Case Study: Organizational Change

I was called in to work with a division of a company that had been in the red for some time. The Leader that was in place had negative feedback from employees in the areas of low trust, no follow through, poor leadership and poor communication. I ran the Big Five on this person and found some trait structures that indicated they were not very well suited to both the culture of the company and to leadership of a large team.

The division was unable to meet customer deadlines, sales were in decline and talent was scarce. There were some key players that had stuck it out and they were critical to moving forward. The division had a great product, just a lack of strong leadership to move it forward.

The company moved another individual into the leadership role. Morale was very low, trust was at a premium and many employees needed a voice. I recommended to the new leader that we get the entire staff in a room and facilitate a conversation where all voices could be heard.

We met offsite to neutralize the tensions. I started the meeting with a quick fun ice breaker to loosen up and laugh a bit. We then sat down to a long day. I had coached the new leader prior to the meeting on how to handle what would most likely be very negative feedback, (not of this new leader, but of how things had been going). This individual was truly receptive to hearing all that the employees offered.

I asked some specific questions about change so that this did not become a gripe session. When employees began to use the platform to gripe I redirected them to finding solutions for their gripes. I also had the group make a commitment to work towards a positive outcome for the day. Many of the complaints were about the work environment, lack of resources and the poor leadership.

At the end of the day the new leader had several pages of notes. This person did very little talking, mostly listened and took it all in. Changes began happening almost immediately. I continued coaching with the leader as changes were implemented. Some talent loss was expected, and coaching with a few of the managers helped to improve communications, teamwork, processes and management skills.

I continued coaching both leader and managers for another year. Two years after,this division has now become profitable and expanded into their own building. They have created a strong culture, acquired and retained talent, and are now in the black.

The credit goes to the leader and the team created that turned things around. The initial coaching, organizational change process set the stage for a positive direction.

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