

Walk the Talk

Radio for Agile Minds

Shelley	<p>It's that time of the month when we "Walk the Talk" and welcome Nick Anderson to the studio to help us check out if we do actually "Walk our own Talk"</p> <p>Nick is Senior Partner for Professional Development Services – long time contributor to WGUV</p> <p>During many consulting engagements Nick and his colleagues identified that organizational misalignment as a major factor in organizations and individuals were not achieving goals</p> <p>This changed their focus to ground their work by aligning people's expectations first before designing learning, coaching and other work. Over the last 10 years, Nick and the PDS team developed their expertise and alignment practice with AIETM by serving companies in Canada and the US.</p> <p>Their approach has helped clients add millions in sales, bring construction projects in on time, and</p>
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	<p>successfully transition family-owned businesses.</p> <p>Each month Nick chooses a topic related to the business world in West Michigan focusing on the transitions this economy is going through</p> <p>Welcome....What has you chosen for us this month?</p>
<p>Nick</p>	<p>Well, I want to build on last month's theme. Regular listeners will remember I was talking about how many change projects were planned in response to the economy yet almost half of the respondents indicate that a significant number of change projects failed to meet their stated goals.</p> <p>In PDS Group we have learnt that anticipating and managing misalignment goes to the root of building successful change. And so my theme this month <i>Managing Alignment Challenges</i> so that you can increase the odds that the change you're planning will achieve its desired results.</p> <p>In the short time available, I want to focus on <i>people alignment</i> but recognize that alignment of resources with strategy etc. are other important components of successful change. It's a big subject. But one thing is for sure – <i>Change has to be personal before it can be organizational...</i></p>
<p>Shelley</p>	<p>In your experience what are the main points for listeners to consider in improving the odds of making a change work?</p>
<p>NICK</p>	<p>For today's program I will focus on one of three key areas:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing Conflict and Relationship Tension Subsequent programs I will cover..... 2. Managing Complexity 3. Improving Performance <p>The first is essential to recognize that there will be conflict and you have to manage it. Too often it's the 800lb Gorilla in the room. (Ummm... I am wondering who didn't give this much thought in Washington going into the last year).</p> <p>I chose the second as the need for change can seem deceptively clear yet being comfortable with complexity is something people want to avoid</p> <p>Thirdly, if you are not actively focused on improving performance...why are you changing?</p>
<p>SHELLEY</p>	<p>The last point seems obvious...why else would people want to change...?</p>
<p>NICK</p>	<p>For Example, If you are in China many changes get caught up with ensuring the leaders don't lose "face". In Corporate America, newly appointed leaders want to put their "stamp" on their tenure....there's a primal nature to new leaders that we often cloak in business school speak, like <i>"we needed a change of direction to improve the businesses performance....blah, blah, blah"</i> And, of course, then there are the two ugly</p>

	<p>sisters – Greed and Ego.</p> <p>The point about improving performance is that leaders start out pontificating about this subject yet get caught up in the first two and lose sight of Change’s central purpose.</p> <p>So, you have the Eternal Change Triangle. If you go into a change with these things in mind you have the strongest structure on which to base change. If you don’t see or manage these three you will be flying a jet without any sense of direction. It’s why PDS uses the metaphor of “<i>The Performance Flight Deck</i>”</p>
Shelley	<p>Why do you think people don’t recognize the first two’s importance?</p>
NICK	<p>In my experience, especially in this economy, too many leaders can get caught up in expediency – a compulsion “to do something” NOW!</p> <p>Back to an earlier program, this call to action that is so prevalent in our culture. Though, the strangest thing I am about to say seems to contradict myself:</p> <p><i>Despite the ubiquity of business planning education in entrepreneurship, there is little evidence that planning leads to success(Honig)</i></p>
Shelley	<p>You are going to have to unpack that one for me...and the listeners...</p>
Nick	<p>Ah! Now I have your attention.....</p> <p>On one hand, Mark Hurst on his Blog quotes Calvin</p>

Coolidge,

*Nothing in this world can take the place of **persistence**. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.*

The trouble with the Coolidge's take on success is, as Mark points out, that the effectiveness of persistence

Depends on having the right direction. Without that one little element, the entire effort is for naught.

Like the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland, a sort of feline **Clausewitz**. Alice asks which way she should go, and the Cheshire Cat answers:

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

For me that means, You have to stop and take time to find the direction. You can't run while you're reading the map.

Too many leaders focus on the end goal and not enough time on:

How are we going to get people to not only accept change but also be committed to changing?

	<p>How are we going to manage this change and keep making money?</p> <p>How are we going to manage SNAFU's (define)?</p> <p>To summarize</p> <p><i>"The general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose."</i></p> <p>-Sun Tzu, the Art of War</p>
<p>Shelley</p>	<p>Let's turn to this month's theme, what are some of the benefits in managing conflict?</p>
<p>Nick</p>	<p>Our work in aligning people on construction projects with Turner Construction, strongly suggests that there 8 benefits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helps develop a healthy attitude to managing rather than hiding conflict. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Helps objectify disagreements and prevents things getting personal 2. Reduces the distracting and destructive products from poorly handled conflict situations. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Defend Attack Spirals have destructive long lasting effects that last years 3. Helps harness diverse views and experience in

	<p>the project team for the good of the overall project and Owner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The power of accepting the “Half Baked” is an inclusive stance not poorly thought out <p>4. Helps handle change as change progresses and manages the constant flow of information between key players...e.g. Owners, consultants and contractors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plays to an earlier program, Clauswitz on not being caught up in sequential thinking – Change is not start with A, then B, then C b. Change is A learn and choose B or C or both knowing that B & C need to be accomplished c. Too many leaders have a touching reliance that they have complete knowledge <p>5. Addresses the tensions in managing the change dynamics as during the change lifecycle</p>
<p>Shelley</p>	<p>If you’re leading such a change, what are the typical examples of change dynamics?</p>
<p>Nick</p>	<p>Very often leaders have a false sense of control, and if for example they commission consultants or create teams things take on a life of their own</p> <p>Another dynamic is my sixth point...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Recognizes that as work precedes the relative bargaining strengths of the parties are constantly

adjusting. Standard approaches to planned change do not take this into account.

In more formal changes, like in construction we find that we need to help teams

7. Overcome the inflexibility inherent in standard contracts. For example, one contract assumes that the design is complete at the time of bidding and that the contractor employs most of the resources that will be required for the project. The fact is, design is rarely 100 % complete at the time of bidding and contractors subcontract most of the work.

Most importantly, aligning people as we do...

8. Develops *Project Teams* while recognizing their different rules of engagement. **AIEx™** recognizes and helps facilitate different project needs and rules of engagement, like:

- Changing Owner demands
- Rapid learning
- Generating and maintaining effective interaction between team members so that they can exchange views and debate the consequences of their decisions in an open and honest forum.
- Changing circumstances over the project's lifecycle.
- Shifting relationship tensions between the major members of the project team.
- Building trust for when things do not go as

	planned.
Shelley	Well, I am looking forward to the next two programs... How would you sum up managing conflict...?
Nick	Conflict in life is a natural as breathing. What we have lost sight of especially with the backdrop of what's happening in Washington is how do you respect another party's opposing stance and achieve successful change...I heard a item on the radio about the Life Raft Debate where the students vote which professor they would choose to take the last place on their life raft...they chose the devil's advocate....because all the others tried to entertain rather than debate
Shelley	Tip of the month
Nick	<p>If you want to follow these three programs you will find an article "Eternal Triangle" in the resources section at pdsgrp.net/resources where you will see a summary of what I have covered today.</p> <p>Here's my tip.</p> <p>If you are planning a change or are in the middle of one.....how many times last week did you not confront your demons and openly say</p> <p>"The Emperor has no clothes....."</p> <p>It's OK to confront the issues not the person if you</p>

	<p>don't unaddressed conflict will fester like road kill.</p> <p>Then, stand back and look at your own organization – and ask “What traps are we falling into?”</p>
Shelley	Contact details
Nick	Blog – pdsgroup.wordpress.com – WTT – A blog for agile minds

The following are designed to stimulate questions to help focus management discussions on improving sales people's behavioral alignment with corporate strategy as it relates to winning more profitable business.

Predictability - What have you learned about your competition today? – And not used?

Changing Customer Values - What do your customers say about you? – And no one hears them?

Enabling - Who helps sellers sell and develop their competence? – And don't understand their role of supporting the sales process?

Matching Expectations - What expectations need to be realigned to win more profitable business?

Distractions - What's distracting you from fulfilling those expectations? – And whose driving on those distractions?

Competitively slow - What's slowing you down in your competitive cycle? – And gives your competitors time to respond?

Role Alignment - How well do managers and others understand their roles? – And not invest the right time developing the right relationships?

Rebalancing Priorities – Who needs to be influenced to take things “off people’s plates” and align goals with the behavior changes needed?

Sales Coaching - How are you going to build greater commitment to coaching sales and competencies simultaneously?

Coaching Cascade – Who is going to establish the Coaching Cascade from Senior Management to Sales Reps?

Evidence-Based Coaching - How clear are people on the evidences they need to see in people’s behavior to build greater success?

Removing Road Blocks - How are you going to take “things off people’s plates?”

Focusing Competencies – How will you focus sales and sales management competency development to only those behaviors that are competitively distinctive? How will you engage managers in becoming more outcome and evidence based in their coaching?

Think, Do, Fix – How are you going to install this injection of momentum and intensity?