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The Art and Science of Making Transformational Choices.



DEFINE



ALIGN



EXECUTE

Five Tips for Navigating the Matrix Organization

Many organizations today are team and/or project based and requires employees to collaborate across the organization to leverage and influence resources they do not control. The five tips for navigating the matrix organization are:

1. Manage the Dynamics

Working in a matrix structure is often described as frustrating. This frustration arises from the perception that the structure produces chaos. Both traditional and matrix structures involve navigating the “white space” on the organizational chart. This requires developing relationships across the organization, identifying interdependencies, and effectively negotiating how those dependencies are managed. This involves being organizationally aware of the dynamics impacting other parts of the business and how the choices in your domain of influence and control impacts their success and vice versa. Additionally, it involves collaborating on priorities and how resources will be leveraged to achieve those priorities.

2. Build Your Resiliency

Organizational effectiveness is measured by intended and unintended results. It is the coordinated effort across an organization that reaps the best results for the organization. This takes effort and resiliency. Building your resiliency involves understanding what brings you energy and what drains your energy. The biggest drain is associated with your attitude and thinking about working collaboratively. If your attitude is positive, working collaboratively will become a way of life and it will bring you energy because you are more focused on the benefits than the level of effort required to achieve them.

3. Empower Yourself

You can color outside the lines if it is for the greater good. Empower yourself to think outside the box independently and collaboratively. Don't allow yourself to be constrained by rules that lead to poor choices for the organization. Challenge the rules independently or build a coalition that pushes back in order to do what is in the best interest of the company. Every day is an opportunity for you to maximize your value and contribution by giving yourself permission to do so.

4. Be Proactive and Assertive

Don't try to boil the ocean. In a matrix structure, you will likely have multiple reporting relationships and competing priorities. Don't be bashful about pointing out conflicts but make sure you bring forward proposed solutions. This will involve doing your homework to clearly articulate the nature and dynamics of competing priorities and the impact. It will also involve making recommendations on how to overcome the conflicts and the tradeoffs that may need to be made. This puts you in a position to position your own solutions without having them dictated to you.

5. Design the Effective Norm and Manage the Exceptions

Businesses and organizations have their own unique dynamics. There is a rhythm associated with how things get done. This does not suggest that the rhythm makes pleasant music, but it does suggest that the human element has learned to work within the rhythm as chaotic it may be. Focus on the part of the rhythm that creates harmony and produces effective results. Working in a matrix structure is often described as chaotic. This can be attributed to the perception that it is management by exception with lots of exceptions. The key is to see beyond the chaos to identify the rhythm that is working and to recognize the exceptions that are not. Then you have two options. The first is to redesign the process to smoothly accommodate warranted exceptions and the second is to design the exceptions out of the organizational process.

If you have any questions please contact Kevin King at info@transformationpoint.com or visit <http://blog.transformationpoint.com>.

