

Employer's Advantage

January 2008

FROM JIM SIRBASKU'S DESK

Measuring Your Compatibility Quotient

Here's a word of advice for managers who have ever had an unpleasant meeting with a key employee and cannot fathom why Give-and-Take turned into Tug-of-War.

Get out your employee manual and look under troubleshooting for Failure to Communicate.

Oh, wait. The human resources department is still working on that part of the employee manual.

All right, that's a fantasy. No instructions exist for this problem because people are not machines. They are a complex recipe of nature and nurture, past experience, current needs and desires, and a number of other foreign ingredients that a manager might not even recognize. To complicate matters more, you as the manager need to know how you are alike and how you differ in ways small or large from those you supervise.

Being alike or different from those who work for you is neither good nor bad. It's just life. But unrecognized or ignored, differences and even similarities can create serious problems for the company, for supervisors, and for those they direct. The results can be disastrous: too little change, too much conflict, reduced productivity, high turnover.

The conundrum is how to manage smoothly no matter how different or similar you are to your employees – effecting the changes the organization needs without clenched teeth, raised voices, sharply closed doors and the echo of stomping footsteps. Must we deal with daily frustration and communicate through formal memos or tense face-to-face meetings?

No. Other ways exist to deal with the problem. Unique new assessments that reveal the characteristics of managers and people who work for them can give us personalized answers about where the problems are likely to be in each relationship, and what we can do to work around them.

Here are some areas to explore:

1. Know Thyself. For example, what do you do to begin your workday? If you need quiet time before 8 a.m. and your employee habitually greets you at your door when you arrive, how will you react? Or if you expect to hear a high-level overview in an 8:30 meeting and your second-in-command wants to go over every detail, how do you handle it?

2. Know Thy Employee and Do Not Assume. A positive and inviting attitude is a great management tool, but don't plaster on a smile, open the door and decree that all will be well. You need to know the facts, and none of your experience, confidence, enthusiasm and good habits will help you manage successfully unless you understand each of your employees and how best to work with them. Is this one self-assured and quick, that one thoughtful and slow to speak up? Is conformity equally important to you

and to your workers? Or do you need someone who thrives on the new and the different? Knowing these things, not assuming them, will help you make necessary changes, avoid obstacles and prevent conflicts with people who operate differently from you.

3. Be Flexible in Your Management Style. You have probably studied dozens of management gurus and know their styles well. You have leadership qualities that got you here. But do you know how to adapt your own style to create the chemistry you need to work well with those who work for you? Can you summon this chemistry around different people, so that you know how best to direct them and they understand precisely what you mean – despite the differences between you?

How do managers find the time to understand themselves AND each worker AND how to interact? A better question might be how do we NOT find the time? People issues will always take the greatest chunk of the day, but successful solutions to the inevitable conflicts that arise touch every other aspect of the business world. The trial-and-error method is slow, even counterproductive, in resolving compatibility issues. Unique new assessments, as mentioned above, can predict work relationships by looking at you and your employees and telling you what is going to happen when you get together.

Think of these assessments as radar that can give you advance knowledge about what could cause a destructive collision and show you how to avoid it. It's not exactly a troubleshooting manual for each employee. But it's the next best thing.

Jim Sirbasku, CEO
Profiles International

It All Adds Up to a Humming Workplace

1. Fewer boss-employee conflicts = better work atmosphere for all
2. Better work atmosphere = more productivity and less stress
3. More productivity = teams meshing well
4. More teamwork = goals met
5. Less work stress = more satisfied employees
6. Happy employees = higher retention rates
7. Keeping key employees = less time and money spent on recruiting and hiring
8. Lowered recruiting/hiring needs = more time and money for growth elsewhere
9. Growth + productive workplace = company stability

CASE STUDY

PXT™ Quiets Squeaky Wheel in Oilfield Service Company

Employment is robust in the oilfield industry and the plants of today require many hands. Workers generally command good rates of pay, but the work can be physically and emotionally difficult. Oilfield work depends on a sense of teamwork and commitment.

In 2002, looking at turnover costs of almost two million dollars, leaders at an oilfield service company knew they had to do something to reverse the trend. They turned to Profiles, specifically ProfileXT™ and its job-matching pattern, to assess where they were and where they needed to be in the specific high-turnover positions of helper and operator.

Job Match Pattern

Since they wanted to spotlight helpers and operators, leaders build a success pattern for these positions

using results from PXT™. Their models were 13 top-performing helpers and 15 operators. Hiring managers gave greater consideration to the job applicants whose overall percentage match to the appropriate ProfileXT™ Job Match Pattern was 75 percent or greater.

Results

During the course of the yearlong test period, the company used the ProfileXT™ results to help make decisions about potential employees in its applicant pool, new hires, employees they hired before implementation of the assessment, and workers who had both separated from the company and that the company had terminated.

Summary

After using the ProfileXT™ for one year, managers reduced helper and operator turnover from 34.5 percent to 25.3 percent. The resultant money savings totaled about \$550,000.

Company leaders further calculated that with a cost of \$24,550 to implement the ProfileXT™, their return on investment was more than 22 to 1.

Participants

Before using the ProfileXT™, the company tallied a whopping 34.5 percent rate of turnover. The high rate of departure cost the company about \$1,910,000. Managers calculated the price of replacing each helper or operator at approximately \$18,900. The average tenure of terminated employees was one year.

During a 12-month test period, leaders used the PXT™ with 245 workers at various plants in two states. They hired 90 job applicants.

PRODUCT FOCUS

Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™ : A Smooth Path between Manager, Worker

How many times have you longed for a way to get inside an employee's head to find out what he or she was *really* thinking? Often this desire occurs after an unpleasant encounter or a meeting that was off-balance. You would pay to know why a key worker suddenly clammed up and another started babbling nervously. More importantly, you need to know what to do differently the next time.

But how do you do this without more information? Some workers might tell their managers what's on their mind, but often employees view speaking frankly as a risk. So we slog along, trying to do the best we can with our assumptions.

That's no longer necessary. Now managers have an assessment that reveals exactly what we need to know about working with different kinds of people. Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™ can show us how both manager and employee score on the seven key characteristics of:

- Self-assurance
- Self-reliance
- Conformity
- Optimism
- Decisiveness
- Objectivity
- Approach to Learning

The assessment takes less than an hour to complete, and the resulting report offers a wealth of relevant information for both employees and managers. The Employee Report details the similarities and

differences between the key players and offers the employee specific guidance on the best way to communicate and work with their managers.

For managers, the report provides what we need to know to grow in our jobs, from a high-level overview to specific ideas on management methods based on the similarities and differences of how people work.

For example, how do you deal with a decisive employee if you, the manager, are also decisive? And what do you do with a more methodical worker whose style differs from yours but whose work is stellar? No guesswork here, as the assessment provides the heavy lifting of showing managers how to implement the new information.

Noted stateswoman Indira Gandhi spoke of the present and the future when she said, "I suppose that leadership at one time meant muscle; but today it means getting along with people." Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™ is all about getting along with employees effectively. Call us at (520) 615-9195.

STRATEGIES FOR WINNING

Carrot, Stick or What? *

To Push or to Pull – That is the Question!

How would you like to have all of your team chomping at the bit to do what you need them to do to make your business successful? Everyone wants that elusive ingredient – motivation – in the people to whom they entrust the development of their business. Well, sorry to turn the lights to dim so quickly, but here's the bad news: YOU CANNOT MOTIVATE ANYONE TO DO ANYTHING – people do what they do because they want to, not because you want them to. And they'll only want to do what you want them to do when the outcome of doing so appeals to them in some way. It is all in their hands, not yours.

A Personal Story from Bud Haney

In the late 1960s, I began operating a franchise business, built a sales organization, and established a very successful operation in a short period of time. I did so well that the company made me a generous offer to become a sales executive in its home office. I joined a staff of experienced sales managers, so I was eager to prove myself as the new kid on the block. About a month after I joined the staff, the opportunity presented itself. The vice president of our division announced a contest, the grand prize being a TV set. Frankly, the TV set didn't excite me; I already had several of them at home. The opportunity to show my peers what I could do was my motivation.

I won the contest. I accomplished my goal by burning the midnight oil and motivating the members of my sales team to expand their efforts. I got them emotionally involved in the contest by asking them to do me a favor. I told them how important it was for me to gain the respect and acceptance of my peers and how much I would appreciate it if they would make an extra effort to be especially productive for 30 days. They came through for me, and everyone on the staff sat up and took notice of my arrival as a player on the scene.

Incidentally, the charitable organization that received the TV really appreciated it!

For practical business purposes, motivation is *getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.*

Two types of motivators make us act – intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation happens when an outside factor causes us to take action. For example, "Work an extra six hours and I'll pay you double time." Most management "motivation" is purely extrinsic, and amounts to little more than manipulation – enlisting promises, bribes and flattery to get things done.

The problem with extrinsic motivation is that it rarely has any useful long-term effect. Use extrinsic motivators to energize your team and you'll find yourself trapped in a cycle where those motivators must get bigger and better to repeat the same results. How long does the motivational effect of a salary increase last? Often only as long as it takes to see the post-tax figure! Traditional extrinsic approaches to motivation are all but useless aids to boosting long-term employee morale and productivity, or to stemming employee turnover.

How about intrinsic motivation? This happens when you take action because of internal reasons – for example, when you work an extra six hours because you feel that the project you're working on is so worthwhile you want to see it completed. Everything we do is ultimately determined by the values we hold. Values are what we truly care about – the qualities and standards we value and aspire to achieve. These values determine our attitudes and behaviors and determine what will motivate us to action. When people take action because the likely outcome of that action appeals directly to what they value, you have true motivation, and time spent developing that is an investment with long-term returns. The most successful leaders and motivators are those who (wittingly or unwittingly) uncover their followers' intrinsic motivations and take time to match these with the extrinsic motivators they have at their disposal.

Easy? Not at all. People are motivated by unmet needs, which will vary from person to person according to their particular circumstances, values and beliefs, education, family background, personality and work experience. To figure out what is important to your people you must ask them and then listen carefully. Ask often enough, and show your willingness to take action upon whatever you uncover, and your people will begin to let you know what is important to them – allowing you to figure out how to package the extrinsic motivators you have at your disposal in a manner that will meet their particular needs. This dialogue can be fostered with mechanisms as simple as frequent one-on-one discussions or well-considered surveys. There are no quick fixes, and this is not a one-time exercise; to be successful, this has to become an integral part of the way you do business.

While working upon uncovering what your people need to be motivated, be aware that recent research has shown that what motivated people as recently as 10 years ago is no longer necessarily relevant today. For example, modern employees view it as a right to have market-level remuneration in return for their efforts, so compensation is no longer a true motivator. In addition to a good salary and benefits package, you must now also provide:

- **Development opportunities.** If you don't develop your people at the pace they desire, they'll find someone who can. People want to grow.
- **Balance.** New research shows that the modern workers' priorities are leisure, family and work, in that order. Make number three the priority at the expense of one and two and you may motivate them to move elsewhere.
- **Input to decisions.** Today's employees feel they deserve input into any decisions that might affect them. Ignore this belief at your peril.
- **Communication with management.** Modern employees are educated and confident and demand ongoing dialogue with their management.
- **Worthwhile goals.** To hold their attention, people need the buzz of worthwhile short-term goals and lots of feedback on their success (or failure) in achieving these goals.
- **Interesting work.** Much of the research on employee satisfaction over the past five years has emphasized the important role that interesting, challenging work plays in motivating people.

Take these three seemingly straightforward steps to build a highly motivated team:

1. Right now: Honestly review the checklist above and if anything on it is not a feature of the way you interface with your team, figure out how you can make it so in the shortest time possible.
2. ASAP: Establish a program to ensure that you maintain a frequently updated profile of what motivates each member of your team. Use this information to match the extrinsic motivators you have at your disposal to best meet their requirements.

3. Ongoing: Look carefully at the extrinsic motivators you have at your disposal and use your knowledge of your people's values and needs to match them to their intrinsic needs.

This will energize your team and assure your success. Now, is that a carrot, or what?

****From the book 40 STRATEGIES FOR WINNING IN BUSINESS by Bud Haney and Jim Sirbasku. © S&H Publishing Co., 5205 Lake Shore Drive, Waco, Texas 76710-1732. All rights reserved. Contact S&H Publishing Co., (254) 751-1644, for reprint permission.***

For Your Information - FYI - EffortlessHR

The New Year brings many changes, such as remembering to write 2008 instead of 2007. That usually takes me about a month to remember. I would like to share with you a couple of other new changes.

One is the look of this newsletter. It will have the same content and value - just a bit more technologically enhanced. I hope you like it.

The second is not really a change but an opportunity. I have been working for almost three years to bring this opportunity to the public. It is a Internet based, subscription program for small businesses to have their own Human Resource Department. It is currently undergoing Beta-testing, but if you are interested, check it out at www.effortlesshr.com. You will be hearing more about it in the coming months.

Hope this finds all of you well and successful as we start 2008.

Lola Kakes
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January 2008

