



Integrating the Needs of CEOs with Training Initiatives

Every year there are studies conducted that explore the challenges and needs of CEOs around the world. And while changing economic conditions and accelerating technology have shifted their focus in recent years, CEOs still focus on the same objectives: sales and profit. Even nonprofit organizations have the same goals, although the language may be different (fundraising and cost control).

The eight strategies to achieve these goals identified in these studies are (1) Excellence in Execution; (2) Customer Acquisition & Loyalty; (3) Increased Productivity; (4) Flexibility & Adaptability to Change; (5) Innovation, Creativity & Problem-Solving; (6) Employee/Team Integration; (7) Employee Engagement and (8) Open, Positive Communication.

Therefore, it's imperative that training initiatives are aligned toward these objectives. The following provides some suggestions to help accomplish this goal.

Excellence in Execution

It is the role of CEOs to create plans, but even the best laid plans aren't worth the paper they're printed on if there isn't excellent, if not flawless, execution throughout the organization. This means that not only does everyone know how to perform their specific jobs, but also that the jobs are a good fit for each individual, both of which are a crucial role of training. Beyond that, however, comes the real challenge: how to involve employees to come up ideas and solutions for higher levels of execution? A CEO can't possibly know how to do everyone's jobs better – only the people doing the jobs can! What programs can you put in place to challenge each individual in the organization, from the bottom up, to improve quality, delivery and productivity?

Increased Productivity

Productivity is the merger of efficiency with accomplishment, and the relationship of effort to reward. In today's world of "more with less," maximizing productivity is even more imperative. One solution is to improve processes, which training can help execute. And, of course, as mentioned above, engaging employees in the process is also beneficial. However, another vital, yet often overlooked need is stress reduction. Without the release of tension through fun, yet productive activities, employees will burn out, which results in a significant reduction in productivity.

Customer Acquisition & Loyalty

No company can stay in business without customers (or, in the case of nonprofits, benefactors). Which explains why sales training will always be a viable investment,



especially when segmented into these two categories: skills for acquiring new customers and solutions for offering exemplary service in order to build long-term customer loyalty.

However, the most successful companies go a step further and embrace the mantra, “Everybody sells.” They engage every employee, from the mail room to the board room, from finance to supply chain, to recognize their role in the company’s sales process. In addition, everyone can (and should) be trained to improve their sales skills within the organization. Some of the most ingenious new product ideas in history have come from people in obscure positions in a company, but they wouldn’t have seen the light of day if these people hadn’t had the ability to “sell” others to take a chance on their ideas.

Flexibility & Adaptability to Change

Change can come in any number of forms. Companies can be going through large-scale changes like reorganization, mergers, or acquisitions, they can be launching new policies, products or processes, or there can be the introduction of new employees/management.

Sweeping changes require a full-scale integration solution. New teams need to go through the stages of team development to reach high performance as quickly as possible. Training programs that identify and solve the barriers to success and create and take action on these plans is extremely helpful.

When new managers are hired, they are challenged to “hit the ground running” to achieve results right away. Companies can no longer afford a six month or longer assimilation process. Therefore, training can help with programs that quickly build trust, build plans and unify the new team toward reaching their goals.

New policies or processes require a lot of training, not only in the traditional way of teaching the application, but also in making sure the new process is accepted by the workers in advance. In addition, new product launches can also create challenges – and opportunities – for training.

Innovation, Creativity & Problem-Solving

Innovation is more important now than ever before. Without it, companies risk losing sales and market share to competition. 3M, a historical leader in innovation, draws 25% of their sales from products released in the past five years, which begs the question: What % of your company's sales in five years will come from products you're not selling today? The next question, of course, is: Where are the ideas for new products, services and programs going to come from? And how can Training help?



Many companies are embracing a strategy of Innovation at All Levels. To accomplish this goal, Training can offer programs that help employees generate ideas for new products and services, classes to stimulate creative problem-solving, solutions to improve decision-making, and, perhaps most importantly, programs to maximize employee engagement to ensure successful implementation of new product initiatives.

Employee/Team Integration

As discussed above, change initiatives require training-related solutions for team integration. When each new employee starts his or her job there needs to be a comprehensive orientation that goes beyond learning where the bathrooms are and signing forms. New employees are hired because of their experience and skills. Therefore, Training should provide ways for new employees to communicate their ideas, build relationships within their immediate and cross-functional teams, and share their learning from previous positions.

Employee Engagement

Engagement is one of today's employee development buzzwords. But what does it mean, and how do you get it? Engagement is created by two factors: ownership and performance, both of which can be delivered by training programs. Ownership comes from people feeling like they're part of the solution, that their suggestions are valued and that they are empowered to take action on their ideas. Performance is indicated by the ability to understand the sources of dissention and embracing diversity of thought through honest, respectful communication. Training can help with both by integrating brainstorming, team development and a bottom-up "Social Learning" approach into the company's initiatives.

Open, Positive Communication

All CEOs know that dissention and conflict can be extremely destructive for a corporate culture. However, many may not realize that the lack of recognizable disputes does not necessarily indicate that they have optimal communication. Instead, it could be a sign of "active disengagement" where people have given up, or there could be a culture of too much formality which limits the sharing of new ideas. The solution is to offer programs to open up dialog and encourage the sharing of divergent points of view.

To download a free copy of an activity to explore these eight goals with management, go to <http://drawsuccess.com/resources/free-management-goals-activity/>

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