TRG LEADERSHIP TOOL
"Practical Means for Dealing with Difficult Times"

On an ongoing basis, this section of our site will feature business tools and planning considerations designed to assist leaders for whom "just keeping up" is not good enough. These notes will focus on sequences of thought and action intended to enhance the positioning for your group, both on a long and short-term basis.

Please check back frequently to review the next tool. Visit our LEADERSHIP TOOLS ARCHIVE for previous tools.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

Make no assumptions. Assumptions are business killers.

We swim in a sea of information. Most ventures include hundreds of bits of positive information…'positive' because they detail the existence of those elements that make up the project. But ventures are also defined by thousands of bits of negative information; that is to say, all of the elements that are not a part of the project. And omission can be as important as inclusion.

Even if you can remember the thousands of elements involved in your profession, it is unreasonable to expect that you or anyone else can hold in their heads all of the combinations both positive and negative for every activity, project and initiative every time.

The first trap is assuming that competence and memory for detail are one and the same. The more competent the professional, the less likely they are to rely on their memory of detail. Knowing your job will do no good if you haven't completely captured the detail of a client's case, project or order and can pass that detail along to others.

To successfully establish any project / venture / or working arrangement, you should first answer <u>all</u> of the questions listed below, even if they seem obvious to you. Unanswered questions indicate the prospect of a hole in the development process.

STARTING THE PROCESS
Before speaking to you, your team, partners or client have only an idea… and probably not a complete idea at that of where this might go.

- How do you know what your client (internal or external) wants?
- Is what they say that they want also what they actually need?

THE TRAP: Your client probably knows less than you do about your field, but you have no way of being certain how much less, unless you ask.

- How well do you understand your client's situation?
- How did you go about asking?
- How do you know if you have asked all there is to ask this time?
- How can you be sure that you have been told all that you need to know to do your upcoming project?
- How much can you remember of what you have been told?
- Have you saved the information in a way that you can be sure it is correct by sending it down the line?

DEFINING THE PROJECT

To get it right you must know what it is. To make it right you must tell it right.

Have you shown the client that you understand their wants and needs to their satisfaction?
THE TRAP: Your client wants to believe that you understand their needs. If you simply tell them that you understand them without presenting the information back to them, they will believe you, even if a part of the information you are holding in your head is wrong or incomplete.

- Does the client understand what you intend to do?
    - How do you know this?
- Does the client understand what you are not going to do?
    - How do you know this?
- What do you have that can show a third party that both you and the client understood each other at the time the project was defined?

MANAGING THE FLOW

The danger is that you and your colleagues know the field and knowing the field is not the same as knowing the project. Nobody actually knows what you know. What makes you think that you know what is inside anyone else's head?

- Do you understand who needs to know what you know?
- Do you understand what they are going to do with this knowledge?
- Are you talking to the right person?
- How do you know that they have understood the information correctly?
- How do you know that they have understood what you told them?

THE TRAP: Once you have passed the client and the client's project along inside your own organization,

you must rely on how well informed the other members of your group are. Your colleague may know even more than you about the field, but that doesn't mean that he or she understands your client or your client's project.

- Do you know when they have or will receive your information?
- Do you know when they will act on your information?
- Is there any way to verify that they understand what you want them to know about the situation?

REMEMBER: If it is not written down, it does not exist.

For additional information regarding Project Development Questions, please visit our Contact Page and send us an Email or simply call us directly during East Coast business hours on our toll free number 1.800.97-REGIS (1.800.977.3447).

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