

Building Organizational Capability through Effective Teaming

By Gayla Hodges

One of the most pervasive challenges for businesses today is the struggle to accomplish more with a smaller staff. Finding the best way to do this is a continuing challenge for many businesses. While there are several ways to approach this challenge, the approach that is cost-effective and successful is to build the capabilities of the organization through the creation of effective teams. My company, Change Agents, Inc. has developed several new processes for training effective teams, including programs that enhance “Naturally Effective Leadership” and that use equine assisted training options to build naturally effective teams.

Too many businesses respond to the need for expanded capability by hiring an individual who is qualified and competent to meet the immediate challenge. While this was common practice in the past, it may not be the most efficient or effective approach in the current business culture. Once the challenge has been met, however, they either have an underutilized employee on their hands or they let the individual go. This will never be cost-effective. First, the business incurs the cost (in dollars, time and investment) of defining the job, advertising it, and hiring. Second, the cost of training or on-ramping must be considered. Third, the cost of either retaining an underutilized employee or of arranging a separation agreement will be incurred.

A second response to the need for expanded capability is the use of independent contractors or to otherwise outsource the work. While this approach eliminates some of the on-boarding cost and the layoff cost, it can result in additional unanticipated costs. First, an independent contractor does not know the company – its business or its culture. Second, an independent contractor will not have the internal ease or connections to call upon the staff for the same level of assistance or cooperation. Third, on-ramping actually takes just as long as it does with a new hire. Fourth, an independent contractor will approach the problem or the need from a single point of view. That point of view may or may not be consonant with the corporate culture or corporate values.

The response to this challenge of expanding organizational capability I have found to be most effective in a majority of cases is the creation of effective teams to accomplish certain tasks. Consider these points:

- There is no additional employee or contractor cost.
- There is no loss of time or momentum to on-boarding a new person.
- The corporate culture and values are shared by the members of the team because they are current employees.
- Current employees have communication networks throughout the company.
- Current employees are already committed to corporate goals.
- Teams are flexible – they can address a single issue or several issues
- When done well, participation on an effective team actually increases employee capability; it can then be applied in other parts of the organization

The key to building organizational capability through teaming is creating an *effective* team. My definition of a naturally effective team is *one that leverages the strengths of each of its members in such a way as to create more than any of the individuals could do on their own*. An effective team will bring to the table a number of points of view, a variety of experiences, skill sets and knowledge bases. An effective team will not rely upon the thinking or the experience of any single individual. Rather, bringing the team together will, by virtue of the uniqueness of each individual member, provide the strength of diversity and experiential depth. It will create the kind of enthusiastic synergy and a level of buy-in that offers the best chance of identifying and creating solutions that are creative and innovative. Further, by bringing together people from various parts of the company, the news of their work and their solutions will quickly be disseminated throughout the organization, energizing others as they anticipate creative solutions that benefit the company and all employees.

If your company is faced with a need to expand the capabilities of the organization, I encourage you to take the bold step of creating a functional team gathered from across the company for their skills, insights, knowledge and experience, as well as their openness to negotiation and innovation. Once you take that bold step, I believe you will recognize a level of accomplishment that might be surprising. I am almost certain your next challenge will be met with effective teaming.

About Gayla Hodges

Gayla Hodges is the President and Principal Consultant of Change Agents, Inc., a company that uses their powerful Natural Effectiveness™ Coaching and Teaming process to help corporate team leaders achieve personal, team and corporate goals. She has extensive experience in instituting corporate transformational change. She coaches executives and managers on leading corporate change, facilitating the development and implementation of organizational effectiveness strategies. For more information, visit www.changeagentsinc.com or call 623-362-3876.