

Leadership from Within - Through Group Dialogues and Executive Coaching

By: Susan Grobler

Imagine an organisation where there is an atmosphere that enables openness and transparency, where employees experience a real sense of loyal engagement and responsibility, where they know they are in the right place and everybody works in the same direction ... resulting in unparalleled commitment, collaboration and peak performance!

Any company is only as good as its people. As a leader you have to support, enable and empower your people. What then, is needed to move a company from where it is, to where the differentiation from its opposition is, moving them from good to excellent? Through experience in corporate organisations, we have identified some of the attributes which enable the differentiation. These are:

Meaning – Employees need to understand the meaning that their contribution has in terms of the success of the company – and how that is important to them. According to Chip Conley, CEO and author of “PEAK”, creating employee meaning can be your secret weapon in differentiating yourself from your competition.

Attitude – Focus on attitudinal changes with respect to the role of being a committed employee in today's work life. It is more than just executing instructions given from the top - it allows the individual to grow into peak performance.

Loyalty – How do we accept and embrace another person's attitudes and ideas? It is about total devotion as an individual towards colleagues and the organisation.

Power – Employees need to be empowered by giving them the opportunity to make real decisions. It will give them the ability to do what is required to take effective action. Employees who are empowered can consult others – including senior leadership - but the final decision must come from themselves. If that is not allowed, there is no true delegation of power. True delegation of power results when work is given back to the person who needs to do it giving them the opportunity to act on what they know.

Responsibility – Giving employees the freedom to assume responsibility for their own work tasks releases energy and resources that would not be available otherwise. Managers and employees need to act as partners in the organisation, taking responsibility for the successful achievement of company objectives. This means that everybody is standing up for and taking responsibility for what is right – aligned to the company vision and values. They do what is needed, what is best for the group, the company and above all, for the customer. Every individual becomes a co-builder of the organisation.

Engagement –When employees are engaged, customers are more likely to come back and spend more. “To create a culture of engagement, it is the work of leaders and managers to enable, empower, equip, and inspire employees so that the employees enter the synergy path. And as they do, they become totally engaged in what they do. It is the employee who actualizes his or her best in the work engagement thereby becoming a self-actualizing person in the process.” (Unleashing Leadership – L. Michael Hall)

Trust –Trust enables organisations to sustain disruptive change, to recover from major setbacks and to rise above adversity. Organisations are no longer built on force, but on TRUST, according to Peter Drucker. In “Leadership and the Power of Trust”, Mike Armour notes that people naturally rally around leaders they can trust.

Openness and Self-Awareness – If you want to build an organisation based on peak performance, it is important to facilitate profound dialogues around themes such as responsibility, accountability, identity and loyalty. To do this there should be openness and self-awareness in the teams. Openness means to be interested in how other people perceive one, to know what differentiates one person from others and to help each to understand the other. It is about a person's openness to do self-reflection. It is about focusing on oneself, reflecting who one is as an individual and making informed decisions about what one wants to and needs to change in one's life. This allows the individual to move out of his/her comfort zone, to identify his/her personal dreams and to align those with the company objectives.

To introduce this concept of **Leadership from Within**, we have developed a unique programme based on dialogues between all levels of management within the organisation and their employees. The objectives are for all to model and experience **Leadership from Within**, to build the positive atmosphere with an attitude that enhances personal openness and transparency, to understand group dynamics, to deal with difficult situations and to learn to give and take feedback. Through coaching (using a combination of Executive Coaching, Group Dialogues with all levels of Leadership, Benchmarking and Facilitation), individuals and groups get the opportunity to identify what needs to change in order to align with the organisation, and to move into peak performance.

If you want to find out more about how to experience this unparalleled commitment, collaboration and peak performance in your organisation, call us now to discuss the opportunities that are awaiting you in 2012.

“Change the way people think; and things will never be the same.” – Steve Biko