

Engaging Your Team In A QTIP Culture

It seems that just when you think you've heard or seen everything a moment comes your way that shakes that belief completely. I was working with a group in the health care field recently and someone made a comment that set me back. It was so simple and yet from an effective management perspective it set the clock back several decades.

The comment was "QTIP". I know what you're thinking, that fits pretty well in a health care culture. Unfortunately, it was an acronym for "Quit Taking It Personally". This from an organization, and an "industry", that is struggling to try to do more with less. A quick look at most health care facilities in Canada tells you that people are stretched to the breaking point as they try to accommodate an aging population with fewer resources. As we have progressed into this prolonged economic trough many organizations are seeing and feeling the effects on their people. It's not uncommon these days to see people performing the work that used to be done by others prior to downsizing.

I help some great people to manage the talent on their teams by better understanding, motivating and developing the people they work with. My clients get a chance to "take a look under the hood" of their people using a behavioural assessment tool called the Predictive Index. Once they understand what the motivational needs and drives are they are far better equipped to align the capacities of their people with the organization's business objectives. The fact of the matter is that there are several great assessment tools out there. The problem is that all of the great data that is captured is usually relegated to the hiring file in HR.

The Society of Industrial Psychologists (SIOP) released a study that indicated behaviour impacts workplace performance by 20 to 25 percent. The question that begs to be asked is that if we know that a motivated and engaged member of our team will have a performance spike of up to 25 percent, why would we ever use the acronym QTIP with them? Beyond that, knowing that this performance spike exists why wouldn't we continue to leverage the data we've captured in the recruitment and selection process to better understand, motivate and develop the people we have on our teams?

In my years in the corporate world I've heard several other phrases that rank right up there alongside QTIP. Have you ever had a manager use any of the following phrases with you?

- you need to thicken up your skin
- that's just the way I manage people
- don't take it personally, this is the only way I coach
- suck it up buttercup
- it is what it is

If, like the health care system, you are forced with trying to do more with less it would seem to me that getting your people onside and engaged should be the number one

priority for a manager these days. People are stressed by the times and now we're asking them to dig a little deeper and do more for us. Without them we're in tough shape. Consider the difference in a personal performance spike of 25 percent if you're able to take on the world yourself compared to getting that same uplift across the entire team. An incremental increase across the team can have a significant impact on productivity.

The reality is that if you approach your team from your personal perspective the message won't be one that resonates and won't help you to get to where it is you need to be. People are going to take what you say personally, that's the reality of their world. More and more today we live in a feelings economy and that's going to become more prevalent as the Gen Y's and Millennials move into management roles.

The great coaches that I've had the pleasure of working with have the uncanny ability to alter their style, the way they deliver their message to suit the audience. In doing so they naturally draw out the best from the people they work with. One distinction for me is when someone describes the boss they work for or with. Working for someone is very much one dimensional and although you can push for, and get results, what would the performance have looked like if you had captured more of that individual's energy.

The founder of the Predictive Index®, Arnold Daniels, used to say "To the greatest extent possible, assure that each individual you select to join your organization has the opportunity to make the maximum contribution to the success and profitability of the business by doing the kind of work for which s/he has the greatest opportunity for productivity and achievement of personal success". We experience maximum levels of success as managers by working with and through others. Knowing how to engage your team on their level gives you a huge competitive advantage.

My challenge to you is this...as you're "Making It Happen", find ways to engage your team in conversations that are less about the business results or outcomes you're looking for and more about how they're doing. I think that you will be surprised at the difference in the quality of communication that you will have with the members of your team if you focus on them first and your needs second. If your primary method of "communicating" with your team is by email, start to engage them in face to face or telephone conversations. Remember that their favourite radio station is WIFM...what's in it for me!

As Managing Principal with Predictive Success Corporation Bob helps organizations manage their talent and improve business results by better understanding, developing and motivating their people using the Predictive Index®. Bob can be reached at bobw@predictivesuccess.com.

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