

Encouraging Growth for the New Year

It's a New Year, and you know what that means! Time to make your New Year's resolutions -- and really try to keep them!

Statistics show that:

- 25% of all New Year's resolutions are abandoned in the first 15 weeks.
- the average person will make the same resolution an average of 10 times.
- those who manage to make a resolution that lasts for 6 months or more have often tried 5 or 6 times before finally succeeding.

So if you're planning on making your resolution successful, remember the three most important elements: Goals, Goals, Goals!

I encourage you to set goals for yourself and your organization that will spur success in the coming year. We've focused this month's newsletter on organizational development, on the importance of implementing agendas that are both fiscally responsible and that align the interests of management and non-management personnel. See the article on page 2 for an example of how to work this to your advantage.

Part of this alignment process includes placing an effort on establishing employee development. The article on page 3 explains how to encourage your employees to learn new skills, to gain new experiences and more knowledge. Presenting them with a growth opportunity is an investment in your organization that could dramatically increase employee retention and, more important, employee production.

I hope you and yours enjoyed the holidays, and that you look forward to a successful and productive New Year.

Please remember to forward newsworthy articles or ideas for future editions. Feedback and article ideas can be emailed to newsletter@flowork.com at anytime to be evaluated for placement in the next suitable edition.

John-Paul Hatala, Ph.D., Flowork Founder



This month's FlowTIP:
*Know your networking
comfort level.*
See page 2 for more information.

What's New?

Let the 2009 Conference Year Begin

2009 looks to be an incredibly busy conference year. Dr. Hatala will be participating in a number of conferences throughout North America. You can check the 'What's New' section at www.flowork.com to see upcoming presentations. If you happen to be at a conference where Dr. Hatala will be presenting, please make sure to say hi.

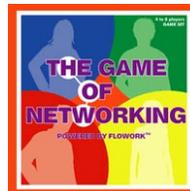


Sign-up for Flowork Certification Training Today!

January 2009 will bring a Flowork Certification Training session to Toronto, Ontario. Included in the 2 day training will be social

network management and strategic job search management. The dates for the sessions will be January 28th and 29th. If you or someone you know is interested in attending, visit our site at www.socialnetworkaudit.com/about_flowork_certification.php to register. There are only a few seats remaining, so make sure you register now so you're not disappointed!

The Game of Networking: The Board Game



Have you ordered your copy of the *Game of Networking: The Board Game* yet? There are plenty of boxes still available, so if you don't have yours yet, be sure to stop by the game site, www.gameofnetworking.com, to get yours now!

Managing the Organizational Agenda: Implementing Successful OD Interventions

The obvious key to any successful Organizational Development/ Human Resources (OD/HR) initiative is addressing the organizational agenda. Aligning strategic direction with organizational development and learning initiatives is paramount to successfully implementing an intervention that can effect change.

Although this is obviously critical, what many OD/HR practitioners fail to realize is that individual organizational member agendas are just as critical to the success of the intervention. Because there is a natural tension between management and employees, it is critical to uncover both agendas in order to successfully implement your solution.

But how do we uncover hidden agendas?

"The organizational agenda should be transparent, although experience has taught me that this is not always necessarily the case," says Dr. JP Hatala, Floworks founder. "It is important that the vision, mission, goals and values have been communicated." If not, he says, a communication strategy should be developed to get the word out.

Another way to do this is by aligning these elements to OD/HR initiatives. Take a training program, for example. It is imperative that the content and desired outcomes be aligned with the direction of the organization. This can be included in the actual

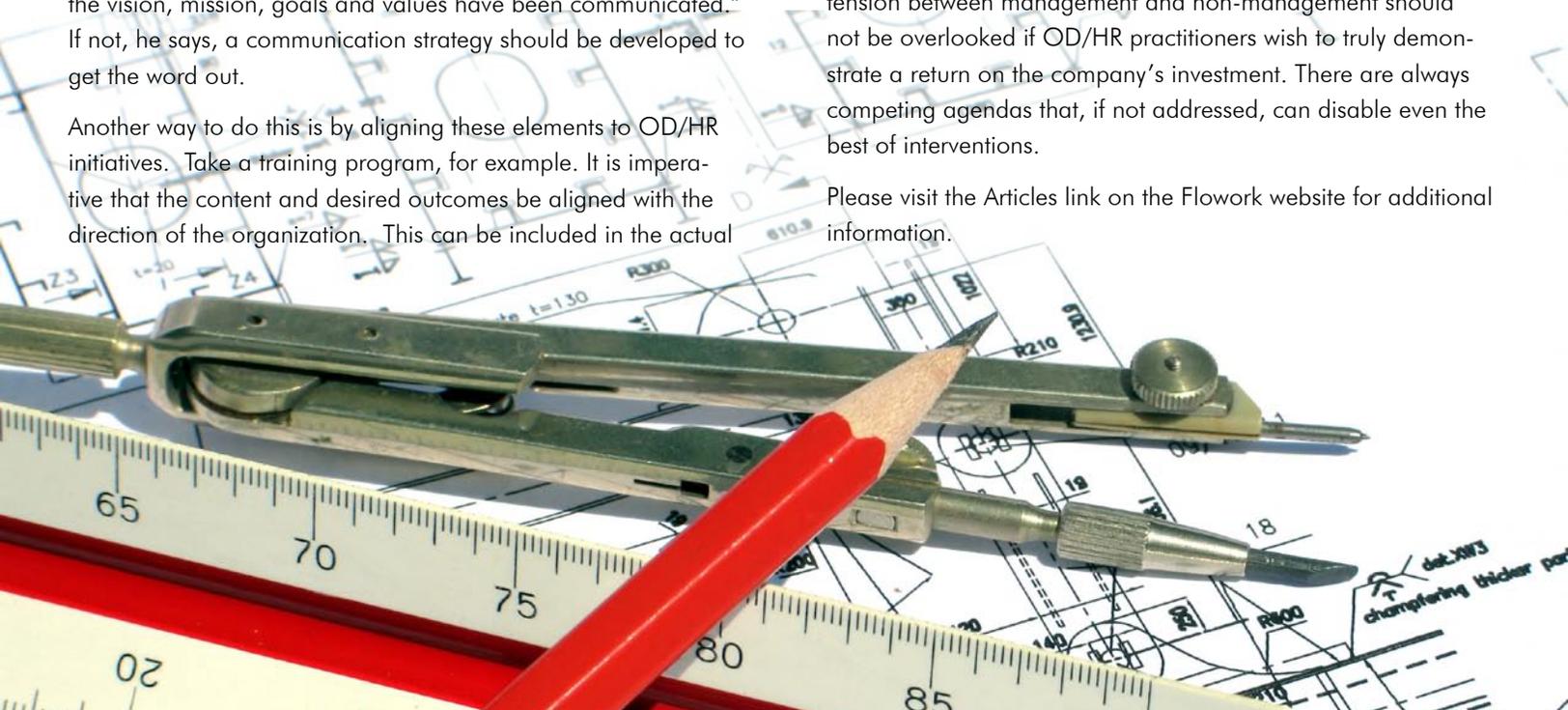
training content and reviewed throughout the program. The learning output should be aligned to the organizational direction, therefore increasing the likelihood the new learning will be transferred back to the job.

"If you want to make sure that non-management agendas are dealt with, include them in the planning process," continues Dr. Hatala. "My research has shown that by including non-management in the strategic discussions and design elements of the OD/HR initiative increases buy-in for all individuals."

The next time a participant is negative in a training situation, their frustration will be directed not only at the organization, but their colleagues as well. They were, after all, part of the implementation process. The best thing an OD/HR practitioner can do is leverage the individuals involved in the intervention.

Although this is only one example, the point of alleviating the tension between management and non-management should not be overlooked if OD/HR practitioners wish to truly demonstrate a return on the company's investment. There are always competing agendas that, if not addressed, can disable even the best of interventions.

Please visit the Articles link on the Flowork website for additional information.



This Month's flowTIP:

Know your networking comfort level. When it comes to networking, we all have our comfort level. If we're not comfortable connecting with people that are referred to us, we need to step back and think about developing a connection strategy prior to approaching the individual. By creating a connection strategy it will help determine what you are going to say to them when you meet. By planning your approach, the chances of getting the individual to help you or to refer you to someone else will dramatically increase. The key is to be able to convert your connections into something that will move you closer to accomplishing your objective!

Rethinking Career Development Within an Organizational Context

Career development within an organizational context has not been in popular demand over the last couple of years. The reasoning lies in the belief that employees are not going to stick around for a long time. Why should the organization invest in this type of activity?

Think of your own organization. When is the last time there was excitement about a career development program? For that matter, how many organizations actually promote career development?

Why should organizations invest in career development activities? In all actuality, it's not really a choice for organizations these days. In order to remain competitive, investments in human capital are *essential* to success. When a machine breaks down (in other words, the company's physical capital), organizations do not hesitate to repair or replace the piece of equipment quickly. However, when issues with human capital arise, organizations tend instead to either dispose of the individual(s) or ignore the problem completely.

Human capital is the number one asset and should be treated like any other capital. Career development is a means of man-

aging human capital, a way of ensuring that it is continually being developed and aligned with the company's direction.

Senior management often complains, "Why should we offer career development programs if individuals are going to end up leaving anyway? Why should we train them for another organization?"

As soon as they fall into this mind trap, the likelihood that an individual will want to continue working with the company dramatically reduces.

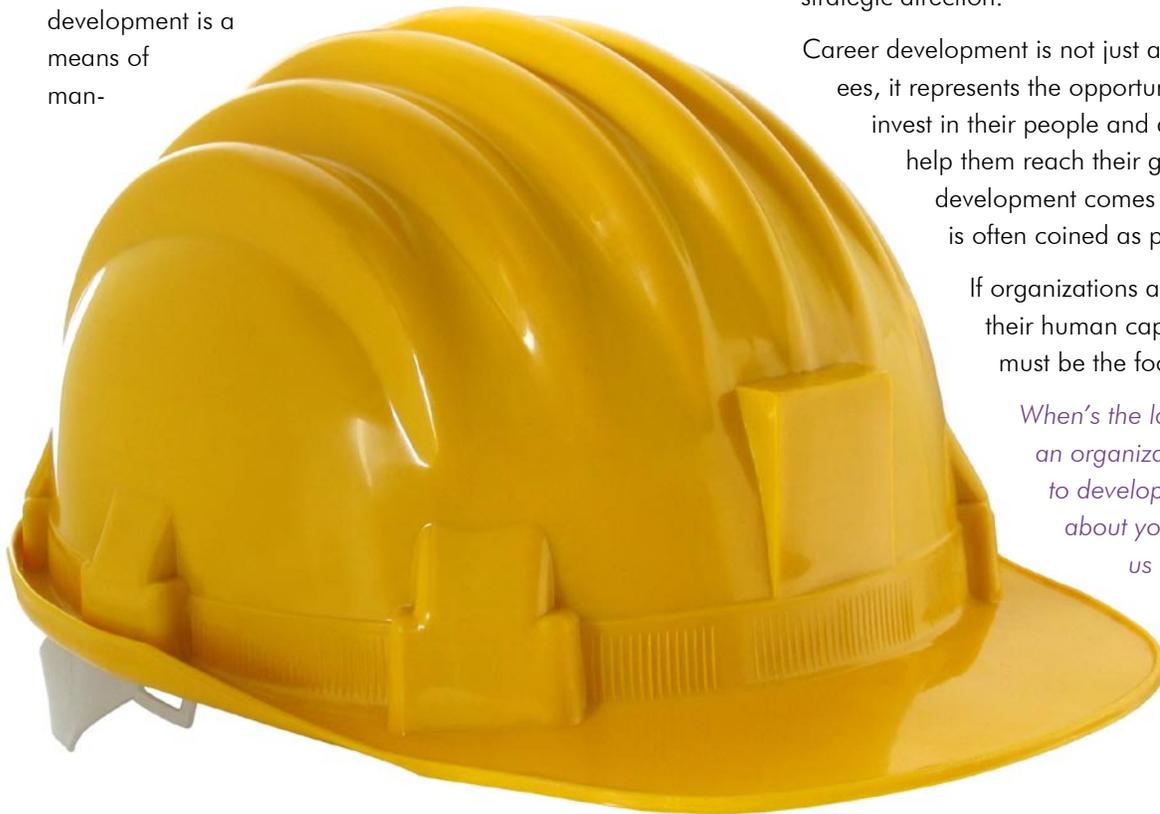
An article was published in a previous issue of this Flowork newsletter about hidden agendas. An example of this concept is illustrated when a worker is given the opportunity to develop a solid career direction by adding new skills, experiences and knowledge to their lives. The employee can see that the organization is making an investment in them, thereby offering them the ability to grow, and the likelihood of their staying with the company dramatically increases.

This benefit for the employee not only reduces turnover, it aligns the individual's performance with the organization's strategic direction.

Career development is not just an intervention for employees, it represents the opportunity for organizations to invest in their people and develop individuals that will help them reach their goals and objectives. Career development comes in all shapes and sizes and is often coined as personal development.

If organizations are to successfully manage their human capital, career development must be the focus of their plan.

When's the last time you worked with an organization that encouraged you to develop a personal plan? Tell us about your experience by emailing us at newsletters@flowork.com or visit our site (www.flowork.com) and click on "contact us."



Positive Feedback Leads to Peak Performance, Results

From *The Democrat and Chronicle*
By Sally Ward • December 28, 2008

How good are you at giving feedback?

Providing effective feedback is a powerful motivator that boosts engagement and results. Yet feedback is often delivered ineptly, too infrequently or not at all.

To be useful, feedback must open a pathway to learning and awareness while leaving the recipient with a sense of possibility and personal worth.

These six key ideas will help you hold feedback conversations that are motivating and constructive:

Always start with what's going right: Initiate your feedback conversation with a sincere, positive statement about the person or his/her actions. This softens the emotional field and establishes a respectful climate. Beginning with negative feedback puts others on the defensive, and can quickly lead to resentment and shutdown.

Use the feedback sandwich technique: After stating a positive quality or contribution, present the issue that needs to be addressed using the words, "And the challenge is ..." Then follow with another positive statement. Here's an example: "Jean, your attention to customer service on the Chadwick account has resulted in increased billings. We're very pleased. And the challenge is to provide a similar level of service to your other accounts. Let's talk about how you will do that. Again, your thorough approach on the Chadwick account has really paid off!"

Ask for permission: This tool opens the door to potentially sensitive areas of focus and enables other people to grant access. Having granted permission, they are now more open to your feedback. Consider the case of the professional who is insulted and confused when her supervisor tells her she needs to improve her client interactions. A far more motivating ap-

proach would be, "May I offer you a suggestion to improve your client interactions?"

Tie feedback to goals: To motivate, you must first develop challenging goals and be sure there is clarity and agreement on them. Whether you're communicating with an employee, a client or a customer, a framework based on goals will enable an impartial, objective discussion about what's going well and what could be going better.

Provide feedback regularly: Don't wait for a problem or a performance appraisal. People need to be recognized. Make a point to notice and tell them specifically how they're contributing. As you let them know that they're progressing toward goals, you'll encourage them to push on and reach higher, even in challenging environments. When they're off-course, straightforward feedback can help them see how they're contributing to unintended results.

Let people see themselves in a bigger light: Praise is a high-octane motivator, and acknowledgement is the most elevated form of praise. A meaningful acknowledgement celebrates inner strength and character and helps people see greater possibilities in themselves. Often, it touches on a person's values or on the positive impact they have on others: "Karen, your spirit of adventure and risk-taking has opened the doors to innovation and helped us stay competitive in the marketplace."

As you develop your capacity to deliver motivating feedback, you'll encourage peak performance and strengthen business relationships and results.

Sally Ward is president of Ward Leadership, an executive coaching and leadership development company. Contact her at www.WardLeadership.com.



Flowork offers the benefits of social capital to anyone of any age. The Education Flowork Program offers educational institutions (Kindergarten through higher education) to ensure their students, faculty and staff become aware of the power of information by networking. Corporate Flowork and the Flowork Workforce Development Program introduces corporations, non-profit organizations, government, and workforce development groups to ways they might increase the flow of information between individuals, departments, divisions and units. Floworks founder Dr. John-Paul Hatala is available for speaking engagements nationwide. If you are interested in booking him for an on-site speaking engagement, please call us at 1-877-flowork or visit www.flowork.com and click "contact us" to discuss your needs.



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