



Special points of interest:

- **Lessons from Childhood**
Appreciating what you already have.
- **S.M.A.R.T Management: A Leadership Paradigm**
- **Enough Success for Everyone** How to get it and why.
- **TEAMS vs. WORKING GROUPS**

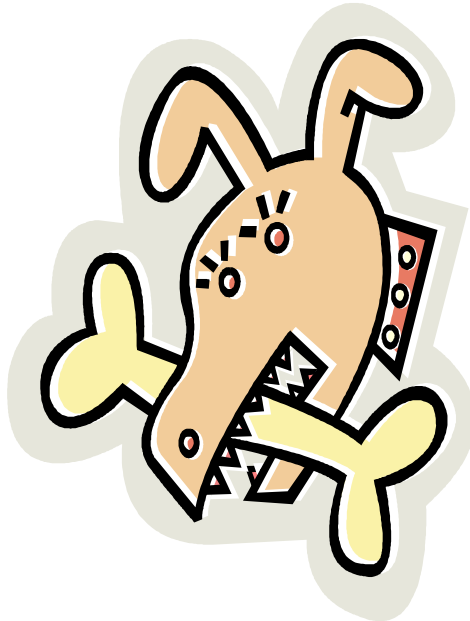
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Building and Managing

Bigger Bone Anyone?: Lesson from Childhood



Lessons for Leaders: "Appreciate what you have"

Have you ever made a decision that you wish you could take back? Leaders and workers—alike make decisions throughout the day that sometimes have consequences that cannot be easily undone. Sometimes making the wrong decision may be costly, not only in financial terms, but also in terms of losing talented personnel. Consider the childhood story of the dog who wanted a bigger bone. How can you apply the following story to influence the way you make daily decisions?

The Story of the Dog and the Bone: One day a young dog was doing his daily routine of walking around the neighborhood and looking for ways to get attention and show others how impressive he was. The local butcher saw the dog from his window on his

usual rounds and decided to give him a delicious beef bone as a gift. The young dog gladly took the bone from the butcher, wagged his tail, and continued in his daily routine to meet up with his friends at the park—and show off his new bone.

As it is with each of his days, he crosses a fallen tree that formed a bridge over a deep-deep creek. The dog was looking forward to showing all of his friends how his own-impressiveness earned him a delicious bone. As he was crossing over the tree, he looked into the water and noticed another dog looking up at him, but with what looked like a better and bigger bone. The young dog thought about how this new dog could show up at the park with a better looking bone and steal the joy of being the most-impressive dog around. He could not put up with that. He had to react—instantly. So, he growled at the dog in the water and opened his mouth to show his impressive teeth. Of course when he opened his mouth, the bone fell out of his mouth and into the water. When the bone fell out of his mouth, the image of the dog in the water instantly vanished. When it reappeared, there was no bone to be found. The dog sadly walked to the park to see his friends, but with no bone. He had only the realization that he should have taken the time to enjoy the delicious bone from the butcher and appreciate that other dogs too can enjoy for themselves the abundance of success in the form of a bone or other pleasures.

Bottom-line: Sometimes, as the saying goes, "The grass is not always greener on the other side." In every available moment, consciously take the time to appreciate what you have. If you have people who are doing a good job around you, tell each of them regularly how much you appreciate them and the specific things that they do that you appreciate. If you notice that others are doing something better, or have better equipment or business practices, see how you can improve upon what you have in a creative way, but always consider the consequences of losing what you already have. **The "Abundance Philosophy" states** that there is always enough success, happiness, and wealth to go around. Appreciate what you have, be thankful that you have what you have, and help others to find success and happiness around you. You may find that by living your life with the abundance philosophy, you will have even greater happiness, success, and wealth than ever before. ■

S.M.A.R.T Management

The art of leadership for managers could not be described as easy by any means. There is no single secret recipe or any quick fix for instant managerial success. However, thanks to leadership scholars, there are plenty of easy to remember philosophies that are tried and true. So many, in fact, that the original authors are often forgotten and diluted in the vast sea of success literature. It seems that everybody has their own twist on what I believe to be "natural truths" that are human laws of nature. The **SMART Management Principle** is one of those easy to remember natural laws of human nature. The acronym **SMART** stands for: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**actfully-Sound.

The story of a newlywed couple and their first Christmas dinner illustrates a reason to use the SMART management principle in our lives—both personally and professionally. As the story goes, the couple who was celebrating their first Christmas holiday together was enjoying each other's company in the kitchen. The husband and his mother were cooking dinner. The husband cut the boneless ham in half and placed it into two pans to cook in the oven. When the wife saw what her husband had just done, she asked him why he did it. (CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)...



So, he looked up at his mother and asked her why they have always cut the ham in half and put it into two pans for cooking. The mother scratched her head and answered the question the same way as her son just had. She only did it, because her mother had always done it and she too was now curious. She decided to give her mother a call and find out if she knew why.

When she got the answer from her mother over the phone she gave out a large chuckle, wished her mother a very happy holiday, and hung up the phone. The curious couple waited patiently for her reply.

The mother answered the question with a smile on her face. "Well, son and daughter-in-law," she started. "Your grandmother just informed me that she taught me to cut the ham in half and cook each half in separate pans, not because it cooks better, but because we never had a pan large enough to cook a whole ham."

With this in mind, I recommend that when dealing with other people, it is a good practice to be open-minded in every situation, double-checking your paradigm of what you are expecting and why you believe the way that you do. **SMART** leaders always take the time to listen to others thoroughly first. They are not thinking of what they are going to say next, but really consider what the other individual is saying before making a reply. Listening is the most-important aspect of communication.

The **SMART** acronym is a handy tool for managers and is best-described as:

- "S"** –Give Specifics. Don't just generalize and expect others to see things as you do. Every person brings in their own pre-conceptions of definitions and terms. Giving specifics helps paint a clearer picture of what you are thinking.
- "M"** –Although you may think you are being specific; help the listener understand better by giving **Measurable** benchmarks, timeframes, and quantities. By doing so, it will help reduce confusing of what the expectations actually are.
- "A"** –The expectations must be **Attainable**. If what you ask is too difficult to grasp or seems impossible, your subordinate may give up early or worse yet, not even try and in the end—lose hope. Ask yourself, "Can I accomplish this goal myself?" or "Do I think this goal can be realistically-accomplished by this individual or team?" It is better to set high goals with sets of smaller and attainable benchmarks than to ask for something that is clearly going to be a waste of time or too difficult to accomplish.
- "R"** –Each task assigned should be **Relevant** to accomplishing the goal. Research shows that even though working on several things that may sooner or later be of value to a goal—working on one specific and related task actually accomplishes more—faster. Therefore, do not sidetrack and stay focused with specific tasks that will accomplish the goal directly.
- "T"** –**Tactfully-sound** means that it makes good sense to everybody involved; the tasks are necessary to accomplishing the goal; and that it can be accomplished with reasonable measures.

Bottom-line: Being a **SMART** leader means thinking critically about what the final goal is and painting "the bigger picture" in terms that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and tactfully-sound. We must all practice double-checking why we believe what we do and realize that others may see something more-clearly when we spell-out our expectations and proactively-listen intently to make sure that others are seeing the tasks and goals as we do. ■

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Call Us Toll Free At:
1-866-513-4296

info@leadsucceed.com
Dr.Paul@PaulGerhardt.com

eFax: 208-692-4647

Visit Our Website:
www.LeadSucceed.com
or
www.PaulGerhardt.com

In the office or in other places of work, the term **"team building"** or **"teambuilding"** is becoming a regular workplace term. What does it really mean? How can teambuilding benefit a "team"? One may think, "We do not need teambuilding, after all, we are already doing great." Right? Perhaps, everybody has been working together for quite some time, or maybe, some members are new to the "team."

Consider this: Even though you may be a part of a group of people working for the same company, you may not be a part of a "team" at all. **Try this:** Ask yourself the questions, "Is my 'team' maximizing productivity and efficiency?—Really?" Are you and your co-workers completing tasks at the quickest rate possible and as effectively as possible? Is there always SIGNIFICANT room for improvement? **Many scholars agree that a true team consists of the following:** 1) Two or more individuals; 2) a common goal or goals; and 3) the necessary resources of:

Time; materials; and space. Your "team" may seem like it has each of those qualities, but does it? Many "teams" are not really teams, because everybody is doing their own thing, and truly **NOT working cohesively** toward a common goal at all. If this is the case, then the "team" you belong to, may not be a team at all, but a "working-group." Believe me, there is nothing wrong with that, but wouldn't you rather be a part of a high-performance team?

According to many team building experts, there are four stages that must take place in order for a team to become a "high-performing team." Those **four stages of team building include: forming, storming, "norming," and performing.** **Forming** is the earliest stage in the creation of team. In this stage people are getting to know each other by name and a number of their basic abilities.

In the second stage, or **storming stage**, the "honeymoon" is over; and people within the developing-team are generally trying to prove themselves and their abilities; while at the same time—establish a position for themselves. In the **norming stage** during the development of a team; most-everything is well-established as far as where each individual fits into roles and responsibilities.

Everything is working beautifully and the team is a full-fledge team—without question. The final stage of team building is the **performing stage**. In this last stage, the team is unquestionably a high-performing team and is accomplishing job-tasks effectively and efficiently.

High-performance teams are formed at the quickest rate when a charter is developed. A charter is a formal written document that describes each member's role, tasks and responsibilities. Often a timeline and a description of decision-making processes can be included within the charter. The charter is usually signed by each member, once any details and questions have been worked out. Members of a high-performance team typically are cross-trained to do multiple functions within the team to accomplish each goal most-efficiently and effectively as described within the charter.

Team building is really a natural phenomenon. Groups of people get together in work-related situations in order to accomplish change in the form of a goal or goals. If the group is comprised of the ideal amount of people who possess the correct knowledge, attitudes, talents, skills and abilities to accomplish the necessary tasks—chances are very strong that a high-performance team will emerge. If the wrong people, who do not possess the correct attitudes, knowledge, talents, skills and abilities, are **minimally NOT** a part of the working-group, then it will be much more difficult for a true high-performance team to form.

Team building activities are any activities that help groups of people build trust in each other, as well as develop necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities in order to accomplish common goals. Quite often it is a good idea for organizations to hire outside teambuilding experts to aid working-groups in building trust and help each member see their own individual abilities, as well as the talents and abilities of their co-workers.

Bottom-line: Most people believe they are a part of a "team," but are actually only a part of a working-group with opportunities to enhance the ability to accomplish goals more efficiently and effectively with the aid of valuable team building training from outside experts. ■