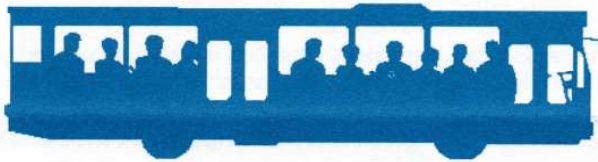


Follow-up

JANE DURANT

5 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH PEOPLE

Getting on the Same Bus



(a team is not enough)

We spend a great deal of time talking about teamwork. As we move into the 21st century, it has become increasingly obvious that some of the old ways don't work too well. However, it is really important that we don't throw the baby out with the bath water. "We have always done it this way" is not a totally useless concept. As someone said, if we don't learn the lessons from history we will be forced to repeat them.

We can work towards being effective team members. Any team worth its salt has to know where it's going and have some ideas of how it is going to get there. All too frequently, however, we launch into well-meaning team-building exercises with little idea of "Where we

are and whither we are tending," as Abraham Lincoln postulated.

So which comes first, getting the group to "team" or deciding where we are going and then which bus to take?

In typical chicken and egg lingo, there really is no right answer, but one found to work is to get everyone on the bus and then decide where to go. Why this way round? By and large, our ability to effectively communicate with each other at anything more than a superficial level seems to be consistently appalling. To develop a mission statement and list of goals by consensus so that we are all going to the same destination takes a level of comfort in communicating with each other which needs a conscious awareness of our intrinsic shortcomings.

By working on team roles, relationships, building trust and understanding of others, we may open up our ability to speak up and out for what we want, need and believe is important. Through working on the perceptions we hold about each other in a supportive but challeng-

ing way, we can enhance our ability to take a look at which bus would be worthwhile getting on, let alone whether the destination would be fine, too.

Mission statements are, like team-building, somewhat topical. But if we don't know where we are going, we won't know whether we got there, will we? Does it make a difference? Joel Barker, in the "Business of Paradigms," reminds us of what happened to the Swiss watch manufacturing industry in the late sixties when they failed to see the importance of their own invention, the quartz movement watch—they left open the opportunity for other nations to become major players in this market.

We have only to look around many of the traditionally successful organizations of the world to see what can happen when we don't make the effort to view the future and adjust our concepts to the new reality. Fine, you say, they should . . . but me? I'm far too busy.

Life is too short to plan. You say, "I live for today, who cares about tomorrow?"

MISSION →

Experts tell us that if we write down goals we have a 60% chance of realizing them. And if we visualize achieving

them, then this percentage increases. But it is easier for a while not to plan. Sometimes, we may even fear success, so why plan for it?

Alice asked the Cheshire Cat "Can you tell me please, which way I ought to go?" The cat replied, "That depends on where you want to end up."

So how do we decide where we're going and which bus to take?

See "Bus" on next page

Bus to Mission *(Continued from page 1)*

Developing a mission statement is a challenging and time-consuming process, which to be effective requires everyone's full involvement. A mission statement is essentially a rallying call which defines our purpose, our reason for being. Using it as a base, we can establish guiding principles, objectives, goals, and eventually action plans. Guiding principles are the true north compass direction we travel in—they come from our values, which are the foundation for our organization's business and ourselves.

From this foundation, goals and objectives can be developed—they may be short- or long-term, but they always indicate what the end result to be achieved looks like, by when and by whom. Like any standard, it is critical that they are achievable and measurable, and to be effective each must contain a list of tasks or action plans.

The above process works at an individual level as well as with your work group.



My belief is that if you can do it for one you can do it for the other. To convince yourself, you may find it easier to take yourself first. A number of people who attend my "Career Change—Jump off the Diving Board" workshop have realized they need to start with themselves.

But just suppose, you decide to start this in your work environment and then follow a similar process. One word of caution: behaviour is difficult to change. If the way we've always done it isn't working too well and you feel it is important, it will probably take you at least a couple years to change yourself and your associates' way of looking at things.

Also, remember that not everything from the past is ineffective. Take the time to realize that there are lessons from the past that needed to be learned. Don't merely make the exercise one of stirring furiously the water in a bucket, at the end of which we are all still floating or sinking as we were before. New ways can be trying, but they can also be worthwhile.

Woops, need to go, my team is calling me. Our bus is leaving for Mission . . .