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SOLVING THE PEOPLE PUZZLE

JUST HOW POWERFUL IS MOTIVATION, REALLY?

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Our goal at ABA is to help our clients with solid business council which will help them outwit their competition, grow their business, and create wealth. In so doing, it is our desire that they use a portion of that wealth to "give back" to their communities and to worthwhile causes wherever in the world they exist. In the last two editions of the monthly ABA Insider we have been offering practical advice on a subject which has great power and, yet, seems to be one of the greatest mysteries to business leaders. It represents perhaps the area of greatest positive potential for improving the performance of your business. That subject is **BUILDING YOUR TEAM** and the challenges which surround **MANAGING** it. We have called our series, "Solving the People Puzzle." Some people really enjoy working on and solving puzzles, and some really find it exhausting and somewhat maddening. But, like it or not, your team is the key to your success as a business, and even more so during this challenging business climate. Most leaders who find this part of running a business the most difficult, feel their skills are inadequate in this area, and/or haven't ever learned the principles which define how to build and manage a successful and growing team. We will continue to discuss some of those principles in this article.

TEAM BUILDING'S MOST CRITICAL COMPONENTS

Previously, we have tackled the issues of **Attitudes** and how profoundly they affect your ability to build and manage a winning team which sets your company apart from your competition. Another important building block which must be in place if you are to achieve optimal performance from your team is **Clarity of Expectations** for every member. They must each fully understand exactly what good behavior looks like for the position they fill. Additionally, they must have been given all the tools and resources they need in order to be successful. One such tool is **Empowerment**, which allows people to do their best work and leverage their strengths for the benefit of the company as well as themselves. There are others like: **Mutual Trust**, **Alignment with Mission**, and **Leadership by Example**.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The mortar which holds all of the building blocks of successful behavior together is **motivating people to produce**.

1. Defining Motivation.

Before you can motivate people to produce at high levels, you must know exactly what it is. First of all, the definition of motivation comes primarily from the two words inside it. They are *motive* and *action*. **Therefore, motivation is: the creation of desires and situations which move people to action.**

All human activities (or actions) are undertaken as a direct effort to meet some need. In other words, everything we do, from the simplest act to very complicated tasks, we do for a reason, and that reason is based around a need that we have. That need has to do with either something in our lives, or the lives of those we love. It may be something we want to acquire, (Psychologists call this "approach") or something in our lives, or the lives of those we love, that we do not want. (Avoidance)

2. Types of Motivation.

The two basic types of motivation are *fear* motivation and *incentive* motivation. Obviously, the former has to do with avoiding the things we do not want to happen and the latter has to do with the things we desire for us and for those we love. Both types of motivation can be effective tools in moving us to action, but they each have specific limitations and guidelines for their use. In terms of needs which we want to fulfill or avoid in our lives, there are both *biological needs* and *psychological needs*. **To design an environment of motivation for your team, you must understand which needs are the strongest for which members on the team, and then proceed to set up a system of cause and effect which allows them to meet those needs.** Though, this is not a simple task, the rewards of your doing so are huge. For when you create a clear path for a person to meet their needs, whether they are biological or psychological, you ignite a very powerful cache of human dynamite.

3. “Win-Win”.

If an effective system of motivation is to be established, all team members must be committed to the principle that everyone in the equation must win.. They must perceive that no one in the company or who is touched by the company will win at the expense of anyone else. Any and all systems of motivation which do not have this win-win component are doomed for failure. Although we cannot treat everyone the same in our company, we must establish systems, policies, and procedures which are fair.

Volumes could be written regarding motivation, and still everything would not have been covered.. But we at ABA do know from experience how incredibly valuable it is to understand its principles. That understanding has revolutionized the business of many of our clients. To create an effective system of motivation you must know your team members and what's important to them. Additionally, you must really care about them, and they must feel that caring attitude from their leadership. Finally, you must understand exactly what are the needs, goals, and resources of your organization, so that you can meld the two agendas effectively.. Once you have done that, hang on for the ride, for it will be an exciting one both for you and your team.

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