

# *Drive for Stakeholder Success . . .*

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## **Focus on achieving results**

- Focus on results that impact all stakeholders: customers, employees, the community, stockholders, etc. Do not just focus on short-term business results. Set goals for results in regard to each stakeholder group.
- Emphasize the need for results, not just activities or long hours. If people are not as productive as they should be, ask them to review the following occupancy, efficiency, and effectiveness criteria.
  - **Occupancy:** Are people occupied with priority activities or do shortages, delays, and other obstacles hamper them? Focus your team's efforts on high-payoff goals and activities that others, such as senior managers, deem important or critical.
  - **Efficiency:** Are people spending the proper amount of time, effort, and other resources on tasks? For instance, are staff members meeting for four hours to resolve something that should be completed in one and one-half hours? Identify situations in which your team is seeking unnecessary permission or approval, and eliminate them.
  - **Effectiveness:** Are people giving attention to the highest priority tasks or are they spending time on less important tasks that should be delegated to someone else?
- Tell your team how their efforts contribute to the organization's bottom line and its success. Analyze goals that have been accomplished in your organization and point out how your team did or did not impact those results.
- Be sure to measure a number of variables and expect continual improvement—even beyond the aggressive goals originally set. Communicate your team's results to as wide an audience as appropriate.
- Monitor your communication and energy to ascertain whether you have a balanced focus that will give you the results you want.
- Recognize that in order to attain quality results, you need quality processes. Encourage your staff to improve work processes whenever and wherever possible to produce better results.
- Benchmark your organization against other respected organizations in your industry. Also stimulate your creative thinking by benchmarking against the "best-in-class" for productivity in other industries.

## Convey a sense of urgency when appropriate

- If your team and their people understand the business context and set goals, you can expect that they will have a strong sense of urgency. If they do not have that sense, or you joined them during the middle of the year, you may need to set an expectation of urgency.
- Be careful with this issue; some executives overdo it. When executives give the impression that everything is urgent and must be addressed immediately, it sets the stage for burnout.
- Think about your team's work priorities and key projects over the last several months. Did you:
  - Convey too little urgency?
  - Convey so much urgency that your staff was unclear about which priorities and projects they should pursue?
  - Convey a sense of urgency on your projects, but not on the work of others?
  - Convey a sense of urgency only on certain kinds of tasks or issues?
- Communicate a sense of urgency about goals, tasks, and projects that are both pressing and important. Expressing great urgency over every project will create unnecessary “brushfires” for your people and undermine your executive credibility. If your team feels that you do not identify genuine priorities, they will make their own decisions about what is critical.
- If you are in an organization that is bogged down by bureaucracy and inefficiencies, create a need for change based on the competitive situation, customer needs, or morale. See chapter 16, “Entrepreneurial Risk Taking” for more details.
- Follow your team's progress on high-priority projects and continue to convey an appropriate sense of urgency. Set review checkpoints ahead of the actual deadlines.
- Identify effective role models. Look for executives who display an appropriate amount of urgency toward important projects and tasks of less significance. Ask them how they prioritize projects, how they show a sense of urgency (verbally and nonverbally), and what strategies work well for them.
- Request feedback from a colleague (another executive or someone on your staff) on how well you communicate a sense of urgency on projects and tasks. Ask him or her to list occasions when you displayed an appropriate or inappropriate amount of urgency and to note any observed patterns.