

Results – Being Radical Might be Just What You Need

Too often organizations are about control instead of achievement. We say we want outstanding results but back off when we see what it takes to get them. We take the safe road where failure is easy to hide, or at least less obvious, and tradition (we've always done it this way) is a safe excuse. We hide behind company rules, standardized work processes and outdated policies. We regulate when people come to work, when they leave, where they sit, whom they talk to and ignore what they accomplish.

Highly successful companies, on the other hand, all have a common attribute that overcomes this deficiency. Each is intensely focused on continually getting better business results. They are willing to sacrifice control, tradition and everything else that is comfortable to attain excellent, world-class financial and service results. This intense focus on always getting better business results permeates these companies. Every employee participates, not just executives and managers. Everyone understands he or she can change almost anything, as long as it will produce better business results. No one fears having to fight with the bureaucracy to get it done.

The best and fastest way to make this change is to go radical. This means allowing employees to make almost any changes in how they work and what they do as long as it produces a better business result. Results become the sole measure of success. In this new culture you never allow self-serving changes without a measurable business advantage. For example, there is a big difference in changing the hours everyone will work to ensure they match when customers need to talk to you and changing them so everyone can avoid traffic problems. The first is a great idea. The second is anarchy.

So, what do you do to ensure this intense focus on results produces outstanding results and not chaos? Here is an outline of the steps we have found are most important in making this transition.

1. Prepare the Way – Make sure things are in place so employees can be successful. Two of the most important are to ensure each unit, team and department has solid, balanced business results with concrete measurable standards. (We call these core success measures.) The second is to make sure that employees and managers have easy access to their results -- monthly is necessary, weekly is even better -- so they can identify opportunities for improvements and be able to measure their success when they make changes.
2. Make Everyone Results Radicals -- Explain the change in attitude and corporate culture in a way that gets everyone excited and enthused about making improvements.
3. Give Everyone "Skin in the Game" -- Set up a reward or incentive program. You will get the best results if this new emphasis is "up close and personal." Build an ownership culture.
4. Monitor your results -- to ensure people are rewarded properly and abuses do not occur.

You will be surprised at how quickly benefits come from this idea. But, the biggest benefits will come from "Phase II" of this process. This occurs after the first wave of changes is implemented and the process becomes institutionalized. These improvements tend to be bigger, involve more people and are more complicated.

Please call us if you have any questions about how to ensure this unfolds properly and how to get all the benefits from this effort. This is the kind of help we were designed to do when we started our practice. Please also visit our website at McDonaldConsultingGroup.com, where you will find further explanations of these ideas (and other exciting ideas) in our Concepts and Ideas section.