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Aspire... Higher



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A S P I R E

Discover potential. Get results.

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Aspire: Alphabetically Speaking

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Unlimited according to dictionary.com; not limited, boundless, infinite, vast, unconditional.

Leaders look for the vast potential within themselves, their employees and for their companies.

What areas have you left untapped within the scope of responsibilities you have in all parts of your life? Where do you tend to see the limited possibilities as opposed to unlimited potential?

Look again with fewer filters and take your life and business where you want it to go.

Tip of the Month

The Art of Delegation

When new top level managers are overwhelmed, they are sometimes told that they need to delegate more; however, delegation is not a quality like integrity or honesty. Honest, ethical and legal behavior is always appropriate - delegation isn't. Inappropriate delegation can ultimately do more harm than good.



Aspire Consulting, Ltd.

combines passion, purpose and performance to achieve results driven solutions for our customers. We partner with businesses and organizations to stimulate individual, team, and organizational development.

Our highly effective solutions lead to dramatic and measurable improvements in several key areas for our customers including the ability to:

- Lead and Manage
- Grow and Innovate
- Capture and Retain Loyal Customers
- Fuel Financial Growth

The benefits to our customers include:

- Increased Internal and External Customer Loyalty
- Improved Profits
- Improved Productivity
- Improved Performance and Quality of the Services They Deliver

We look forward to the opportunity to talk with you about how we can partner with

To understand where you can delegate more effectively, begin by getting to know those who report to you, their areas of strengths, and their areas of enthusiasm. Find out how these align with their current areas of responsibility. Ask your employees where they would like more responsibility and where they are struggling. Ask them also if they think they currently work on tasks that others can do or learn to do.

Encourage cross-divisional cooperation and decision making without you. Many times, decisions can be made more effectively and efficiently without your input, saving you time. This is another area that your direct reports can begin to further develop their skills in collaboration, team building and decision making.

On the other end of the effective delegation scale is delegating at the wrong time. If your organization is rapidly changing, it's your most important responsibility to keep everyone informed about the larger strategy and how each area fits into that strategy. This consistent reinforcement of the whole being greater than the parts in a fast-paced environment can only be done by the leaders and will set the long term tone for collaboration.

Check yourself. Where are you too involved and where are you not involved enough? It is your job to set the direction and develop your employees. What steps can you take to be more effective in your delegation while empowering and supporting your employees?

[More Info on Management Development](#)

Transparency and a Culture of Candor

In their book, *Transparency and a Culture of Candor*, Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, and Jim O'Toole offer seven steps for developing a culture of transparency. They suggest that the factors that work against developing a culture of transparency can lead to disastrous results and they suggest ways that leaders can achieve healthy and honest openness.

1. Tell the Truth

Simple to say, more difficult to do. It's natural to want to tell others what they want to hear. Instead, keep it simple, straightforward and honest. Candid leaders tell everyone the same thing, and they have no need to revise their stories.

2. Encourage People to Speak the Truth

It's never easy to be honest with the boss. It takes courage to speak up. But encouraging people to share their honest opinions is crucial if leaders want to build trust and open communication. Be particularly mindful of your response as a leader to those hard truths. If you frown at someone who tells you what you don't want to hear and then ignore them for the rest of the meeting, your team will learn not to tell you things they think you don't want to hear.

you and your company.

Aspire Consulting, Ltd.

email:

info@aspireadvantage.com

phone:

845-803-0438

web:

<http://www.aspireadvantage.com>

Food For Thought

Collaborative Excellence: The Health Care Challenge

Healthcare in the United States is in crisis. It is a crisis of cost as well as of quality and safety. We spend much more than many countries that are ranked above us in healthy life expectancy. According to the United Health Foundation, the United States ranked 28th for healthy life expectancy.

In November 1999, the Institute of Medicine issued a call to action in their report "To Err is Human" citing between 44,000 and 98,000 preventable deaths in United States hospitals due to medical errors. A more recent report cites 100,000 deaths annually. This is the equivalent of 350 jet liners crashing every year. We do not hear about them as they happen one at a time, anonymous to all but the families and loved ones.

Why has this continued despite monumental efforts to improve safety, systems and processes?

We believe that the answer lies in the leadership, people and the culture that currently exists.

The healthcare industry (and

3. Reward Contrarians

Be willing to listen to opposing points of view and promise to consider the merits of others' arguments. Find the people who tend not to think with the crowd, listen to them intently, and support conditions for thinking differently. That doesn't mean you always have to do what they say - but having people who can articulate ideas that are different can help the entire group think creatively. By changing your way of communicating to focus more on the results rather than the process, you will have taken a significant step towards better communications.

4. Practice Having Unpleasant Conversations

Few people excel at delivering negative feedback during performance appraisals. Offering negative feedback upward, to one's boss, is even more challenging. It requires being truthful and not malicious or hurtful. Unpleasant or negative feedback should be able to be used as a springboard for improvement.

5. Diversify Information Sources

Communicate regularly with different groups of colleagues, workers, customers and even competitors to gain a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of others' perceptions. Getting caught hearing your own echo by listening only to those who agree with you is dangerous.

6. Admit Mistakes

Candor is contagious. When you admit your shortcomings or errors, it paves the way for others to do the same. Simple admissions can disarm critics and encourage others to be transparent as well.

7. Avoid Blaming

When you have a problem that needs to be fixed, find out how the problem happened, and fix the problem. Don't look for a culprit, look for the people who can fix the problem. Public blaming discourages groups or individuals from raising a red flag in the early stages of a problem for fear that they'll be blamed. If people or a group needs coaching to keep the problem from happening again, do the coaching in private, and use it as a time for education, not finger-pointing.

8. Build Organizational Support for Transparency

Protect whistle-blowers-but don't stop there. Norms and sanctions should encourage truth-telling, including open-door policies, ethics training and internal blogs that give a voice to people lower down in the hierarchy.

Transparent organizations find ways to build these steps into all aspects of their daily work. Take the time to begin implementation now.

[More Info on Organizational Assessment](#)

In their own words...

"Our dreams are a size too big so that we can grow in them." -

many others) is still battling in a system that expects humans to make perfect decisions all the time. We know that cannot be true. We believe that the systems and processes should be standardized and the culture should do everything possible to prevent mistakes. Simultaneously, it must expect mistakes in order to reduce the impact of them.

We are also sure that although this is very easy to identify in healthcare, that the same paradigm exists in other organizations and limits the quality provided and ultimately impacts the bottom line.

An alternative paradigm creates an organization that requires commitment in completing responsibilities and problem solving with systems improvement when human mistakes happen. Doing this would result in organizations that:

- Standardize care or processes based on the best available evidence
- Change these processes as the evidence indicates they should be changed
- Applaud those who catch errors while learning from them without pointing fingers at those who make errors
- Immediately reassess procedures and processes when errors occur
- Are led by leaders who understand their role in decision making and culture setting
- Employ collaborative decision making for

Author Unknown

"I am not interested in the past. I am interested in the future, for that is where I expect to spend the rest of my life." - Charles F. Kettering

"We can't become what we need to be by remaining what we are." - Oprah Winfrey

teams, with input valued from all levels equally, and ultimate responsibility on the team leader

- Focus everything they do on the patient or customer

While the outcomes of implementing a culture that is focused on safety for patients in healthcare is one example, the financial stability of all organizations would benefit from implementing these changes and shifting the paradigm to collaborative problem solving and a culture of excellence.

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