

Trade or Train

In the past few weeks we have heard a lot about the sports teams of Toronto. Will the Maple Leafs be trading for new players in their stretch run for the playoffs? The Raptors have recently changed their line-up as result of trades. How about those Blue Jays! The Jays just opened spring training in Dunedin, Florida. Showing up at camp were a number of new players. The list included top notch pitchers; heavy hitters and a strong experienced catcher.

Why did these professional teams make these changes? I believe the key motivation was the desire to reach an objective. For the Raptors, perhaps it was the outside chance to make it to the NBA playoffs. For the Maple Leafs it was perhaps the desire to once again capture Lord Stanley's mug. The Blue Jays are no doubt looking to recapture the glory of 1992 and 1993 and win another World Series.

Ok, you say, so what does all this have to do with my business? Just like these sports franchises your business has set targets and objectives for the year. We are now anywhere from $\frac{1}{4}$ through your fiscal year to perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$ way, depending on your fiscal operating period. You have put together your team and are working on your strategic objectives. The key question to ask, to quote a popular talk show host is; "How's that working for you?"

This should be much more than a rhetorical question if you are truly serious about success in your business. Now is the time to take a hard look at where you started from and where you are right now. If the result of this examination shows you are not on track to at least achieve your minimum objectives, you have some serious decisions to make.

It is necessary to take a good look at the members on your team. Are they the people you need to move forward? Do you have the right people in the right seats on your bus ride to success? Do the team members have the knowledge and skills required to perform at the level expected?

Should the answer to any of these questions be a resounding NO; you have reached the trade or train scenario. Unlike sports teams, companies do not have a draft or a trading conference to exchange talent. What you do have is the opportunity to honestly evaluate the best interests of the organization and your staff. Perhaps it is time to Part Company in the best interest of all involved. In other words to "trade".

Another scenario occurs when the individual possesses the attributes required to be successful. In this situation you may wish to consider the option to "train". As mentioned in a previous article, consider whether they have been given a lot of information on the "what to do" and "how to do it" but little information on "why to do it". In this case what is needed is more training or explanation of why the task is being performed, to motivate the individual.

Examining the individuals in a vacuum does not present the full picture. How does each member interact with the other members of your team? Have your performance measures been established such as to reward only the end result? If this is the case your team may well be working against each other to achieve the rewards you offer.

Asking these questions of your organization is never easy. In fact, the easier road to take is to stick with the status quo. Unfortunately, if this is your choice you will fulfill a now famous quote by Albert Einstein: “If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.”

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