TREATY
CONSULTING GROUP
The BlameBusters™

Post Office Drawer 121255
West Melbourne, FL 32912-1255
Phone: 321-345-5094
Fax: 321-345-5428
Web: www.TreatyConsulting.com
Blog: www.BlameBusters.com
Twitter: @DrGregHowes

Business Optimization: Building a Performance Culture
Dr. Greg Howes, DM, MBA, PgMP, PMP
The BlameBuster™

Abstract

Business Optimization is an important business technique required in the ever-increasingly competitive global market. In order to optimize business performance and improve top-line and bottom-line results, a performance culture must be constructed. The Treaty Consulting Group, LLC (TCG) model for business optimization is a systematic process that enables organizations to build a cohesive leadership team with clarity of vision and to execute on that vision of performance excellence. The TCG model is an iterative 6-step process that creates and maintains a performance culture. An overview of the TCG model is presented within this paper, and the first two steps are covered in detail. These are the steps required to create cohesion, clarity, and the plan. This is Article 1 of a three article series. Article 2 discusses people and tools, and Article 3 presents organization and strategy emergence.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

About Treaty Consulting Group

Treaty Consulting Group, LLC is a global management-consulting firm that specializes in business optimization.

We help businesses of all sizes optimize by constructing a performance culture that aligns Mission, Vision, Strategic Objectives, and Operational Excellence. We use the combination of proven organization behavior and operation management tools and techniques that provide immediate results while establishing an enduring optimization culture.

We build strong connections with executives, middle managers, supervisors, and individual contributors to develop a rich view of the people, tools, processes, and organizational arrangement that are truly used to accomplish the firm's mission versus those that are purported. We pride ourselves on forming strong bonds with the entire organization to provide one-on-one coaching of the techniques that will influence employee behavior, empower performance, and instill permanent change.

We are adept at creating formal and informal communication strategies that will build support for organizational efforts and facilitate organization optimization. These aptitudes enable us to diagnose the leverage points that enable quick performance increases and to lead functional and cross-functional teams in developing an operational system that fosters long-term improvement through inter-departmental cooperation.

We facilitate the development of systems thinking that recognizes the structures cause its own problems, not environmental factors or individual gaffes.

We are experts at system optimization and are professional BlameBusters™.

Business Optimization: Building a Performance Culture

Is Everyone Blaming Everyone Else and Profits and Efficiencies Drag? Are you frustrated that you do not have time to focus on the strategy your organization needs? Does it seem like you are the only one thinking about what is wrong and how to fix it? Do your hard charging executives optimize on their individual functional area? Is the result that your business profits and efficiencies lag? Would you like to instill a performance culture?

Imagine having your team aligned toward the same goals: A team that is optimizing at all levels. Imagine having an organization that is keenly focused on creating a healthy organization and a performance ethos. Imagine having time to think about the future instead of just dealing with problems of today. Imagine doing this with a simple and disciplined approach that has been proven in companies of numerous sizes and in various industries.

Yes, you can get your team to see the business from your perspective, from a total perspective. Yes, you can get individuals to work as a team to optimize at the business level, to improve efficiencies and profits, and to free you to focus on the strategic issues your company faces. Yes, you can have a business that is optimized for performance at all levels!

You are not alone struggling to stop the finger-pointing and getting your team pulling in the same direction. Surprisingly, the reason teams struggle steams from the external orientation that most of us adopt when dealing with problems. Like most people, you have been trying to understand the problems through a cause and effect paradigm. However, this gives you little power to alter the course of events. What needs to be accomplished is to focus on the internal structure, which greatly enhances the ability to influence the outcomes because you are addressing the underlying source instead of trying to manipulate events. The key is to construct a change in thinking that creates a performance culture.

Building a performance culture is a journey and not a destination. However, all journeys require knowledge of where we stand and where we want to go next; otherwise, we are just wandering around. When any organization decides to build a performance culture, they, by definition, are undertaking a significant change effort and these efforts will have their enemies. As Robert F. Kennedy stated, "Progress is a nice word. But change is its motivator and change has its enemies" (Kennedy, 1964). In order to overcome the natural resistance to change, a systematic approach must be taken. This approach must deal with the whole system, which includes people, processes, and tools. It must begin with defining the vision and detailing the steps along the way. Figure 1 (TCG Business Optimization Cycle) depicts a systematic approach that begins with developing a robust understanding of the vision, while creating cohesion and clarity throughout the organization. This is followed by a participative engagement
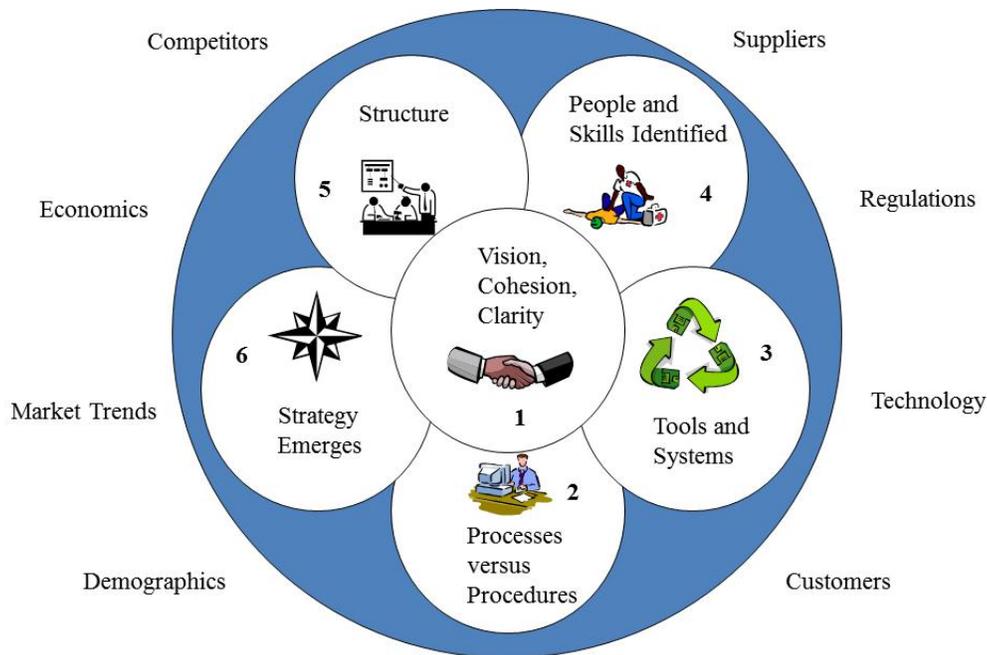
Figure 1. TCG Business Optimization Cycle

with the organization to understand the processes, tools, and people required to achieve the

performance culture vision. Based on these discoveries, an organization structure is developed

and created to manage the many aspects of the organization. This ensures a strategy emerges that

supports the vision and the performance culture is realized. Then the journey continues by

continuously optimizing the performance through measurement and adjustment.

Discussion

It is easy to state that an organization's vision is to become a performance (results) driven culture. It is much harder to implement the soft and hard skills necessary to drive toward that vision without creating dysfunction. To accomplish the vision without creating dysfunction requires a special kind of leadership that encourages vulnerability trust and fellowship toward a common goal. It requires using workshops instead of meetings to bring the processes and procedures in line with each other. Many organizations when faced with change will begin by redrawing the organizational chart or by selecting an information technology system. This is exactly the wrong approach. If you automate on top of poor processes, you will have a highly automated dysfunctional system; and if you don't know the processes, people, and tools that need to be managed, the organizational structure created will not be optimized for leadership performance. The key begins with creating a team that has shared visions, the ability to surface and challenge each other's basic assumptions, and the ability to create clarity around the vision. To prosper in today's global environment, businesses must be willing to continually learn and optimize their performance, which requires creating a performance culture based on performance measurement led by a cohesive team.

Setting the Performance Vision (Step 1)

Lencioni (2012) states that the foundation of building a healthy organization begins with creating a cohesive leadership team that requires "members of the team to trust one another and can be genuinely vulnerable with each other" (p.194). Howes (2005) recounted the story detailed in (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997) and concluded that leadership is the courageous determination by an individual in initiating and constructing fellowship toward a common goal. Thus, developing a performance culture must begin with creating the performance vision, setting clarity around that

vision, and clearly communicating that vision throughout the organization and the environment in which the organization exists.

Creating the vision.

In order to create a vision of where an organization wants to be, it is important to understand where it is at, to create a team that is willing to engage in difficult discussions, and to create clarity around the plan ahead. The approach used by Treaty Consulting Group begins with assessing the state of the organization and using the results of that assessment to facilitate building a cohesive team and clarity of direction.

The assessment.

When conducting an assessment of the organization, it is best to use a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach permits determining why and how, in addition to the what, where, and when that quantitative research permits. Qualitative research is used in the social sciences and provides a method for in-depth understanding of human behavior (Bickman & Rog, 1998), which makes this approach very well suited for performing an organizational assessment.

When conducting an assessment, I have found that grounded theory and story-telling approaches are superior to shadowing. Shadowing, which as the word suggest, permits learning about organization behavior by following individuals around like his or her shadow. I have found that this makes workers very nervous and that they will modify their behavior. Thus, I avoid using this approach, although I have found it useful on occasion when detailed understanding of a process is needed. Regardless, I only use this after I have created a relationship with those who are being observed.

Grounded theory, which allows hypotheses to emerge from data, is a far superior approach. In my performance optimization efforts, I have always been amazed with how forthcoming

individuals are, the common themes that emerge, and the pure genius of the collective wisdom of the organization. I have also learned that although there are common themes, subtle differences exist between the top of organization and the bottom, and between the individual departments. This is why it is necessary to conduct a cross-department and a top-to-bottom engagement.

When assessing the organization, it is best to begin by working from the top-down and to engage in open-ended questions. By conducting interviews first with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), then with his or her Presidents, then Vice-Presidents, and so on down the organization, a robust view of the organization emerges. This open-ended approach permits storytelling, which is a power tool for understanding organizations. Besides being a significant way to communicate and influence behavior, listening to the stories that are told within an organization is an excellent method to gain insight to how individuals make sense of their world. We are the stories that we tell!

These sessions should be limited to no more than one hour. When I first started conducting these interviews, I believed that they were best conducted in person. I still believe that the face-to-face approach is best for many reasons (i.e., personal relationships are developed, non-verbals can be witnesses, etc.), but I have found that in our very busy, high tech communication world, they are not pragmatic. Since the ultimate in performance organization is a pragmatic one, I have opted to use voice and video teleconferencing to the fullest extent possible.

There are many advantages to using the communication technologies available and individuals are becoming more accustomed to doing so. By using the technology available, a greater number of individuals can be interviewed in a shorter time, schedules can be better aligned, and costs can be significantly reduced. I have also noticed, oddly enough, that the quality of the information gained is superior. I have not completely understood if this is because

individuals feel a sense of anonymity, or if it is because self-consciousness is lessened, or if I can take better notes when not in a face-to-face environment. In any case, I have found that conducting these interviews virtually, along with limited face-to-face interviews, facilitates the creation of a superior final product.

Once the top-down, cross-departmental, broad-based interviews are completed, the data collected from the interviews are mined, tagged, and categorized using automated and manual tools, and themes emerge that provide a robust story of the organization's health. Even the most skeptical executives do not dispute the advantage they could achieve if they could make their organization healthy (Lencioni, 2012). Thus, the assessment report provides an excellent foundation to build a cohesive team and to develop clarity of purpose, and I begin the next step by briefing the results to the leadership team.

Developing the cohesive team.

"Workshops are an excellent method for focusing your mind and everyone else's on solutions and improvements within your organizations" (Holmes, 2007, p. 54). Workshops are much more effective than meetings. In fact, I see very little reason for conducting a meeting. In a meeting, the leader talks and the staff listen. In workshops, the leadership team gets to work on problems together and develop the cohesiveness required to lead a performance culture. An organization cannot become healthy if the leadership team is not cohesive (Lencioni, 2012), and after presenting the results of the assessment, which provides a context of where the organization stands, we turn our focus to developing the cohesion.

There are many different approaches that can be employed at this point from taking personality instruments (e.g., Myers Briggs Type Indicator, which is based on psychologist Carl Jung's work; or the DiSC, which is used by numerous human resource professionals in fortune

500 and 100 companies), to taking the leadership team through a quick exercise encouraging them to share something about themselves, to having them write their fears on large sticky note pads, to sharing their thoughts about their teammates, etcetera. Each of these approaches works to varying degrees of success with different groups. However, the best approach is to combine cohesion building and work accomplishment. There is little time to *sing kumbayah* or to get bogged down in touchy feely hand holding events. This is about maximizing the performance of a team, which requires developing a vulnerability trust so real conversations can happen.

The workshop that we have used at Treaty Consulting Group begins by briefing the results of the assessment. We most often will get a nodding of heads as we work through the briefing of the findings, but occasionally we will find an area of significant disagreement. However, what is important is we have captured, in a document, a point from which we can deviate as we move forward. We then spend a couple of hours getting to know each better by understanding and honoring our differences. I know this sounds a little touchy feely, and to be honest, it is. However, this is not about getting to know your *inner child*, nor is it about, as Don Henley of the Eagles suggested, about *finding your inner child and kicking its little butt* (Eagles, 1994). It is about building trust so we can *get stuff done*!

Once this is accomplished, we move on to a presentation discussing change management. Again, there are numerous models for managing change and several of those are discussed briefly in the presentation, but it really boils down to involvement and communication: that is, early involvement by everyone, and consistent and frequent communication. However, without clarity, consistent communication cannot happen.

Creating clarity.

Clarity of focus cannot be overstated. If everyone is not pulling in the same direction, then energy is being wasted, the business is not optimized, and the vision of a performance culture is not attainable. This clarity must begin with the leadership team and that leadership team must communicate that vision without ambiguity. Disagreement must be aired, conflict must be encouraged, dialog must happen, and agreement much be reached. And when the leadership team leaves the workshop, they must be in total agreement on purpose. It is unrealistic to expect that consensus will be reached on every decision, but agreement on purpose must be reached. Comments after the meeting like, *I disagreed with the decision and I voted against it, but those others folks voted for it,* creates ambiguity, undermines the ability to achieve the vision, and cannot be tolerated. The key to reaching agreement is providing a methodology that permits everyone to be heard and provides approach to decision making.

One approach I have used with great success is *Affinity Diagramming*. This approach begins with the facilitator asking a simple question of the leadership team (e.g., what are the 4 – 6 actions we need to accomplish over the next 3 – 12 months). However, instead of these being discussed immediately, the participants are asked to write each idea on a separate sticky note, and are given 5 minutes or so to do so. Once they have completed this portion of the exercise, they are asked, in-turn, to go to the wall, explain their comment, and place the comment on the wall. After completing this portion, they are asked, as a team and without speaking to each other, to go to the wall and put the ideas in categories. While doing this, anyone can move a sticky note, and if someone does not like where it has been moved, they can move it to another location. After 10 – 15 minutes, 7 – 8 categories will emerge. The team is then asked to condense those into 5 categories. Finally, they are requested to reduce them into three. The team is then

asked to agree on the definition of those categories. At the completion of this exercise, the high-level vision for the organization has emerged. This is by no means the end of the planning exercise. It is just the beginning and more effort will be required to flesh the plan out. Nevertheless, the high-level vision for the next 3 - 12 months has been developed with the participation of all the leadership team. This vision can then be communicated with assured clarity because everyone has participated in its development. I have conducted this approach several times as an internal and external consultant, and it has always quickly resulted in a cohesive vision for the path forward. Now this vision can be communicated with clarity of purpose.

Communicating.

Jack Welch, who transformed GE and was named "Manager of the Century" in 1999 by Fortune Magazine, stated that during change efforts at GE he would talk and talk about the change until he couldn't stand to hear himself talk anymore about it; then he would talk some more (Welch & Welch, 2005). It is not possible to over-communicate. As indicated by Mr. Welch, the leader of the organization must communicate often, but the communication must also happen between everyone within the organization. As stated earlier, we are the stories we tell; similarly, we can construct the vision by telling the stories of where we want to be. By getting everyone telling the same stories, the vision is realized sooner, profounder, and with more certainty.

There are two types of communication channels is an organization: Formal and Informal. Generally, formal communication is through Newsletters, All-Hands and Staff-Meetings, etc. However, another powerful communication channel is the grapevine or informal channel. These exist in every organization, cannot be eliminated, and are beneficial if used by management to

spread the official word. A robust communication plan that uses all channels to spread and

encourage disseminating knowledge up, down, and across the organization will significantly

improve moral and acceptance of the coming change.

Understanding the Processes and the Procedures (Step 2)

The quality guru Philip Crosby once noted that all work is a process (Jacobs & Chase,

2010), and I share his position. There has been a lot written on the difference between process,

procedure, document, written procedure, document processes, etc. Taking a quick scan of the

internet provides a plethora of positions on the subject. The core is simply this, all work is a

process, and all processes can be designed, measured, and improved. Process management is the

foundation of business optimization and the cornerstone of a performance culture.

Processes.

Processes are how we do business. Every business, company, department, or portion of any

organization uses processes to perform their work. The idea that an organization does have

processes ignores the reality that all work is a process. Work is a transformational process. When

work is accomplish, individuals, groups, teams, organizations, etc., take inputs and transform

them into outputs using a process. Sometimes the processes are documented and sometimes they

are not: Regardless, organizations use process to accomplish work.

Procedures.

The goal of standards like ISO9001 is to ensure these processes are formally designed to

meet the needs of the business, and to ensure they are documented, and through training and

audits, they are followed. Many approaches can be used to document the processes from flow

diagrams, to written word, to pictorials, to audio or video tapes. When they become documented

processes, I refer to them as procedures. That is, process is how work is accomplished and

procedures are how organizations purport work is accomplished. These are rarely the same, except in high performance cultures. Thus, in order to build a high performing culture, you must bring into alignment the way we say we do work and the way work is actually done. This requires working with the entire organization, and just like with the senior leadership team, this cannot be accomplished without cohesion in purpose, which requires eliminating the blame that is often prevalent in organizations.

Expanding the cohesion.

The people that really understand what is happening in an organization are those that are doing the work. The workers that use process to get stuff done are the ones who realize what processes are really used, what ones work versus what ones are purported to work, and what sacred cows need slaying. Although an assessment is a good place to start a change effort, the ultimate optimization comes from the individual contributors and middle managers who are in the trenches every day dealing with the problems while getting work done. As with any change effort, cohesion must be built before change can be implemented. This cohesion can be accomplished by developing meaning in the work we do. Frankl (1984) stated that human beings arrive at meaning in life by creating works or doing deeds. Thus, we can build cohesion by doing work. That is, the best way to build a team is to do work together. I developed a workshop specifically focused on building cohesion while identifying current processes, and then creating an action plan for post workshop efforts. Consultants at Treaty Consulting Group, LLC, have facilitated this workshop, or variations of it, numerous times, and the participants have always enjoyed the time working together, but more importantly, they have indicated that the approach is the most productive of any workshop they have attended. I personally have witnessed a

definite bonding and collective purpose in goal, while creating a plan to be used to develop the

performance culture.

Developing the plan (the workshop).

The workshop is conducted offsite and is normally schedule for 3 full days. The agenda for a

typical workshop follows:

Day 1

- Introductions   08:00 – 08:45
- Overview   08:45 – 09:50
    Why Are We Here?
    The Agenda Ahead
    How We Arrived Here
    What We Will Accomplish
    The Vision
- Break   09:50 – 10:00
- Team Building   10:00 – 12:00
    Review of the day
    Warm-ups
    Connecting & Appreciating Differences
    Insights—Who are we anyway?
    Sharing - Why get to know each other?
- Lunch   12:00 – 13:00
- Team Understanding   13:00 – 14:00
    Role of History
    Creating New History
- Change Models   14:00 – 14:50
- Break   14:50 – 15:00
- Team Mission Discussion   15:00 – 16:00
    Goals
    Keys to success
    Recipe for disaster
- Tribal Leadership   16:00 – 17:00
    One team
    Our ground rules
- Break   17:00 – 18:30
- Dinner (Treaty Consulting Hosted)   18:30 – 21:00

Day 2

- Day 1 Review/Day 2 Overview   08:00 – 08:30
- Guiding Principle Development   08:30 – 09:50
- Break   09:50 – 10:00
- Manage Ourselves - Blind Spots & Bias   10:00 – 11:00
- Systems Thinking and Change   11:00 – 12:00
- Lunch   12:00 – 13:00
- Process Identification & Discussion   13:00 – 14:50
- Break   14:50 – 15:00
- Process Discussion & Mapping   15:00 – 17:00
- Evening free

Day 3

- Day 2 Review/Day 3 Overview   08:00 – 08:30
- What we need to do?   08:30 - 09:50
- Break   09:50 – 10:00
- Development Discussion   10:00 – 12:00
- Lunch   12:00 – 13:00
- Task Prioritizing   13:00 – 14:50
- Break   14:50 – 15:00
- Recap and Next Step Discussion   15:00 – 16:00
- Conclude   16:00

There is one pre-workshop assignment, which is to complete an on-line personality instrument. This questionnaire is quick and provides an assessment that groups people into one of four categories. The workshop, like most workshops, begins with introductions. However, this workshop is a little different in that we encourage the individuals to highlight their accomplishments about themselves during these introductions: to sing your own praises. We have found that initially participates are a little reluctant to boast about themselves, so the facilitators begin the exercise. This creates a climate that it is ok to blow your own horn and it

provides good history of the facilitator. Once a couple of folks have provided their highlights, the mood changes, and everyone *gets into it*. By the time the introductions are complete, the participants are looking around the room thinking: Wow, this is a great team! Every time I have conducted this exercise, the energy in the room significantly increases and you can see people begin to smile! This has been true regardless of the nationalities, and I have conducted this with multi-national groups from all continents. It also provides a great lead into understanding each other and what we hope to accomplish.

Creating understanding of each other.

We begin this portion by asking the participants to share their concerns. We do this by putting large sticky notes on the wall. On the top of the sticky note, we write phrases to elicit responses. These phrases are not predetermined, but are gleaned through the assessment process in the initial phases. Some examples might be:

1. What concerns you most?

2. Whom on your team are you most worried about?

3. I just wish we would start…

4. I just wish we would stop…

5. Whatever we do, we must continue to …

6. What are you the least concerned about?

7. In order for this change to be successful, we must do…

8. I hope when this workshop is complete we have …

We then provide markers that are used to walk around the room and provide responses by writing them on the large sticky notes.

Then we conduct a debriefing of the responses and continue with candid dialog. It is at this point, we introduce the results of the personality assessment that was completed pre-workshop. We use this to explore our similarities and our uniqueness. After this, we launch into understanding the history of teams and what it really means to be a teammate. This is followed by a presentation and discussion on change and how people naturally react to change. We continue the discussion around how to achieve success as a team and how to ensure disaster. We conclude this portion by brainstorming and setting the rules of engagement for the team. At this point, we have had a very long, but productive day.

The next step will be to look at the processes, but that will have to wait until day two of the workshop. At this point, we take a break in order to read emails, make calls, and freshen-up before going together as a team to dinner. This team dinner is very important as we continue to build relationships. This team dinner is set in a casual setting where conversation can be accomplished easily between the whole team, and where we can get to know each other a little better than is possible in the work setting. By the end of the first day, we are very tired, but we are also very relaxed with the team we have grown to know quite well in a short period.

Defining the processes.

The second day of the workshop begins by reviewing the events from day one and recounting stories from the team dinner. After that recap, we begin the process of defining the processes.

We use the affinity diagraming technique discussed earlier to develop the guiding principles for the team and how to manage ourselves.

We then provide a presentation on systems thinking. Systems thinking is a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed to make patterns clearer and how to change them effectively (Senge, 1990, 2006).

We begin laying out the processes that are currently used to accomplish work within the organization. This becomes the high-level roadmap for bringing the processes and procedures in alignment.

We now have developed the high-level "as is" architecture of the processes used to execute work in the organization. It is now time to create an action plan and to prioritize the tasks in that plan. This brings us to the close of day 2.

Creating the action plan.

Day 3 begins with a brainstorming exercise to develop the actions required to continue with the effort, although this brainstorming is not performed in the normal approach. We use a *structured approach* that encourages everyone to participate, including the introverts.

After capturing the brainstormed actions required, we discuss each of the tasks to understand them and to provide critique as prudent. We encourage candid discussion in a non-threatening environment by using the *quarter can technique.*

After we have thoroughly discussed and understand the brainstormed tasks, we prioritize those using *voting cards*. Once the team has voted, we then have the priority of the actions that we have developed. If time permits, we assign owners to each task, if not, we perform this during the post workshop efforts.

In any case, we now have a cohesive team and a robust plan for executing the optimization efforts and building a performance culture. This plan consists of an "as is" architecture of the

process employed with the organization and a set of prioritized actions to which to manage ourselves. Now it is time to begin the post workshop effort.

Post workshop.

The post workshop effort requires developing a program plan based on the actions developed and prioritized in the workshop effort. At this point, we are at the beginning of a program to create and maintain a performance culture and we need to use the actions developed in the workshop to build a program plan. The first step in building this plan is to unambiguously define the "as is" architecture and solidify the "to be" desired state.

Determining where processes & procedures diverge.

Many different tasks or actions will need to be completed in order to execute the plan to develop and maintain the performance culture. Regardless of the exact steps and tasks detailed in the program plan, a major effort that will be required is determining where the procedures diverge from the processes that are actually used.

To accomplish this, an iterative approach is accomplished that cycles through the steps of 1) evaluating the accuracy of the processes identified in the workshop, 2) comparing those with the procedures currently in existence, and 3) identifying and documenting divergences.

A cross-functional team should be used to perform these actions, and to maximize ultimate acceptance of the performance culture vision, as many employees as possible should be engaged. Literally, the more engagement at this point: the greater the probability of success. The purpose at this stage is to create a solid understanding of the "as is" architecture used to perform and the desired "to be" architecture that is desired.

We have a constructed cohesion around the vision and an excellent view of the "as is" state and the "to be" desire. Now it is time to put these together to develop a closure plan.

Developing a closure plan.

The use of the term *closure plan* indicates that we plan to reach a desired state; thus, we execute on the plan to create the performance vision. However, in many ways this term is a misnomer. Because we are creating a performance culture, we need to both create it and maintain it. Thus, we are more in line with what the Project Management Institute (PMI) calls a program than a project. A project has a definite beginning and end, where a program delivers benefit to the organization and its end is indefinite (Project Management Institute., 2004, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2013).

Thus, the closure plan we need, at a minimum, must have all the sub-plans that any high-quality program plan requires to include the program processes, requirements management, change management, process improvement management, scope management, time management, cost management, human resource management, communication management, and risk management. A project plan requires a plan for each knowledge area for project management as describe by the Project Management Institute (Mulcahy, 2011), and this is true for a program too since a program is a collection of related projects. A good template is a valuable tool for developing a program management plan and we have developed one, which we suggest be used to create a plan for the specific effort.

Bringing processes and procedures together.

An old cliché used by ISO9001 implementers and auditors is *do what you say; say what you do,* and this is the axiom for many ISO9001 efforts, but it often leads organizations to create reams and reams of documents that no one ever reads, let alone follows. However, without putting on paper the processes that are followed and creating documentation (procedures) that details those processes, it is impossible to find the problem areas or disconnects. The key is a

disciplined and pragmatic approach, a commonsense approach if you will. However, the problem is that commonsense is not very common.

Treaty Consulting Group, LLC uses an approach that is founded in Systems Dynamics and Systems Theory. This approach focuses first on the transformation process of turning inputs into outputs. Stated differently, this process is focused on finding the disconnects between the processes first and then improving the processes once the disconnects have been stabilized. The major issue with processes is not how the process is performed, but instead whether the inputs and outputs align, which is where we focus our efforts, initially.

Summary

My name is Dr. Greg Howes, a business optimization expert and practicing academic with a proven track record of enhancing operation performance and improving top-line and bottom-line results. I founded Treaty Consulting Group, LLC to help organizations optimize their business by focusing on removing the blame that is often present in organizations. Don't work harder; instead, find the levers that permit you to work smarter.

We have a proven approach that begins by working with your team to identify concerns and to the help them by providing training, simulations, and workshops to not only educate, but also to instill optimized performance. An overview of the six-step Treaty Consulting Group (TCG) model for business optimization and the details of the first two steps of the have been presented in this first of a three part series. Article 2 will cover people and tools & systems, and Article 3 will cover organizational structure and strategy emergence.

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