

The GREYSTONE MANNER

A Newsletter of The Greystone Consulting Group, Inc – Fall 2007

“Human Relationships at Work: The Untapped Frontier”

Leaders and managers can study, train and be coached. But if they fail to work on their interpersonal skills after focusing upon their self-awareness, they will not succeed when given more complex responsibilities. The ability to relate to and connect with others helps confer influence and ultimate leadership success.

Until recently, there has been little focus on what goes on within the relationship between two people in an organization. Almost all professional development programs focus on the individual: what you can do to improve yourself. Thousands of people explore leadership and management skills each year with an emphasis on improving their personal abilities. Very few have participated in programs to develop interpersonal skills.

Obviously, pursuing personal growth is worthwhile. Now, however, experts suggest that executives who develop their interpersonal skills will finely hone their ability to lead and influence.

The best managers in the world are not only experts in systems, processes and technical competencies. They are also proficient at understanding their employees' personal strengths and preferences. Thus, they increase employee engagement and productivity. Unfortunately, most people's experience with bosses falls short of these goals.

The Boss Is Last

A recent Princeton University study reveals how individuals feel about spending time with associates: Clients and customers were trailed by coworkers—and the boss came in dead last. Interacting with the boss was rated, on average, as being less enjoyable than cleaning the house.

The Gallup Organization conducted a famous study of workplace attitudes, asking 8 million people to respond to the following statement: “My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.” The results show that people who agree with this statement:

1. Are more likely to stay with an organization
2. Have more engaged customers
3. Are more productive

Perhaps you've had a similar experience. When a boss treats you like a friend and cares about your life, you feel more enthusiastic about, and committed to, your work.

We spend 50 percent more time with our customers, coworkers and bosses than we do with our friends, significant others, children and other relatives **combined**. To be sure, finding a few strong friendships at the office will help anyone be more engaged and productive.

*A Letter from the
President*



An awful lot has happened since our last newsletter in the Spring. I have spent extensive periods of time working in Geneva (SZ), Chicago, Dallas, Portland (ME), and Little Creek (VA) delivering leadership programs and doing organizational studies. I've always been dedicated to increasing self-awareness, but found myself constantly amazed by the lack of skills that folks have in interpersonal relationships. So many, many folks just didn't see the need for or didn't know how to develop or hone these skills. So, here's my shot at explaining why we need to explore this area with more intensity. I've also started to revamp and increase the modules in the Integrated Leadership Seminar Series (ILSS) to put more focus and emphasis on this issue.

cheers, jim

Look out for the NEW series of Podcasts that are designed to embed some of Greystone's more popular theories...

What Great Leaders Do Differently

Leaders and managers get to know each employee as an individual, tailoring their management style to people's personal needs and preferences. Marcus Buckingham emphasized this point in *The One Thing You Need to Know* (Free Press, 2005):



“To excel as a manager you must never forget that each of your direct reports is unique and that your chief responsibility is not to eradicate this uniqueness, but rather to arrange roles, responsibilities, and expectations so that you can capitalize upon it.”

Studies by The Gallup Organization and other groups delineate four necessary management skills:

1. Pick good people.
2. Set clear expectations.
3. Recognize excellence, and praise it often.
4. Show that you care about your people.

This fourth skill is uncomfortable for many—far too “touchy-feely” for results-driven managers on the fast track.

Show You Care: Soft Skills with Hard Results

There's no getting around it: As soft as this skill may appear, data support it is tangible and critical to leadership success. Employees who feel cared about are:

1. More productive
2. Less likely to miss workdays
3. Less likely to have accidents on the job
4. Less likely to file workers' compensation claims
5. Less likely to steal
6. Less likely to quit
7. More likely to recommend the company to friends and family

Human beings are herd animals, with a strong drive to bond. It's in our blood. If you want people to accomplish more and handle tasks with consistent improvement, you need to connect with them, show you care and observe the results.

When we are connected to others, especially in a work environment, we experience greater security, are more willing to share confidences, feel encouraged to take risks and can support one another freely. Creativity and collaboration skills are enhanced.

Set the Example

If you want your company to undergo a positive transformation, you must set the example. Forge bonds with your people. Don't be afraid to ask about—and listen to— what they want, what they like and what has meaning for them. Be deliberate and explicit. Tell them they are important to you and that you care. Explain that you want them to succeed and help them achieve their goals.

Keep their confidences. Learn about their private lives, within appropriate boundaries. Be willing to accommodate challenges in their personal lives within the work schedule.

Above all, be genuine in your show of respect and caring. Don't hesitate to intervene when facing poor or mediocre performance. When you really care, you help people confront their difficulties and outline the path to success.

To inspire top performance, you must know people as individuals so you can motivate by focusing on their strengths and managing around their weaknesses. As you help them grow, you'll learn how to steer them toward roles that best fit them, rather than simply promoting them up the ladder.

*Today we are
faced with the pre-
eminent fact that,
if civilization is to
survive, we must
cultivate the
science of human
relationships.*

-FDR

Up Close and Personal at Work

Sadly, many organizations frown upon getting to know employees on a personal level.

Nearly one-third of some 80,000 managers and leaders Gallup interviewed agreed with the following statement: “Familiarity breeds contempt.” Some companies even prohibit close relationships between employees, fearing they’ll come together to berate their bosses or company policies.

Only 18 percent of those surveyed work for organizations that provide opportunities to develop friendships on the job. Companies that discourage such friendships do so at their own peril, as employee satisfaction increases by almost 50 percent when friendships thrive.

Only 30 percent of employees report having a best friend at work, based on Gallup research. These individuals are seven times more likely to be engaged in their jobs. They get more done in less time, have fewer accidents and absences, have more engaged customers and are more likely to innovate. They share new ideas.

Close friendships at work also double the chance that workers will have a favorable perception of their pay. As Tom Rath writes in *Vital Friends: The People You Can’t Afford to Live Without*: “When we asked people if they would rather have a best friend at work or a 10 percent pay raise, having a friend clearly won.”

Rath asserts that more work friendships—even with bosses—improves engagement and productivity. Those with at least three close friends at work were 96 percent more likely to be extremely satisfied with their lives.

Emotional Intelligence May Not Be Enough

Daniel Goleman’s landmark books on emotional intelligence stressed the importance: of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Now, newer studies reveal empathy and social skills are even more important leadership skills.

“In short,” writes Goleman in *Social Intelligence* (2006), “self-absorption in all its forms kills empathy, let alone compassion.” The more attentive we are to others, the more keenly we will sense their inner state and pick up on subtle cues.

Social intelligence is composed of two broad categories: social awareness (what we sense about others) and social facility (what we do with this awareness).

What You Can Do to Strengthen Work Relationships

Progressive companies encourage socialization through team sports and outside activities. Astute leaders recognize that friendships should be encouraged and that work life needn’t be separate and distinct from one’s personal life.

In truth, people bring their personal lives to work each day and often talk about them with colleagues. Even those who don’t share what’s going on outside the workplace bring their moods to the office. Intelligent leaders and managers recognize that each employee is a whole person with a private life that accompanies him or her to work. Ignoring this reality prevents leaders from learning what makes people tick.

To be sure, there are degrees of appropriateness and complexities to navigate. It is essential to use common sense when choosing questions to ask an employee or coworker.

The importance of education cannot be overestimated. Have you ever taken a course in friendship? What about studying your one-on-one workplace relationships? Certainly, we could all benefit from taking a look at the roles we play with our customers and clients, coworkers and, of course, our bosses. Our Integrative Leadership Seminar Series (ILSS) is grounded in doing just that.



Social Awareness

Primal empathy:
Feeling with others; sensing nonverbal emotional signals

Attunement:
Listening with full receptivity; attuning to a person

Empathic accuracy:
Understanding another person’s thoughts, feelings and intentions

Social cognition:
Knowing how the social world works

Social Facility

Synchrony:
Interacting smoothly at the nonverbal level

Self-Presentation:
Presenting ourselves effectively

Influence:
Shaping the outcome of social interactions

Concern: Caring about others’ needs and acting accordingly



**THE GREYSTONE
CONSULTING
GROUP, INC.**

432 Cranes Roost Court
Annapolis, MD 21409-5748

Phone & Fax:
(410) 626-8989

E-Mail: greystoneconsulting@mac.com

We're on the Web!

See us at: <http://www.greystoneconsulting.org>

*Facilitating Self-Awareness,
Growth, and Transition*

As Rath says, ***"It is possible that most of the magic, and our room for rapid personal and professional growth, lies in developing our friendships...The real energy occurs in each connection between two people, which can bring about exponential returns."***

Resources:

Buckingham, M. *The One Thing You Need to Know... About Great Managing, Great Leading and Sustained Individual Success.* (2005). Free Press. New York, NY.

Goleman, D. *Primal Leadership.* (2002). Harvard Business School Press.

Goleman, D. *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships.* (2006). Bantam Dell. New York, NY.

Rath, R. *Vital Friends: The People You Can't Afford to Live Without.* (2006). Gallup Press, New York, NY.

THE GREYSTONE CONSULTING GROUP, INC.
432 Cranes Roost Court
Annapolis, MD 21409-5748