



GrowthPort Partners, Inc.

The Incredible Power of Achievement

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"Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved". William Jennings Bryan

Results-oriented employers

Today, employers must use the opportunity to produce results as a means of attracting, hiring, and retaining the talent they need to competitively succeed. Results-oriented employers thrive by engaging the most innovative and entrepreneurial individuals. By continuing to make use of the power of achievement throughout the employment process, a business will be able to accomplish more, with fewer people and doing it faster, better and for longer.

Compatible results, mutual fit and alignment of interests are terms used to describe a merger between two businesses. These same words are increasingly relevant to both employers and employees during the employment process. Good hiring, like successful merging, requires the formation and management of a long-term, mutually beneficial alliance based upon a two-way opportunity to achieve.

Start by hiring results-oriented employees

During recruiting and selection, the prospective employee must of course be made fully aware of the results-focused environment for which they are being considered. The opportunity to produce and to be evaluated on results isn't attractive to everybody. It is uncomfortable for some. Especially externally motivated people who are all too willing to give up responsibility for their actions; instead they only want to be told what to do, try to do it and then leave for the day.

Results-focused individuals are just the opposite. They take responsibility for their performance. They market themselves based upon the skills they have and the quantified results they have produced applying them. For them, being given the responsibility to produce well-defined results and the authority to achieve them is not only desirable, but it is essential. It builds their skills inventory, their stock-in-trade and their work security. A detailed application and effective interviewing will reveal who these people are.

Once results-focused employees are selected, every aspect of their employment must clearly and consistently support performance.

Matching compensation and performance management to achievement

The compensation and performance management practices must be inexorably linked to achievement. Employees who consistently accomplish the results they set out to do must be rewarded and not merely for effort, supervisory opinion or length of service. When their “walk” matches their “talk” they should be rewarded and acknowledged, both monetarily and in recognition or advancement.

The organizational and management structures of a business must also foster the personal accountability that goes with choosing to perform results-focused work. Employees should be supported, not controlled, pulled, or pushed. Allow employees to become leaders, not followers—drivers, not passengers. It takes experienced managers to sustain a self-managing results-oriented culture. And, they must act as resources and coaches, but do so largely at the discretion of the employee-players so as to facilitate achievement of the assigned objectives.

Accountability and sense of ownership

The traditional multi-layered structures and superior-subordinate relationships that typified organizations of the industrial era don't work as well in today's results-driven settings. Where performance is required, results are attained by inner, not outer, direction. Personal (and group) accountability and enlightened self-interest replace the need for complex hierarchy and tight managerial control. The accountability approach also helps weed out incompetent employees.

Where people work largely for themselves, health care and workers' compensation costs will be significantly reduced. Increased productivity, quality and profits will follow because people will identify with the product or service to which they are contributing. This sense of ownership of the work produced is a powerful incentive to work both hard and smart. Ten proactive employees choosing to produce at 100% of their capacity will always outdo 100 reactive employees operating at 10%.

What it takes to have a results-enabling workplace

Becoming an “employer of results” sounds easy. Why else are we in business? It isn't! A results-enabling workplace requires:

1. Leadership willing and able to define and communicate the results sought;
2. Candor when the results sought are not accomplished;
3. A well communicated, common vision;
4. Shared values; and,
5. Mature, even wise, supervision.

Training and promotion

A results-oriented business requires helping employees become the stewards of their own work and futures. Achievement must be recognized and rewarded constantly. Training and promotion must be made available to the employee based upon his/her proven record of contributions and relate to a career path charted mainly by the employee.

HR's role as part of the management team

In former General Electric CEO Jack Welch's current best-selling book "Winning", he identifies the many specific ways in which management of large and smaller businesses can become more achievement-focused. Specifically, he tells CEO's that to succeed in the global knowledge workplace they will have to take primary responsibility for the attraction, management and retention of talent themselves. This shift will not be to the exclusion of the "HR" function, but to its inclusion as an active part of the senior management team.

Differentiating employees based on achievement

As a veteran Chief Executive, Welch emphasizes the value of "differentiation" among employees based upon their achievements. In organizations of all sizes and across all industries he has observed that 20% of employees are achievers, 70% have the potential to become achievers and 10% will never perform at the level required of them to remain on the team.

Welsh points out that continuing to reward the top 20%, further developing the middle 70% and inviting the bottom 10% of employees out of the organization is top management's obligation to the business, and that doing so is not "Darwinian," harsh or unfair in any way. According to this wise and successful leader, "Differentiation, like candor, clarifies business and makes it run better in every way."

Recruit, hire and develop results-focused talent

Welsh's "every brain in the game" approach to leadership is precisely the way businesses must recruit, hire and develop results-focused talent. Imagine an organization that attracts the best and brightest new and experienced talent. What if that business was able to field a team comprised mainly of achievers and with additional results-producers impatiently waiting on the bench for their turn to play? This dynamic would not be without its challenges, but in a highly competitive marketplace, it would be far better to face those kinds of dilemmas than the business-threatening problems that would occur if real talent were too scarce

Helping employees assess their own value

The importance of achievement is taken from the organizational to the personal level. Unless individual employees understand that producing greater results for their employer is in their self-interest, performance will not be taken personally and, therefore, won't significantly increase. However, when that connection is made by employees and rewarded by their employers, productivity will be maximized. Here's a formula that can help employees assess their own value: $V = St + A + R$ (Value = Strengths + Actions + Results).

- Strengths are the skills someone excels in, which may result from education, be inherent with a personality (a good listener, for example), or come from experience (both work and personal). When these are listed, it is clear that they all work together to add value to an individual.
- Actions are the ways people demonstrate their strengths. From creating a new filing system to leading a quality initiative, actions are tangible proof of how someone applies his or her strengths and skills.

Employees should be encouraged to identify and communicate their successes.

- Results are the bottom line of every business venture. Without positive results, there is no real value being created from applying strengths. Employees should record and document their results.

Employees can develop their own value formula

It is unfortunate that in today's workplace few people truly understand their own value. The value formula helps employees make the critical connection between self-interest and productivity. The work security derived by an employee who identifies the strengths they have, applies them to produce increased results for their employer (and themselves) will never lack for gainful employment. Nor will they likely be content to stay put when opportunities for them to grow and get a return on their skills ceases or even diminishes in their current job. These employees will look elsewhere to apply their skills and knowledge.

Once the personal paradigm shifts from working for someone else to working for oneself it rarely, if ever, returns to the way it was. Opportunities to learn new skills to produce a greater variety of marketable results are continually sought, not avoided. Chances to increase productivity are regarded as blessings, not burdens. This shift is how Welsh's middle 70% can become part of the top 20% of employees in any organization and, importantly, be motivated to remain there.

Attracting, retaining and transitioning a workforce that is replete with informed, self-directed stewards of their own results (and lives) is possible today. It is THE competitive edge now and in the future. Going forward, success belongs to organizations with the foresight and courage to build or evolve to an empowered, interdependent, initiative-supporting, achievement-rewarding, results-producing, and, yes, even joyful, working community.

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