

FOUR CORE AREAS OF LEADERSHIP FOCUS IN HIGH PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENTS

BY BILL HOGG

This is the fourth article in our series of articles that looks at Building a High Performance Work Environment. The full series will be available for download as a white paper once it is completed.

In our last article, we discussed [three critical elements for finding the right people](#). This article will examine where leaders need to focus their efforts to build the right work environment.

As a leader you have a lot on your plate. Numerous issues are constantly competing for your time and attention. From day to day tasks and administrative duties to strategy development and the management of the long term vision for the company, you are constantly playing a balancing game and attempting to prioritize what deserves your immediate attention.

4 key areas that leader must focus their efforts

Since your time is a finite resource, focusing on the key areas that will drive your team to produce desired results and sustain a high performance environment is something that you cannot lose sight of -- even when your attention is being pulled in every direction.

Focusing on these key areas will help maintain a high performance environment:

1. Organizational well-being and engagement

A large part of creating and maintaining a high performance environment has to do with internal development. Your ability to create an environment to continuously develop people within your organization will help to drive results and keep people engaged. Most people don't want to work in a static environment; they want to grow personally and professionally through training, coaching, exposure to new things and promotions. Therefore, you need to promote personal development that lead to additional opportunities for team members.

Never lose sight of the fact that the number one role of company leaders is to inspire and engage their people. If you don't engage your teams, your organizational well-being will suffer.

As a leader you need to ask yourself:

- Do people in the organization have a positive attitude?
- Are there available opportunities for personal growth available to all
- Are people engaged and in tune with the work environment?
- Are there opportunities to further engage people and expand their role?

2. Productivity and Goal Setting

Set expectations that challenge and will help you reach your goals for the company. You need to be well aware of what is being achieved in the short term and how these short term goals, achievements and milestones are working to help you attain your long term goals.

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When it comes to individuals, you need to ensure that their personal goals are in alignment with the company vision and mission. A lack of alignment in this area will have an impact on performance levels as well as a person's level of engagement.

3. Creative Thinking and Continuous Improvement

Creative thinking plays a large role in high performance work environments. Leaders need to be creative and continually focus on ensuring rewarding work. You also need to communicate that everyone plays a meaningful role in achieving the company vision.

How is this accomplished? You need to create an environment where team members have the confidence to voice their opinions and concerns. When people feel that their voice is heard they will be more engaged and will feel that the role they play is important to the overall well-being and success of the company.

4. Effective Process

The final key area of focus is process. From the top down there needs to be efficiency in the day to day operations of the company. A good process adds value to the company and should not be a barrier to getting things done.

This is accomplished through effective internal processes and protocols. Performance will suffer without a solid foundation for how things are done and a clear directive for what is expected. Therefore, how you want things done and a timeframe for when tasks and projects are to be completed needs to be clearly communicated and mutually agreed.

Before implementing a process it needs to be well thought out. Plus, you also need to be open to adjustments down the road that are identified by providing your team with a forum to voice their opinions, thoughts and ideas to continuously improve how things are done.

Focusing on these four key areas will help to communicate expectations for employees, create further engagement, and improve efficiencies in terms of performance.

See the full set of articles in our High Performance Work Environment series by visiting www.BillHogg.ca/resources/articles/.

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Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch InBev, The Bay, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Pita Pit, RBH, State Farm Insurance, Toronto International Film Festival and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.

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