



Behaviours, not outcomes, drive high-performance teams

09 September 2009 6:39am

Recruitment managers who focus on the outcomes they want from teams - instead of the behaviour that will get them there - risk creating dysfunctional teams that fail to deliver results, says consultant Garie Dooley.

Dooley, who has previously managed recruitment companies and whose company Leading Teams reforms "some pretty ordinary teams" in both corporate and elite sports environments, says there is often a disconnect between the people in teams and the outcomes they're expected to achieve.

He says an organisation can have the best delivery model, turn-around times, e-timesheets and candidates, but often things fall down within the team dynamic.

The key to high-performing teams, he told the RCSA conference on Monday, is trust. Trust ensures things happen faster, and "the quicker you get things done, the less it will cost you".

Culture critical

Leaders must keep in mind that regardless of what their company mission statement says, workplace culture is "the behaviours that you accept and reward".

"If you have a set of behaviours in your business today that are going unchallenged, that's your culture."

Dooley believes most recruitment firms have at some point tolerated a salesperson whose behaviour wasn't in line with the culture they wanted, simply because they got results. But he says doing so ignores the effect that such a person can have on other team members, particularly new ones, who will see what behaviour is accepted and follow suit.

To create a high-performance culture, leaders must focus on the behaviour they want, not their nominated outcome. The danger of focusing on the outcome is that managers ignore behaviour in order to get to it, he says.

There are just two vital elements to great teams, he says. These are strong professional relationships and a clear behavioural framework.

Strong relationships

Dooley suggests there are five levels of personal relationships, as defined by the conversations that happen within them:

1. "grunt" - where people recognise each other but barely speak to acknowledge their presence;
2. "stuff" - where conversations might involve the weather, sport or work;
3. "family" - parties to the relationship show some interest in each other's lives;

4. "self" - sharing personal information; and
5. "feelings" - when people express how they feel and how they are affected by one another's actions.

In great teams, he says, all conversations are about "self" and "feelings".

"That is what a strong, professional, sustainable relationship looks like. If you listen to them talk; if you listen to their conversations, that's what it's about.

"We're not in any way propagating some sort of love-in," he adds, "it's about things like: 'You know that decision you just made? I want to talk to you about it and give you some feedback about how it's made me feel'."

Great leaders, he says "will push you and ask you and challenge you about how you're feeling about their behaviour or how their decision has impacted upon you".

Dooley says managers should ask themselves questions to determine the strength of relationships in their team, keeping in mind that often their own behaviour needs to drive change:

- When was the last time you gave your manager feedback about their behaviour?
- Do you avoid opportunities to give your manager feedback about their behaviour?
- How many of your team do you "grunt" at?
- How many of your team would actually talk to you before they resigned?
- Do you wait until performance review time to tackle behavioural issues? (Dooley says if managers give feedback constantly, there is no need for performance reviews.)
- Do you think giving feedback damages relationships?

High-performance framework

Managers can use a simple process to build a high-performance framework, Dooley says.

It involves considering key questions:

- What words would you use to describe your team now?
- How would you describe your team "in an ideal world"?
- What behaviours do you see that stop you from having the ideal team? (Who is exhibiting these behaviours and do they need some feedback?)
- What behaviours must your team display if it is to become the ideal team?

This can be a lengthy, confronting exercise, Dooley says, but at the end managers have a behavioural framework and the key words become the team's "trademark".

The people to lead the team to its ideal state are not necessarily those who are at the top of the organisational chart, he says, but rather the people who already "live and breathe" the behaviours managers want to see.

Great teams happen when the framework for work behaviours overlaps with how team members behave in their personal life, "and when they think no-one is watching".

Great leaders, he says, "behave the same day-in and day-out".

If you have some recruitment news to share or would like to suggest a topic for an article, [click here](#) to email the editor.

Related Links

Related Article : [Learn from the great communicators how to mobilise your team](#)

Related Article : [Consultants need more authority and accountability: Jackman](#)

Related Article : [Managers must share the bad news and the good](#)

© Copyright Recruiter Daily
2009

All articles in Recruiter Daily are protected by ©
Copyright