

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS: THE KEY TO MAINTAINING QUALITY TEAMS

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Summary

This paper will show managers and executives how to individualize the way they motivate each of their employees so that employees and team members will be happier in their job, healthier, more productive and more willing to implement quality programs.

Research shows that all employees can do well on teams and in the workplace if they are managed and motivated according to their needs (Kahler, 2000, Gilbert 2004). Dr. Taibi Kahler, an internationally acclaimed psychologist, has shown that the key to forming positive relationships with employees and fellow team members is to help them get their motivational needs met positively and to use an Individualistic Management Style to manage them. (Kahler, 1982). A working knowledge of the concepts of Process Communication enables managers to understand how to motivate each of their employees so that they can address the motivational needs of each type every day.

Keywords

Behavior, communication, distress, Gallup, interaction style, management, management style, mismanagement, motivation, personality, personality type, process communication, psychological needs, quality, relationships, Taibi Kahler.

Text

Dr. Taibi Kahler, an internationally acclaimed clinical psychologist, has shown that the key to forming positive relationships with employees and fellow team members is to help them get their motivational needs met positively and to use an Individualistic Style to manage them. (Kahler, 1982). Dr. Kahler's Process Communication Model® describes the characteristics of six distinct personality types based on how they take in and process information and the world around them. He also identified the preferred management or interaction style of each type, their preferred mode of communicating and their motivational needs. The model also describes what each of the types will do when in distress and provides both proactive and reactive antidotes for dealing with them.

Dr. Kahler called the six personality types Reactors, Workaholics, Persisters, Dreamers, Rebels and Promoters. Figure 1 lists the characteristics and motivational needs of each of the types.

Figure 1

TYPE	CHARACTER STRENGTHS	PERCEPTION	NEEDS	2° Distress
Reactor (Feeler)	Compassionate, Sensitive, Warm 30% (75% F, 25% M)	Emotions (Feelings)	Recognition of Person Sensory	Makes Mistakes
Workaholic (Thinker)	Responsible, Logical, Organized 25% (75% M, 25% F)	Thoughts	Recognition for Work Time Structure	Over controls
Persister (Believer)	Conscientious, Dedicated, Observant 10% (75% M, 25% F)	Opinions	Recognition for Work Conviction	Crusades
Dreamer (Dreamer)	Reflective, Imaginative, Calm 10% (60% F, 40% M)	Inactions (Reflections)	Solitude, Clear Directions	Shuts Down Waits
Rebel (Funster)	Spontaneous, Creative, Playful 20% (60% F, 40% M)	Reactions (Likes & Dislikes)	Playful Contact	Blames
Promoter (Doer)	Resourceful, Adaptable, Charming 5% (60% M, 40% F)	Actions	Incidence, Action	Manipulates

Although everyone is strongest in one of these six personality types, everyone has parts of all six in them. Dr. Kahler describes this as a six-floor condominium in which some floors are more fully developed than others. Research shows that most adults can access two or three of their parts fairly easily. Most children can access only one or two of their parts. (Kahler, 1996). Because each of the types perceives the world differently and is motivated differently, employees who are like their managers tend to do well on teams led by those managers. Conversely, those who are not like their managers may have difficulty. Many managers have Workaholic and Persister as their most well developed parts. Consequently these are the employees who perform well on teams run

by Workaholics and Persisters. Rebels, Dreamers and Promoters sometimes have difficulty with Workaholic and Persister managers because of miscommunication between them and their managers. Frequently they end up quitting or being fired for insubordination and for a poor attitude. (Gilbert, 2004). It is no one's fault. Everyone is doing the best they can with what they have available to them at the time. The managers are doing the best they can and so are the employees. That raises the question, how can everyone do better?

Research shows that employees of all six types can do well on teams and in the workplace when they are managed and motivated according to their needs (Kahler, 2000). A working knowledge of the concepts of Process Communication enables managers to understand how to motivate each of their employees so that they can address the motivational needs of each type every day. To do so, managers can ask themselves the following questions.

1. How can I provide personal recognition for the Reactor?
2. How can I give recognition for work and provide time structure for the Workaholic?
3. How can I ensure that the task is meaningful for the Persister?
4. How can I provide reflection time, space and structure for the Dreamer?
5. How can I ensure that the task is fun for the Rebel?
6. How can I incorporate action and excitement for the Promoter?

If managers will do this, employee motivation and job performance will improve and they will stop their negative behaviors. This will allow managers to spend more time focusing on goals and less time putting out fires. Savage, in 1991, said, “Learners who get their needs met in school, seldom cause trouble, because doing something that interferes with getting a need met is not in their self interest.” (Savage, 1991) Although Savage was talking about students in the classroom, his comments are equally applicable in the workplace. Dr. Jonathan Knaupp, a professor at Arizona State University, said, “We can give employees what they deserve or what they need. If we give them what they need, they will deserve more.” (Knaupp, 1990) This is the key to establishing relationships and to the success of every employee – helping them get their motivational needs met every day.

In an article in “The Scientist: The Magazine of the Life Sciences”, Cepheid CEO John Bishop says that he keeps a list of the personality structures of his employees on his desk and he holds the list more dear than anything else in his office. He explains that by knowing how individuals in his staff approach the world, he can best communicate with them. He has learned that if he knows how his staff thinks, he can both understand the motivations for their recommendations as well as communicate his positions to them in the most likely way to get them to respond. He uses this knowledge to achieve his goals of high quality products, positive cash flow and an increase in revenue from \$85 million to \$100 million per year. (Wilan, 2007.) Larry Adams, the former president of Martin Marietta Corporation found the concepts of Process Communication very useful and told the authors that “the concepts complement the concepts of Total Quality beautifully”.

In their book “First Break All The Rules”, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, described the results of extensive interviewing done by The Gallup organization to determine the effectiveness of a workplace. They found that if employees answered the following twelve questions positively, they worked for an effective manager in an effective organization. The questions are:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials necessary to do a good job?
3. At work do have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last seven days have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does my supervisor or someone at work seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
7. At work do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my coworkers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
12. This last year have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

All of these questions can be related to the needs of the six personality types. For example, Question 7, “At work do my opinions seem to count?” clearly refers to the conviction need of the Persister. Question 4, “In the last seven days have I received

recognition or praise for doing good work?” refers to the Recognition of Work need of the Workaholic and Persister. “Do I have a best friend at work?” refers to the Recognition of Person need of the Reactor. “At work do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?” refers to the strengths of each of the six types. For example, for the Rebel it might mean be creative and have fun. For the Promoter it might mean lead, sell, or be involved in challenging or exciting projects. For the Reactor it might mean use their excellent interpersonal skills or show concern for other people. For the Dreamer it might mean be reflective, conceptualize ideas, and work alone. For the Workaholic it might mean analyze data or work with numbers. For the Persister it might mean work on a project that is important, will have impact or is challenging. Helping employees get their needs met positively greatly improves their job satisfaction, their desire to produce quality work and their willingness to adjust to new ideas. (Kahler, 2000).

In his book, “The Mastery of Management”, Dr. Kahler explains how each of the 6 types prefers to be managed and describes what each of the six types will do when their needs are not met positively. Workaholics and Persisters are most productive when their supervisors use a democratic management style in which they participate in setting team goals and the paths chosen to achieve them. Reactors consider their co-workers part of their extended family and are most productive in an environment in which everyone is nurtured as if they were members of one big happy family. Rebels are most productive when their manager uses a Laissez Faire management style in which they are encouraged to use their creativity in finding innovative solutions to problems with a minimum of

direction and supervision. Dreamers respond well to an Autocratic Style in which they are told to do one thing at a time and are left alone to accomplish it. Promoters also respond well to an Autocratic style. Tell them the goal and the quick reward they will get for achieving it, and then get out of their way. (Kahler, T. 2000) Managing everyone the same is not managing them equally. Neither is it treating them fairly.

One of the authors had a Dreamer secretary who was not getting any work done. She needed direction and she needed help prioritizing the many tasks she needed to perform each day. The author did not realize this and so the secretary sat at her desk in severe distress all day. After learning of the Dreamer's needs, the author used an autocratic management style with her, helped her prioritize her duties each day, and made certain that she was able to get several periods of alone time each day. Immediately, the secretary showed what great secretarial skills she had. All of her tasks were done every day and the office ran very efficiently and effectively. The author learned a great lesson. Take advantage of people's strengths and do whatever is necessary to help them work around their shortcomings.

When team leaders and managers do not individualize the way they interact with their colleagues and employees and do not motivate each according to her or his needs, the employees may show signs of distress that are predictable and observable. Managers who know the warning signs to look for and recognize the significance of the distress behaviors when they see them, can quickly intervene to re-motivate the employee.

When Reactors are mismanaged they tend to make mistakes resulting in the team having to do extra work or do tasks over. When Rebels are mismanaged they tend to miss deadlines, withhold information or sabotage the project in some way , resulting in

the team getting behind schedule and missing production deadlines. When Promoters are mismanaged they tend to create negative drama within the team, resulting in team members distrusting each other and reducing the willingness of team members to cooperate with each other. When Dreamers are mismanaged they tend to shut down and are unable to focus on the tasks at hand, resulting in other members of the team having to do more than their share of the work. This frequently upsets team harmony and results in some team members getting angry because not all team members are doing “their share”. (Kahler, T. 2000)

When Workaholics are mismanaged they tend to take on more and more work themselves because they can do it better, faster and more efficiently than anyone else. This frequently results in their taking on so much that they cannot do it all well and ends in team members deciding not to put a lot of effort into the project because other team members are going to change things anyway. Frequently this results in team members not doing their best work and reduces the quality of the final product. When Persisters are mismanaged they insist that everything be done their way and if other team members refuse to comply with their ideas, may cease to be team players and subconsciously may work to destroy the morale of the team (Kahler, 2000). None of these things will happen if managers will ensure that their employees get their motivational needs met every day.

Conclusion

The key to successfully implementing quality programs is for managers to ensure that they individualize the way they manage each employee, i.e. that they use the style

with each employee that the employee responds to best. Managers must also strive to help each employee get their motivational needs met positively every day, if possible, but at least weekly. When managers do this, their employees are happier, healthier and more productive and are more willing to work hard to accomplish the goals of the team. In addition, the mistakes, sabotage, and missed deadlines that interfere with producing quality products, disappear or are greatly reduced. Indeed, when employees display the behaviors listed in the negative behaviors column in figure 1, they are sending their managers a message that they are being mismanaged. Managers who heed this message and individualize the way they motivate their employees are the most effective managers. When each person is motivated according to her or his needs, team members will be more willing to implement quality processes, teams will function more efficiently and products will be of much higher quality (Kahler, 2000).

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