



February 2019

Volume 24, Number 2

With much of the year ahead of us, there is still plenty of room for improvement (or maybe it's time to toss the New Year's resolutions and set some small realistic goals). Whether it's time to freshen up your workplace, be a better communicator, or bring just the right amount of passion and enthusiasm to your work, this month's articles can help you be an extraordinary team leader.

Kristin

IN THIS MONTH'S **ISSUE**

- ◆ [Give Your Space a Team Energizing Makeover!](#)
- ◆ [What's the Best Way to Answer a Team Member's Question?](#)
- ◆ [Panel Moderators: Bring the Right Level of Energy to a Panel Discussion](#)
- ◆ [From the Bookshelf: The Critical Few: Energize Your Company's Culture by Choosing What Really Matters](#)
- ◆ [Contact Kristin](#)

GIVE YOUR SPACE A TEAM ENERGIZING MAKEOVER!

Over the years, I have facilitated a leadership team discussion of the results of their employee engagement surveys and focus groups. The topic of "physical environment" inevitably rises to the surface: The furniture is outdated or even broken, there are missing ceiling tiles, smudges on walls, piles of files stacked in corners...the list goes on.

The janitorial service is rarely the culprit. Their job is to ensure cleanliness, but how can they do that when there is crap all over the place? What I find to be most interesting is that employees tend to disregard these small changes in the work environment until they become so obvious that it's embarrassing – or some consultant comes in to discuss employee engagement.

Back in my Coast Guard days, we would do a "field day" once a month – and frankly, I think it's a good thing to do periodically. Whether it is at the office, your cubicle or even your home, follow these five steps to tidy up the place. It should only take a half a day at the most (maybe schedule the whole day if it's your first time, but I doubt you'll need the whole day!) It will boost employee and team engagement, enhance your representation with your customers, and you'll feel better as well!

First, gather the team together and explain the objective and the process: to tidy up the place!

Second: Walk around the office (or your cubicle) and take notes as to what is "off brand" – those things that are inconsistent with your brand promise. For example, my company name is "Quality Process Consultants, Inc." so inherently in my brand promise is a notion of "quality" – presumably "high quality." So anything that is not high quality in my

workspace is “off-brand” for me and my company. Also note those things that are dirty, messy, or broken.

At this step, I often think of the times I was getting ready to sell my house. Remember the times the realtor would come in and tell you to get rid of excess stuff, paint the worn cabinets, or even do a little renovation? Oh yeah, this step is much like THAT.

Just list all the things that need to be taken care of. No evaluation. No action. Just list it all.

Third: Take the list and segment it into task and projects, along with a specific person who is responsible for the successful completion of that task or project. I call that person the “champion.”

- Some are “just do it” tasks e.g. file the papers, move the boxes, put the tools away...
- Others require a bit more effort e.g. fix the broken picture frame, reupholster the couch (or get rid of the couch and buy a new one!)
- Renovations become a project e.g. the bathroom needs a major redo!

Fourth: Just do the “just do it” tasks! Don’t wait to do it tomorrow, or the next day. Just do it now!

Fifth: Champions should work on their task or project until it gets done. Of course, that will take longer, but periodically report your progress during your weekly team huddles.

How’s that sound? You can even make it into a mini-teambuilding event: Encourage your team to wear jeans, buy pizza for lunch, crank up the music!

WHAT’S THE BEST WAY TO ANSWER A TEAM MEMBER’S QUESTION?

When one of your team members comes to you with a problem, you essentially have four choices:

1. You can simply answer it.
2. You can answer it with providing context and information as to why that is the answer.
3. You can ask probing questions so the team member “self-discovers” the answer.
4. Let the person think it through and figure it out for himself.

What’s the right answer? Come on, think about it. Which one would you pick? My guess is that you choose to ask good, probing questions to prompt her figure it out. Seems like a good idea...but is it?

This is the essence of coaching a person who is feeling uncertain, yet, in your opinion, has the ability to perform the task. But what if they DON’T have the ability, the knowledge, or the skills? Asking probing questions will just frustrate them.

Sometimes, your team simply needs you to tell them what to do. When is that, you might ask? Simple: When they don’t have the skills, capability, or the confidence to do the task. They have never done it before and are reluctant to proceed. It’s not that they don’t *want* to proceed and to be successful, but they are reluctant, unsure and simply don’t know the answer. In that case, #1 is a good idea, especially when time is a priority.

But if time is not a priority, you can guide the team using a combination of telling and explaining why things are important. This works best if they are eager to get started, but are still clueless on how to proceed. In this case, the second option would be more effective.

Is it ever ok to let the person “flounder” and figure it out for himself? Absolutely! If they have a track record of success, have the skills to do the task (even though they may have never done this specific task before) and are eager to take it on, why not give them the task and let them run with it? Of course, you want to explain the task and then be available if they need you. Otherwise, get out of the way!

Next time a team member (or your team) comes to you with a problem, think about

your response. Do they have the skills and capabilities? Are they motivated or reluctant? Based on your assessment of their competence, choose the appropriate response!

PANEL MODERATORS: BRING THE RIGHT LEVEL OF ENERGY TO A PANEL DISCUSSION

Many years ago, I was on an hour-long panel moderated by a close friend. It was her first time moderating a panel about a topic she was clearly and definitively vested in. She asked four well-known colleagues and she was thrilled that we all said “yes!”

I gave her a bit of coaching on how to moderate a panel, but had absolutely no idea that she would spend the first 30 minutes on the intro (how excited that we were talking about this topic) and to introduce the panelists (her relationship with each of us and why she so admired us, blah, blah, blah).

Those first thirty minutes were a train wreck. Not so bad once we got into the substance of the panel, and obviously, we ran out of time for audience Q&A.

I typically find that the panel moderator doesn’t bring enough energy to the table, although in this case, she brought too much energy to the panel!

One of the moderator’s roles is to be the “energizer:” to model the desired level of energy and enthusiasm for the panelists and the rest of the room. The panel moderator works the room, engages the audience, and injects a little humor where appropriate to keep it lively.

Although her heart was in the right place, her level of energy was over the top. She was so passionate about her relationship to the topic and her friends, that it got in the way of being effective.

So what is effective? The key here is in the word “model.” The panel moderator models the behaviors that he wants to see in the panelists and the audience. I believe the best moderators bring energy and enthusiasm about the topic and make it about the audience, not about them. Opening comments and introductions should be short and simple. The moderator should be interested and engaged in the discussion, and ask probing questions.

The key is for the panel moderator to bring just the right level of energy to the panel discussion. Not too much, not too little. Just the right amount of energy!

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: THE CRITICAL FEW: ENERGIZE YOUR COMPANY’S CULTURE BY CHOOSING WHAT REALLY MATTERS

As a professional facilitator of CEO mastermind groups, I would be RICH if I got a dollar every time an executive would talk about how important culture is - the setting, caring, fostering, and nurturing of culture gets a lot of airtime. And the most important factor to an M&A deal? You guessed it. Culture.

But what exactly is “culture” and how can the leadership team proactively shape that culture? That is not as well articulated!

FINALLY, we have a book that lays out a very practical methodology steeped in actual business practice. Jon Katzenbach, in his book, [“The Critical Few: Energize Your Company’s Culture by Choosing What Really Matters”](#) has captured an effective process:

1. Catalyze the critical few natural elements (or traits) within your current company culture that will inspire a positive change
2. Using those traits, determine critical few behaviors that align with the company’s mission and vision
3. Finding the critical few authentic informal leaders that will start and energize the flywheel of change

Sounds easy, right? Yes...and no. What I love about this book is that Katenbach breaks each step down so that you finish the book thinking, "I can do that! Yes, it will take time and an intense amount of collaboration, but if we truly believe that (to quote Warren Buffet) 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast,' then this is a worthwhile investment of time and energy.

©2019 Quality Process Consultants, Inc. | The Extraordinary Team | All Rights Reserved
USA: 28150 N Alma School Parkway #103-615 | Scottsdale AZ 85262 | (480) 399-8489
Toll Free: 1-800-589-4733