

Keeping The Team Together

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So much has changed recently...

...how do we know what is truly connected to the reactions we've had since September 11? There isn't any way to be certain, but after speaking with several consultants since the disaster, I've noticed the following.

There have been many more requests for "teambuilding" and "strengthening teams," partly because people want to pull together and partly because they find themselves acting differently toward each other. When a larger system over which there is no control is compromised, tension, conflict, and stress often increase at interpersonal levels. When people are threatened, the tendency is to become more self-focused and protective even though we should be interacting with others even more.

There has also been an increase in the use of words such as "safety," "security," and "trust." Though people are discussing issues associated with the workplace, societal safety themes prevail. Even very personal statements are interlaced with comments about possible threats to previously safe home, work, and social environments.

There is a tendency toward self-judgment ("There is something wrong with our workplace because we're not getting along or communicating as well as we did before."). Morale tends to lower when we question competence and confidence. It can produce an unhealthy environment of second-guessing and suspicion.

We're all going through a difficult time, so let's give ourselves a break. Let's agree that our responses to crises are within the norm, declare the existence of problems, and then get on with rebuilding our teams, resolving our disagreements, enhancing our communication, and proposing processes to deal with other issues as soon as they arise.

Our personal strengths emerge when there's a collective commitment to do something positive about a difficult situation.



Strategic Planning

By their very nature, strategic plans are challenging. Their objective is to get people and organizations to look outside the box, to take exception to "standard procedures," to rediscover the ideas, motivations, and values around which the organization developed.

Today's gurus of strategy urge companies to democratize the process by handing strategic planning over to teams of line and staff managers from different disciplines, and to ask customers for advice on what to produce.

Strategic Planning: offers an opportunity to transform an organization; results in a new focus for the organization and a compelling vision for the future; creates new market opportunities; and focuses on what can be rather than what is.