

by Leanne Hoagland-Smith, M.S.
ADVANCED SYSTEMS

4 Keys Unlock Doors to Business Success

Yes, business is demanding. Finding ways to increase business success is on everybody's wish list. Through four short vignettes, you may discover what is keeping sustainable success from reaching your doorstep.

Scenario One

During a recent presentation, a business owner received the following challenge. If 10 of his 100 employees named the top three current organizational goals, would he receive the same answers from everyone or would he receive five, 10 or even 25 different goals? The business owner shook his head and responded, "No, I am sure that I would receive more than three goals." He was then asked: "Maybe, this is why you aren't hitting your goals?"

Scenario Two

At another presentation, an executive was asked if she set goals? She responded quite enthusiastically, "Of course, I set goals." A second question followed: "Can you state with 100 percent conviction that your employees know how to consistently achieve both their personal and professional goals?" After a few moments, she replied "No." She was then queried how this lack of knowledge affected her bottom line?

Scenario Three

A president of a company was asked: "Have you ever seen behavior inconsistent with your strategic plan?" "Yes!" he responded. Another question followed, "What did you do about it?" "Well, we sent them to training and within six months we had to send them back again?" The president received this question: "Are these performance failures a result of a lack of knowledge or skills or due to poor attitudes and habits?" His response was: "Why bad



attitudes and poor habits.” Again, the facilitator asked another question: “What are all these re-do’s costing your company?”

Scenario Four

During the annual meeting, the chief executive officer of a manufacturing company informed her executive team that she wanted to achieve a 10 percent growth during the next 12 months. The vice president of operations made plans to purchase new manufacturing equipment for new products while the vice president of sales and marketing began to implement a plan selling existing products. The chief financial officer decided to cut budgets to capital improvements and marketing. All three executive team members believed that their actions would help achieve the 10 percent growth.

These scenarios demonstrate the four critical success factors (CSF's) that impede businesses from achieving consistent results: communication, goal setting and goal achievement skills, attitudes and alignment.

Success Key #1:

Communication is the key to unlocking the potential within businesses as well as individuals. When the goals are in alignment with the vision and consistently communicated from top down, then performance excellence is much more likely to happen. Inconsistent communication contributes to missed targets and lowers the performance for the entire organization.

Success Key #2:

Goal setting and goal achievement are learned skills. Unfortunately, many presume that these skills are acquired during the educational experiences. Therefore, these skills are not actively taught in the corporate setting. Yet, consistent goal achievement or the results are what every organization seeks.

Success Key #3:

Attitudes drive behaviors that result in change. Many companies focus on trying to change negative behaviors because they are experiencing negative change. However, when the negative attitudes are replaced with positive attitudes, those attitudes will drive positive behaviors creating positive change. By failing to address negative attitudes when implementing new trends, changes or initiatives, the result is wasted resources creating a negative drain on the “KASH Box.”

Success Key #4:

Alignment is necessary to ensure that the desired results are achieved. Performance excellence happens when the strategies, systems and people are working together to build loyal internal customers that drive loyal external customers. The much heard adage about “Getting everyone to row in the same direction” is true, but probably should be amended to include the following “by using the same paddles.”

When these four CSF's work together, results happen quicker and create a culture of working “smarter and not harder.” As an executive coach, I ask all of my clients the following questions:

Do you know with 100 percent accuracy that every employee can clearly articulate the top three goals for the organization?

Does every person within the organization consistently set and achieve all of his or her personal and professional goals?

Does everyone within the organization at ALL times consistently demonstrate positive attitudes?

Are the strategies, systems and people in alignment to build loyal internal customers?

Hopefully, these four keys may help you to achieve the consistent results that you desire.

Leanne Hoagland-Smith, M.S., President of ADVANCED SYSTEMS, has 25 plus years experience in public and private sectors as a performance improvement consultant and facilitator. She helps organizations to create executable strategic plans and the business skills necessary to “pull it off” by closing the knowing-doing gaps. Her contact information is leanne@processspecialist.com.