



MIKE DESJARDINS

Beliefs and behaviours drive corporate success and failure

Hidden within the fabric of your organization lies a set of beliefs, behaviours and values that forms the basis of your culture.

Although values rarely need to be changed, if you're interested in shifting toward a culture where successful execution of your strategic plan is the norm, the beliefs and behaviours that are getting in the way of action and accountability *do* need to change.

Since behaviours are essentially beliefs turn into action, shifting the culture of your organization starts first with uncovering and challenging the assumptions that drive the beliefs and behaviours that are inconsistent with action and accountability and then ensuring that rewards (and I'm using "rewards" in the liberal sense of the word to include both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards – praise, raise, bonuses, promotion, etc.) are linked to specific performance.

Here are five questions that senior teams can ask themselves to start to uncover the hidden truths in their business to build a culture of getting things done.

What one behaviour do

we, as the senior team, need to start modelling that will dramatically improve the behaviour of everyone else in the company? Few people look down the organizational chart for cues to model their behaviour as a leader; most everyone looks up or side-to-side. Behavioural change within an organiza-

Don't underestimate the impact that even the smallest change in leadership behaviour can make on your entire organization

tion is most successful when it starts at the top.

Don't underestimate the impact that even the smallest change in leadership behaviour can make on your entire organization.

What company-wide assumptions and beliefs have shaped what our organization looks like today? Shared beliefs are a large part of making sure everyone is

on the same page, aligned and moving in the same direction. The trouble comes when we fail to stop to examine whether these beliefs are still true.

Take a long hard look at what you may be doing regularly simply because that's the way "we've always done it." Challenging assumptions that run so deep that they have become the core beliefs that underpin how you run your business day to day will likely uncover some hidden truths that are roadblocks to growth.

What do we need to start believing, in order to guide the desired behaviours going forward?

These new beliefs will shape the attitude and behaviours that will be adopted by the senior team and trickled down through the organization, to guide a new culture of getting things done.

How can we link performance to rewards? The foundation of changing behaviour is linking rewards to performance and making the links transparent.

This tells people what's valued and what they should focus on. If you reward and promote people for ex-

ecution, your culture will change.

What kind of people are we looking for? Have you ever noticed that when you have a critical, time-sensitive, core objective that you need to delegate, there are a few people in your organization that you turn to every time?

Take note of what it is about those few key people – the people that get things done – and make sure you

include their core attributes and strengths in your hiring criteria.

There's no better time than now to take an honest look at what's really happening in your company.

Understanding how unchallenged assumptions and shared beliefs are contributing to the behaviours that are holding your company back from really getting things done is the first step in cre-

ating a culture that sees consistent growth and achievement. ■

Mike Desjardins is the CEO at ViRTUS (www.virtusinc.com), an organizational development consulting firm with expertise in strategic planning and implementation, leadership development, change management and succession planning for medium to large organizations.

UBC/SMEI Diploma Program in Marketing & Sales Management

Outstanding curriculum • Acclaimed faculty • Industry recognition

Canada's most advanced training program for sales and marketing professionals offers a three-year curriculum leading to the prestigious UBC Diploma in Marketing and Sales Management, with the option to become a Certified Sales Executive and/or Certified Marketing Executive. Program starts September through March. Classes meet Monday evenings.

For more information, call 604.266.0090 or download a program brochure at: www.smeivancouver.org

Registration closes on August 25, 2010. Online applications accepted. Act now – enrollment is limited.



Opening Worlds