

Can Senior Leadership Be to Blame For Low Productivity?



Solutions for Leadership & Organizational Excellence

According to a recent Microsoft survey, of 38,000 workers, people indicated that they felt productive only three days a week. Microsoft would like you to believe that technology could solve this problem. However, the reasons provided: unclear objectives, lack of team communication, and unproductive meetings, would seem to indicate poor leadership.

More specifically, these answers point to a lack of "purpose." This is an organizational issue, and not typically the result of one bad manager. It is more systemic in its cause, which points to the upper levels of leadership. So, can the senior leaders be mostly to blame? Actually, yes they can.

As you often hear, ignorance is not a good excuse. Likewise, senior leadership, not knowing that there is a dramatic loss in worker productivity, let alone what's causing that loss, is not an excuse. There are two components that should help every executive team start to resolve this problem in their organization. They are as follows:

1. The corporate mission, vision and goals, is it clearly relayed to all levels of the organization?
2. Are all levels of the organization hearing that message accurately?

If there has not been a clearly articulated mission, vision, and goal statement developed, then both components are a moot point. If, however these have been established and they include important components which reflect the type of organizational culture the company wishes to have, then the building blocks for what needs to transpire are in place.

For the sake of argument, let's start with the most likely scenario: there is an old mission and vision statement somewhere, which was developed years ago, and is collecting dust in someone's filing cabinet. Go get it, and dust it off. Revisit it and be sure that it still accurately reflects the type of culture and business model that you want to have.

But, let's not stop here. Aside from lack of direction, what else is going on? While the mission and vision are important, they are not the only piece of the puzzle. Only a very well orchestrated Organizational Assessment Study will provide you the information you need to get worker productivity back on track.

The Assessment Study will shed light on several critical areas of performance, including the perceptions of: process, leadership impact, communication, and teamwork. This detailed assessment will reveal critical areas that need to be addressed BEFORE you roll out the new mission, vision and goals. Without having the inhibiting issues identified and plans in place to resolve them, the new mission, vision and goals stand little to no chance of being disseminated correctly, let alone embraced and championed by the employees.

What Microsoft uncovered in their survey is actually hardly news worthy. But, the fact that so few companies choose to address it is. Granted, an Organizational Assessment requires an investment of time and money. But, that amount is usually a fraction of the money lost from lack of productivity and direction that can be solved with the proper help.

Just because you don't write a paycheck to Mr. and Mrs. Lost Productivity, does not mean they are not on your payroll. Because the truth is, you do pay them every month.

For information on Organizational Development and Assessment Processes, please give Farr Associates a call #800-395-3277, to learn how to optimize your organization's performance.