



Caswell **CORPORATE COACHING** Company

Making good companies even better - worldwide

NEWSLETTER
May 2017
Volume 17,
Issue 5

Flip on your Turn Signal



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Seminars 2017

- **26 Jan.**
Guadalajara,
Mexico
- **12 Feb.**
Kiev,
Ukraine
- **23 Feb.**
Ottawa,
Canada
- **10 March**
Ludhiana,
India
- **5,6 June**
Ottawa,
Canada
- **26 June**
Kiev,
Ukraine
- **6-13 Sept.**
Ottawa,
Canada

Have you ever come up behind a vehicle at a traffic light only to find it is about to turn left on the green, has not signaled and you are stuck behind waiting to move forward? And, perhaps you face another red light? At that point, you would probably have a derogatory thought of that driver being lazy. From the other driver's perspective, the feeling was, probably, that signaling did not really matter before you arrived. This same 'it-doesn't-seem-to-matter-now' thinking pervades most businesses; it causes not only frustration but, most often, leads to serious disasters. This is called the failure to communicate.

For the 20 years that I have been coaching companies, there has never been an exception to the complaint of 'failure to communicate' within each of the enterprises when I first visit them. Not only is the complaint common, it is for most companies, the very first complaint. The situation is endemic. Let's be blunt: communication makes the difference between success or failure of a company.

Human Nature

We can chastise people's behaviour; however, we must recognize that it really is human nature to be lazy, or to take the path of least resistance. We don't act on things unless we feel they are necessary: not closing the bathroom door if no one is nearby, not shaving on the weekend, working in our pajamas when at home, driving two blocks to pick up the mail, not making a meeting report unless our boss demands one, committing things to memory (and forgetting them later), and so on. There can be only one conclusion from this fact: we need to bridge the gap between acknowledging that taking the easiest path is normal and that incredible disasters befall us in the workplace when we take the easiest path too often.

The Disasters

Show me a company without more disasters each week than it really wants, and I will show you an Irishman who doesn't like potatoes. It doesn't take too much analysis to illustrate that the disaster in question was caused by a failure to communicate adequately. When JDS Corporation went bust with a \$45 billion deficit, the blame could readily be laid at the failure to communicate.

The Cotter Pin Effect

In many mechanical devices a little pin, only 2" long and 1/16" diameter, called the cotter pin, fits through a hole in a 1/4" diameter shaft, say. That 1/4" shaft holds one of many 4" x 10' steel support structures. They, in turn, make up the 50' arm of the crane that is hoisting a 20-ton load. If you remove that tiny cotter pin, the entire 20 tons will come tumbling down; the pin must be in place to avoid a disaster. This leads to the same effect in business when small (essential) steps are avoided by unthinking people.

What makes Success?

Obvious Contributors

- Luck (being in the right place at the right time – most of us can only dream of that)
- Hard work (we know what that is all about)
- Intelligence (we assume we have plenty of that as we plan each of the stages and actions of our business)

We are all doing our best for these obvious elements. What about the not-so-obvious elements?

Not-so-Obvious Ones

- Cooperation (those rowing on the oars together will always beat the ship not rowing together)
- Minimizing the sand-in-the-gears (tackling the issues that are slowing the enterprise down)

Sand-in-the-Gears

Obviously, the more sand that is removed from the gears, the smoother they will run. So, too, in your company. This is a separate topic to be addressed outside of this paper, except to say that **communications** and **cooperation** go a long way towards removing the sand-in-the-gears; they are described as follows.

**CCCC offers
4 products:**

1. Read about the CCCC management methodology for **\$40** electronically or **\$400** with a set of 12 books (2,700 pages) in a hardboard case.

2. Learn about the CCCC management methodology by attending the week-long **Practical MBA**, **\$7,500**.

3. Act on the first step of resolving your key issues with a tactical planning session by CCCC at approximately **\$10,000**.

4. Engage fully in the *Climb to Excellence* right from the start (3-year step-by-step program) guiding you to *Excellence*, **\$150,000** (\$4,200/mo.)

Cooperation

Any of you who have attended the 8-hour “Best Kept Management Secrets” seminar by CCCC will know that the subject of cooperation is complex. During the course of CCCC aiding enterprises to move forward, we introduce elements that encourage greater cooperation such as the Safe Environment and the Problem Management Council. However, we have only two pages here; so I will be brief.

It is obvious to most people that the athletic team that cooperates more, wins more often – whether it be a sport with a puck, sculls, or a football. It is also true with companies. If it is not intuitive to you, let us offer the assurance that our continuous measurements of corporate cooperation, over the past 10 years, has, without exception, verified this point.

Communications

The key to cooperation is positive communications. When CCCC assists a company, we offer 15 different communication elements, but by far, the most influential one is the holding of meetings on a regular basis. (So, a preliminary step – but outside of this paper – is to understand what makes meetings work and what does not; that is, what makes meetings fun and what does not.)

There is a simple law: if you have meetings – things happen. If you do not have meetings – things don’t happen (communication fails). Things fall between the cracks – and gum up the corporate gears.

However, if a meeting is held, there must be actions that fall out from that meeting (which we need to document in an Action List of who is to do what, and by when). If you have no actions (i.e. no Action List), then why on earth did you have the meeting? **A MEETING WITHOUT A RESULTING ACTION LIST IS A WASTE OF TIME** – better not to have the meeting at all.

Obligations ensue regarding meetings:

- Hold the meeting weekly (usually)
- Create an Action List and follow up the Action List
- Create necessary follow-on actions to any completed action.

The Cotter Pin in Business

To make a meeting work, the issues to be discussed have to be relevant and timely. Thus, we have another simple-to-state rule: Write it down – NOW! As soon as something of concern happens, write it down. Do not think it does not matter or that you will somehow remember. Fight the normal human laziness; put on the car’s turn signal now! This is the cotter pin of business.

Flow

Just as the crane works from cotter pin, to ¼” shaft to 10’ structure to 50’ arm to carry the 20-ton load – and cannot work without the cotter pin, so it is true of business (and life). Let’s review the business sequence.

- **Write it down NOW** (the cotter pin)
- Bring the idea to the meeting (or to the person of concern – which, of course, is an ad-hoc meeting)
- Have regular meetings; have an action list after the meeting; follow up the action list
- Create new actions – if upon completing one action, the situation demands a further action
- The result will be improved communications
- The result will be fewer things falling between the cracks
- The result will be less sand-in-the-gears
- The result will be more cooperation
- The result will be a more successful enterprise

Pull out the cotter pin (ignore the importance of writing it down NOW) and you are bound to suffer the inevitable consequence. The “it-doesn’t-seem-to-matter-now” thinking WILL lead to problems. Writing it down now is a pain in the butt, but who can argue its cruciality for success?

Good luck in changing your own personal habits.

Bill

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