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The Competitive Edge, Inc.



Photo by Hugh Foster

“BE DARING, BE FIRST, BE DIFFERENT”

All of us at CEI wish all of you a happy and healthy Holiday Season and a prosperous 2004!

We Moved!!

We keep growing and growing! CEI has moved to new headquarters. Our new shipping address is :

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TEAMWORK

Great teams do great things! Bad teams do bad things! The most important task a leader can accomplish is to build and sustain the right team for any job. The dynamics of team building is an evolving science and the subject or more books than my library can hold. However, everyone agrees that the benefits of doing the job right are invaluable to any organization. When a team performs at its best, organizations can expect motivated employees who are passionate to achieve well-defined goals, proud to be doing their personal best to benefit the "big picture".

What makes up a good team? It begins with a true leader. The true leader selects his or her team based on the needs of the project that include skill sets, work ethic and attitude. Communication is paramount to get buy in from the team members; communication of their vision of success and the role to be played by each of the members. A clear delineation of team processes such as decision-making and conflict resolution is also communicated. Everyone should play a unique role that takes maximum advantage of their talents and strengthens the team. Think of an orchestra or a sports team. Each player brings their unique talents that contribute to their overall success. The conductor or manager leads the way, sets the goals and supports the effort.

What makes a good team player? It is someone who is willing to put the visions and goals of the team ahead of their personal interests. They are willing to elevate their efforts to meet the challenges of the team and be willing to go the extra mile when necessary.

Any team is only as good as its weakest link. Winning teams are made up of people who are willing to make things happen.

There are steps that any organization can follow that will help to ensure the success of any team effort. The right people bring the right results. The right results reap rewards for the organization that go beyond the deliverables of the project. Increased productivity, employee retention and company pride are all results that can be converted into financial gain.

With the understanding that teamwork is the backbone to success, organizations should be willing to invest in the hiring and development of the right employees. There are both tangible and intangible components to these decisions. The wonderful line in Alice in Wonderland says it best, "when you don't know where you're going any road will take you there". The organization needs a vision. The vision is more than market share or quality of product; it is also the attitude with which you intend to do business. Once the vision is defined, the components of it's achievement must be defined and communicated to the entire organization. Each job function within the organization should then be aligned to the achievement of the vision. This requires the identification of skill sets, attitudes and work ethic. CriteriaOne is the process by which all of these components can be defined and documented. DISC is the process through which team dynamics can be aligned. Investment in the building of winning teams is a gift that keeps on giving. When the goals, processes, trust and relationships of an organization are clear, success will follow.

In this issue:

Book Review Enjoying Excellence	2
CEI's Preferred Providers Inscape Publishing	3
Did You Know That...	3
Advice from the Edge Rewarding Your Employees	4

CEI's Next Train the Trainer



March 3-5, 2004
Peachtree City, GA

*Coming together is a beginning,
staying together is progress, and
working together is success."*
- Henry Ford

Our next issue:

Got a question?
Need an answer?

ASK JUDY

Let Advice from the Edge know your questions and then watch for Judy's advice in future issues.

BOOK REVIEW

I had the pleasure this month of reading "**Enjoying Excellence, 30 Pearls of Wisdom**", written by Earl Suttle and John Hubbard. This is a self-help, personal growth book that is intended to help the readers develop attitudes, skills, discipline, passion and perseverance to enhance their lives. It is meant to be read in stages. The thirty pearls are meant to correlate to the thirty days in a month. Each chapter contains not only the "pearl" but also instructions for putting the "pearl" to use. The book supports the "TAP" Principle that is defined as Trust, Attitude and Action, and Passion and Perseverance.

"Take personal responsibility" is the prevailing message. This includes responsibility for your health, job performance, home life, positive parenting, and your happiness. This begins with self-evaluation. Understand what you should be thankful for. When you recognize your areas for self-improvement, reprogram your mind through visualization and then plan, plan, plan. Plan for your health, your finances, your marriage and family and your spiritual life. Learn to laugh and develop a happy attitude. Bounce back from your failures. Have faith, through good times and bad. Surround yourself with positive people, avoid toxic people and don't worry so much.

Keep yourself employable. Continue to learn. Define a narrow path. Find out what people want and aren't getting and find your special niche. Do more than you are paid to do. Take smart risks. Embrace positive change. Change occurs in attitude, behavior and level of knowledge. "Fake it until you make it". Don't be afraid to ask questions. Share your success with others. In the same vein, find mentors and build networks.

Understand that your job is not your life. Cherish your family and valued relationships. Develop hobbies and get continuous exercise. It is important to find personal motivation and to improve your mind, body and spirit. Most importantly "Never Quit". "Its not where you start - it's where you finish that counts".

When you are sitting on the plane and want a good read, pick up this book. It is published by Victory International and is available at most distributors and internet bookstores. Enjoy!

CEI's Preferred Providers

Inscape Publishing, formerly Carlson Learning Company, is the publisher of multiple self-assessment learning profiles that are available via the internet or as paper-and-pencil assessments. Two of their most popular profiles are highlighted below.

Their Time Mastery Profile helps your organization set priorities and manage time effectively. This unique tool provides people with a complete, self-directed assessment of their current time management effectiveness, and then provides a framework for developing customized strategies for skill improvement in twelve key areas: Attitudes, Goals, Priorities, Planning, Scheduling, Interruptions, Meetings, Paperwork, Delegation, Procrastination, and Teamwork.

Inscape's Discovering Diversity Profile supports diversity as a business strategy, acknowledging that organizations need to learn to work successfully with others who don't share the same background, beliefs and traditions. The Profile provides a confidential and effective way to help employees explore diversity issues through knowledge, understanding, acceptance and behavior. It helps employees discover their own "comfort levels" with differences and gain insight, take action and value diversity within a successful organization.

Detailed information about Inscape's products can be found on my website, www.competitiveedgeinc.com.

"When he took time to help the man up the mountain, lo, he scaled it himself"

- Tibetan Proverb

"If a team is to reach its potential, each player must be willing to subordinate his personal goals to the good of the team."

- Bud Wilkinson

Did You Know That...

1. In Minnesota, it is illegal to cross state lines with a duck on your head.
2. In Los Angeles, it is unlawful to hunt for moths under a street light.
3. An unmarried woman may not parachute on Sunday in Florida.
4. In Texas, it is illegal to take more than three sips of beer while standing.
5. By law, everybody in Vermont must take at least one bath a week.
6. In Kansas, it is against the law to catch fish with your bare hands.
7. In Washington state, all lollipops are banned.
8. In North Dakota, it is illegal to lie down and fall asleep with your shoes on.
9. A law in Kirkland, Illinois forbids bees from flying over the town.
10. It is illegal to carry an ice-cream cone in your pocket in Kentucky.
11. In Muncie, Indiana, it is illegal to carry fishing tackle in a cemetery.
12. In Milwaukee, residents must keep pet elephants on a leash while walking them on public streets.



ADVICE FROM THE EDGE

Rewarding Your Employees

The holidays are upon us and companies are struggling with budgets and tight purse strings as they try to determine the best way to recognize their employees. As this issue of the newsletter is focused on Teamwork, and with the understanding that much of this advice is not new, I thought I would take a few minutes to address some proven methods for motivating and rewarding your employees for a job well done. The introduction of a rewards program for 2004 in conjunction with Holiday celebrations can only bolster the morale and commitment of your employees.

Recognition is in the eyes of the beholder. So make sure that your methods of choice are things that your employees find rewarding. Rewards should be given as soon as possible after a desired goal or achievement is reached. Rewards should be given, not only to the outstanding individual, but also to the outstanding team. Let everyone on the team work toward a common goal. Publicly recognize good performance. This can be done in a team meeting or branch meeting. It can be published in the company newsletter. You can engrave a plaque or take pictures of your recipients and display them in the public areas of your workspace.

Money is always the greatest motivator in the lower tiers of your organization, but it may lose its appeal within your management structure where power is just as, if not more important than, money. Time can be very important to everyone. Give everyone on a high performing team a day off with pay. Create achievement awards that they can hang on the walls of their offices. If you choose to provide specialty items, such as tee shirts, ball caps, calendars or paperweights, make sure your company logo is prominent on the product. Take advantage of the marketing opportunity.

Three important things to remember. Don't start something you can't finish. Assign a reliable person in your organization to faithfully execute your program. Recognition is most effective when it comes from the boss. Take the time to shake hands and personally extend your heart-felt thanks. Last tip, don't forget the behind the scenes support teams who quietly make things happen.

If you are sincerely interested in rewarding your employees, please contact our office for a complementary Personal Interest Attitudes & Values Assessment to find out how you can discover your top passions.

"A group becomes a team when all members are sure enough of themselves and their contributions to praise the skill of others."

Anonymous

The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime."

Babe Ruth

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."

Andrew Carnegie