



ATTAINÉ
PERFORMANCE
CORPORATION

MAXIMIZING RESULTS

A SNAPSHOT OF IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR STRATEGIC LEADERS

Based on the advisory work of David Seregow, Ed. D.

Attaine Performance Corporation: www.attaine.com

TEN WAYS TO DRIVE OUT FEAR

“No passion so effectively robs the mind of all its power of acting and reasoning as fear.”

Edmond Burke

Each new year I focus the first edition of *Maximizing Results* on a critical business issue that I have regularly confronted during the previous year. The issue for last year was the fear of communicating openly and candidly.

As the world’s foremost management thought leader, **Peter Drucker argues that fear generates hostility toward innovation, produces resistance to change, and is incompatible with knowledge work.** (Peter Drucker - *Shaping the Management Mind*, 1999)

Fear of communicating openly and candidly—and the accompanying anxiety and doubt—develops in an organization when, for a variety of reasons, employees’ attempts to be open, creative, candid, and authentic are ignored or discouraged. Sometimes, open communication attempts are even punished. In all these cases, employees quickly learn that conformity is the key to job tenure.

I suppose that the current difficult business climate can take some of the blame for the heightened levels of fear confronting us, but a fear of the consequences of

TEN WAYS TO DRIVE OUT FEAR

1 of 3

© Copyright 2004 | David Seregow, Ed. D. | All Rights Reserved

Attaine Performance Corporation www.attaine.com

We encourage the sharing and forwarding of Maximizing Results if copyright and attribution are always included.



ATTAINÉ
PERFORMANCE
CORPORATION

frank communication seems to be a staple of corporate culture, even in the best of times. **A key goal of every organization should be to drive out all fear.**

A DISTORTED REALITY

An accurate view of reality is vital to organizational success. The free flow of information essential to accurately defining the current business reality is hindered or, even worse, totally blocked when employees are afraid to communicate candidly. As a result, clarity about what does and does not work, the effective use of resources, potential risks, and potential opportunities is never fully realized.

Several vivid memories come to my mind from last year. A number of very talented people held back information that could have significantly improved their organization's performance or prevented the wasting of limited resources. Unfortunately, they knew that articulating their unpopular, yet accurate, view of reality would have resulted in retribution.

When organizations have a distorted view of reality, remaining competitive and, in some cases, even staying in business becomes a truly daunting task.

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

Research clearly supports the connection between open, candid communication and a company's bottom line. The Gallup Organization conducted a survey of workplace practices over a period of twenty-five years with an astounding 105,000 employees from 2500 business units responding. The results show a relationship between the valuing of employees' opinions and employee retention, productivity, and profitability. (First, Break All the Rules, 1999) In another study of workplace practices, Fitz-enz found that of the 1,000 companies studied, the most successful had an extraordinary concern for constant and extensive two-way communication. **Open, candid communication is a bottom-line issue.** (The 8 Practices of Exceptional Companies, 1997)

TEN WAYS TO DRIVE OUT FEAR

2 of 3

© Copyright 2004 | David Seregow, Ed. D. | All Rights Reserved
Attaine Performance Corporation www.attaine.com

We encourage the sharing and forwarding of Maximizing Results if
copyright and attribution are always included.



ATTAINÉ
PERFORMANCE
CORPORATION

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF CONSTRUCTIVELY DIVERGENT VIEWS

Consensus for consensus sake is harmful to an otherwise successful organization. To attain sustained peak performance and maintain competitive advantage, there must be a healthy discourse of constructive, divergent views. Here are some ways to accomplish this:

1. Inform everyone in the organization that constructive disagreement is not only healthy but encouraged. Ensure that all levels of management, especially senior management, model this viewpoint.
2. Treat all constructive viewpoints with respect and never view any thoughtful question as unworthy of a thoughtful response.
3. Focus discussions on what's right and not who's right.
4. Offer training in such skills as holding difficult conversations, active listening, managing conflict, creativity and innovation, critical thinking, and so forth.
5. Listen, listen, listen.
6. Never attack the messenger.
7. Include communication issues in the yearly review process.
8. Regularly challenge assumptions.
9. Recognize and reward innovative ideas and solutions.
10. Never allow the achievement of financial goals to be at the expense of company values.

Best wishes for a more open and candid year!

TEN WAYS TO DRIVE OUT FEAR

3 of 3

© Copyright 2004 | David Seregow, Ed. D. | All Rights Reserved
Attaine Performance Corporation www.attaine.com
We encourage the sharing and forwarding of Maximizing Results if
copyright and attribution are always included.