

Running Off Track?

Your workforce talent holds the key to the answer.



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What is the most valuable element of your organization? It's not a fully stocked warehouse or a huge customer list. Regardless of your product or service, your most valuable asset is your workforce. Smart managers know that they are also essential to the success of your business.

Just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, a company or organization is only as strong as its weakest employee. Skilled, motivated employees can meet the ever-changing demands of the market, provide insight into improved processes and rebound from temporary setbacks. Employees who feel they are valued members of a team are more productive, engaged and devoted to the overall success of the business. They are more open to offering suggestions for improvement and finding creative solutions. Filling positions with skilled workers may seem obvious, but factors such as wrong first impressions, strong personalities and egos may skew the process, causing gaps or overlap or worse—lack of performance.

A poorly placed employee may be faced with written warnings or other disciplinary action, when in fact, this valuable asset may not have been trained properly or the workflow may be faulty. Snags in the system, disengaged employees, ignoring or looking the other way on poor performers often causes friction and frustration among some of the best employees, often resulting in high turnover and delays, both expected and unexpected, in the work process.

You can start the process by asking questions, and allowing your employees to offer their ideas. If your company culture has become less than friendly when it comes to employee



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input, an outside consultant is a wise investment. An organizational development (OD) specialist has the knowledge and skills to enter an environment, engage with the workforce talent and identify the factors that prevent a company from running like a well-oiled machine.

Organizational development specialists help work groups collaborate more effectively by:

- Facilitating and aiding the communication processes with those who are resistant to change or fear speaking up due to the personalities in the room.
- Including new hires to offer their view of the orientation and training process.
- Clearly identifying the desired outcome and the commitment from senior management.
- Gaining conceptual agreement, which results in full participation from workforce.

However, there are many internal factors that can derail the agreement such as vacant key leadership roles, a point person who doesn't have the ability or authority to quickly execute the activity needed to achieve the desired result, or management that isn't fully engaged in the effort. When everyone in the organization has skin in the game, all are motivated to see their ideas come to fruition.

No one knows their own jobs better than the people doing them, yet their personal descriptions of their duties may change depending on whether they are reporting to management or training a new hire. An effective OD consultant will not critique their performance, but instead will consider employees' definition of the tasks, how effective they feel their output is, and what they think could be improved.

While not all improvements are tangible or difficult to quantify, they can be conceptualized. Outcomes include:

- A reduction in emergency meetings and long email strings between middle and senior management.
- Improvement in employee performance demonstrated by a reduction in customer wait times or shipping schedules.
- Improved morale among workforce when their feedback is part of the solution.

Tapping into your workforce talent is one of the most cost-effective and simple ways to keep everyone engaged in the success of the company. 

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