to be a repetition of the past:

Paradigm 1 | Employees are Human Resources

If you treat employees like *resources* they will behave accordingly. In other words, they will perform their tasks in exchange for their salary . . . nothing more . . . nothing less. Employees are also not *team members*, as the word implies a collaborative effort. What if they don't feel like cooperating? Do they continue to be team members?

Employees should be partners in the generation and delivery of services and products valued by clients. This may sound semantical, but it's not. This is about the “mindset” that shapes the relationship. (i.e.: positional power or influence, compliance or commitment, rational engagement or emotional engagement.)

Paradigm 2 | Solid knowledge and skills will drive high performance

In “Hundred Percenters,” Mark Murphy writes that attitude (rather than skill) is frequently considered the primary differentiator for professionals who perform at 100%. What is the point if a brilliant, creative and technically competent employee has a negative attitude? Attitude is the major obstacle to full performance, as a negative employee tends to be resistant to feedback, shows little willingness to deal with change and negatively impacts their team motivation.

Many managers overlook the attitude issue due to the technical talent and the “results” obtained by

these employees. Managers need to be clear about the consequence of such attitudes instead of rewarding them.

Paradigm 3 | Reward short term results and hope that a series of short terms will lead to the long term

Obviously, if an organization is unable to consistently generate short term results, then there is no need to be concerned with the long term. It will not survive. The key issue is the balance between short and long term perspectives. Balance drives the development of responsible and strategic thinking. It highlights the need to innovate services, products and processes. It also places the client at center stage and opens possibilities for additional sustainable actions and contributions in the community, therefore consolidating the organization's projected image.

Paradigm 4 | Managing change is the same as managing transition

Managing change is about creating and executing a plan to go from point A to point B. Transition is the psychological re-adaptation to deal with the change. That's the true challenge of leadership when dealing with change. John Kotter, in “The Head and Heart”, says: “People change because they are shown a truth that influences their feelings, not because they were given endless amounts of logical data.”

State and repeat—as many times as needed—your purpose for moving from point A to point B. Give people a significant role in the transition process. Recognize that the losses are real and help people to find a new meaning or to substitute the losses for something comparable; if there is nothing to be done, just acknowledge the loss, and move on. Finally, do not forget to summarize the learning points from this experience, so that it can be applied to future changes. They will certainly occur.

Paradigm 5 | Branding is developed with marketing

Branding is developed every minute, by each and every employee. A multimillion dollar marketing campaign will be wasted if the experience provided by employees to customers is diametrically opposed to what the ads promise. Until it becomes real through services provided by employees, a brand is just a promise. Powerful brands are consolidated by surpassing customers' expectations. Employees who understand their role, as part of a mosaic, and who are treated as partners by leadership help to create a powerful brand.

We'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy 2015. We hope these reflections will take you to a new plateau of personal and professional realization.

See you next month. Suggestions are welcome.

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