

CLIENT CASE – BUILDING A HIGH PERFORMANCE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Situation

Acme was a successful publicly-traded financial services company that had stalled in growth and profitability in part due to the lack of collaboration and teamwork at the senior level of the organization. The senior leaders were not aligned to company goals and served to protect their function or business at the expense of the larger enterprise. Feedback on poor performers and ineffective policies, systems, and procedures was not provided to the responsible parties. As a consequence, actions were taken that did not produce intended results and nothing was done to remedy the situations. In short, the CEO had let the culture become one where team members did not trust each other, communications were ineffective, conflict existed among team members, and poor performers were not held accountable by their peer counterparts. When the team met, they agreed that if they could improve their senior leadership effectiveness as a unit then the following outcomes would likely occur:

- Increased chances of taking Acme to the next level of growth and profitability
- Increased likelihood of retaining key talent
- Increased senior leadership credibility
- Deal with company issues of “Now vs. When we Grow” since issues are magnified with growth

Solutions

To address this situation the CEO asked that we complete a series of team effectiveness meetings. The following outline was developed and implemented during a series of team meetings over a period of one year:

Overall Objectives of the Team Meetings:

- Improve overall team productivity and effectiveness
- Implement a management process that cascades corporate goals effectively and aligns teams and individuals with strategic initiatives
- Introduce a framework for team effectiveness along with a common vocabulary – Five Dysfunctions and Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Improve overall employee engagement

Phase 1 – Diagnosing the Business Issues

- Interviewed senior leadership team members and 10 senior managers to look for opportunities in:

- Major causes for current team issues
- Structure, style and process changes
- Recommendations for improvements
- Administered the Five Dysfunctions to the senior managers and the MBTI survey to senior leadership team members and senior managers

Phase 2 – Team Effectiveness Process Initiation

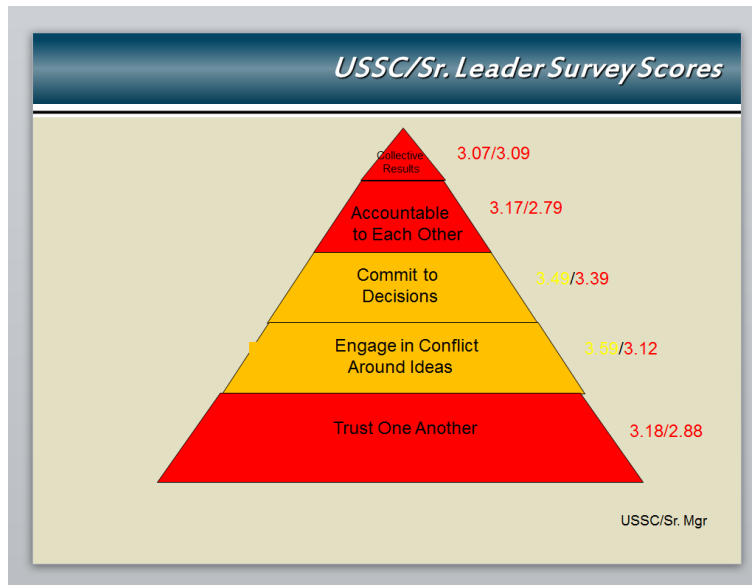
- Deal with Dysfunction #1 – Building Higher Levels of Trust
- Designed and facilitated a one-day offsite meeting with senior leadership team members with the following agenda:
 - AM
 - Introduction and Ground rules
 - MBTI Individual and Team Profiles
 - Implications
 - PM
 - Phase 1 results
 - Structure, Style, Process Changes
 - Issue Identification and action planning – Force Field Analysis
 - Next Steps
- Report Summary and Recommendations
- Second One-day offsite meeting with Senior managers designed and facilitated the following:
 - AM
 - Introduction and Ground rules
 - Five Dysfunctions Survey Results
 - MBTI Individual and Team Profiles
 - Implications
 - PM
 - Issue identification and action planning toward removing barriers to team effectiveness
- Report Summary and Recommendations

Ongoing Implementation

- Senior leadership team oversight of process
- Continued progress toward the Five Dysfunctions and turning these into strengths among senior leadership and senior manager teams
- Measurement of progress – Pulse Survey and Five Dysfunction Survey every six months

Results

The results of the Five Dysfunctions of a Team Survey were very low for the senior leadership team and other senior managers. This was the “call to action” to address issues that were preventing the company from achieving their goals of profitability and growth.



The critical issues identified by the team to address and remedy the current lack of performance included:

- Lack of common goals
- Insufficient understanding of the complexity of the environment which leads to lack of clarity on issues
- Changing priorities
- Lack of sustained commitment to stay the course and accountability
- Poorly designed organizational structure

Each of these issues was assigned a senior leader to develop and implement actions to address the problems and improve company performance.

Over a period of 12 months the team continued to meet and work through these issues with action plans. Acme was recognized as one of the best places to work in its industry at the end of that year. Acme went on to grow and thrive as the senior leadership team learned to work more effectively as a cohesive unit.

Testimonial

“David Brookmire and CPS have provided real value to the Arthritis Foundation with talent development strategies to build a high performing senior management team. David and his team have worked with us during the selection process, on-boarding, 360 assessments, coaching for performance and understanding the impact of individuals on team dynamics.”

Roberta K. Byrum, CPA, Chief Operating Office
Arthritis Foundation

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