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"Achieving Excellence" Issue 20 - June 2021

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In This Issue:

*Welcome
In Your Quest for Excellence
Employing Soft Power as Part of Your Management Toolkit
A Model for Overcoming the Four Villains of Decision Making
Our Offerings*

Welcome

Welcome to the June issue of "Achieving Excellence" which is inspired by clients and friends of Seventeen Gorman Advisors. We enjoy new ways of thinking and new ways of helping you achieve your goals.

Seventeen Gorman Advisors is a consulting practice focused on improving individual and organizational performance through skill building programs and developmental services.

Our approach to problem solving and issue resolution involves client participation at all points in the process. Above all, we listen to our clients to understand their needs and goals so that the solution we develop together - as true partners - provides a sustainable business advantage.

Best Regards,

*Jeffrey C. Leventry
Principal*

In Your Quest For Excellence

"Coercive power forces people to do things, while soft power inspires them to accomplish objectives." - *Derchat Keltner (a Social Psychologist)*

Employing Soft Power as Part of Your Management Toolkit



During my Management Skills course at Rider University, I focus on the specific skills that are necessary to perform successfully in a Management role. These skills include leading, communicating effectively, delegating, conflict and time management, and motivating others.

While all of these skills are essential for today's Managers to master, I would argue that learning how to influence and motivate others to achieve desired outcomes is the most important attribute in a Manager's toolkit.

What is meant by soft power?

Management Authors Richard Daft and Dorothy Marcic define soft power as "influence that is based upon building positive relationships and personal credibility." They believe Managers can utilize this power to "gain agreement for a new initiative, secure consensus for a change in strategy, or win concessions from a difficult vendor."

The two types of soft power that are generally recognized in the field of Management include the following:

- **Referent Power** – this is derived from a Manager's personality characteristics that command others' respect and admiration so that people desire to emulate or follow the Manager. Other terms used to describe referent power include charisma and likeability.
- **Expert Power** – this power results from a Manager's special knowledge or skill in a particular field. When a Manager possesses true expertise, people will follow his / her recommendations or direction because of the Manager's superior knowledge and credibility.

The advantage of using soft power in the workplace is that it does not rely on a formal position or title, but instead relies on interpersonal relationships and credibility. As a result, it has the ability to affect long-term changes in attitudes and behavior.

In contrast, hard power is a short-term approach that stems largely from a person's position of authority in the organization. While hard power (including coercion, legitimate power and reward) may be used in the workplace, it should be limited to those situations that may require quick action or compliance.

In summation, Derchat Keltner (a Social Psychologist) commented, “Coercive power forces people to do things, while soft power inspires them to accomplish objectives.”

How can soft power be developed by Managers to influence and motivate others?

Soft power can be used in many ways to support the achievement of corporate and team goals or objectives. Since this approach is based upon establishing positive relationships and credibility, it may take time to develop and implement. Some of the key ways that soft power can be developed include the following:

- Attempting to understand other employees’ views and interests by listening to what they have to say about important issues that impact the organization.
- Engaging with groups of people that you would not normally interact with so that business colleagues will know you and respect your ideas, opinions and recommendations.
- Becoming involved in corporate initiatives that span various departments or divisions in the firm in order to promote collaboration, partnership and cross-silo communication.
- Investing the time to gain knowledge and expertise by attending certification programs or completing coursework in your profession.
- Volunteering to sit on a panel discussion involving industry issues to showcase your expertise and enhance your credibility.
- Publishing an article in an industry publication or professional magazine that is widely distributed.
- Framing your requests in a way that supports the mission and values of your organization.
- Assembling and developing an alliance of people who support your objectives and who can implement your decisions and the direction you have for the organization.

What are the benefits of using soft power effectively?

Experts agree that utilizing soft power in any organization delivers numerous benefits. This is why the most effective Managers develop and implement soft power as part of their repertoire. Some of the benefits that accrue from regularly employing soft power are as follows:

- It has the ability to affect long-term changes in attitudes and behavior so that your staff are more apt to support corporate priorities and objectives.
- It increases the likelihood that various stakeholders in the organization will buy into the Manager’s decisions and implementation plans.
- It strengthens the Team dynamic and boosts Team performance.
- It may help the Team achieve desired business results in a difficult environment where others have failed.
- It improves the reputation of the Manager as others notice his / her ability to execute on corporate initiatives.
- It enhances the ability of the Manager to accomplish career success as he / she aspires to a Leadership role in the organization.

In conclusion, the ability of a Manager to make use of soft power to achieve

business results not only improves corporate performance, it elevates the profile of the Manager who masters this important skill. In light of the above, what steps will you take to develop your soft power and make it an important component of your Management toolkit?

A Model for Overcoming the Four Villains of Decision Making

Today's young professional needs to possess many skills in order to perform his / her role effectively. These include writing skills, presentation skills, communication skills, analytical skills, problem-solving skills and interpersonal skills.

Another critical skill that yields significant benefits (but is often overlooked) is decision-making skills. In fact, employees are challenged every day with making good decisions that produce optimal outcomes for their organization.



So, what stands in the way and hinders our ability to make consistently good decisions? Chip and Dan Heath in their book “Decisive – How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work” call these the “Villains of Decision Making”.

During my Decision Making capstone course at The College of New Jersey we discuss the four villains and approaches for overcoming them in our quest to making better decisions.

The Four Villains of Decision Making:

Here is a brief definition of each of the villains:

- **Narrow Framing** – unduly limiting the decision options that we consider in any given decision scenario.
- **Confirmation Bias** – seeking out information that bolsters our original beliefs or assumptions (which are often self-serving).
- **Short-term Emotion** – being swayed by passion and emotions that will quickly fade.
- **Overconfidence** – having too much faith in our predictions and thinking that we know more than we do about how the future will unfold.

The “WRAP” Process for Making Sound Decisions:

Chip and Dan Heath have developed a process for overcoming each of the four villains which they refer to as the “WRAP” Decision Model. The advantage of their model is that it is simple to understand and easy to apply, even in the most difficult decision situations.

The four steps in their process are as follows:

- **Widen your options** – instead of considering one or two options, brainstorm

several options that are potentially viable. Some tools that may be used to assist the decision maker include: looking at the opportunity cost, using the vanishing options test, multitasking, looking for someone who's solved your problem, and laddering up via analogies.

- **Reality-test your assumptions** – to formulate better decisions, we need to look beyond self-serving information and make an attempt to test the assumptions that underlie our reasoning. Approaches that can help us accomplish this include: constructive disagreement, playing devil's advocate, asking disconfirming questions, running small experiments to test our theories, and considering the opposite of what we normally would do under the circumstances.
- **Attain distance before deciding** – to overcome short-term emotion, we should take a step back to attain distance and see the big picture instead of making a quick decision. A few ideas that can support this goal include: the 10 / 10 / 10 analysis, looking at our situation from an observer's perspective, asking ourselves, "What would I tell my best friend to do in this situation?", and honoring our core priorities or values.
- **Prepare to be wrong** – to overcome an excessive faith in ourselves and our judgment, we need to find a middle ground that is somewhere between too much and not enough confidence. Ways to address this issue include: What is the best case and worst case outcome that could happen in our situation, anticipating and preparing for both adversity and success, conducting a realistic job preview, and setting a tripwire that can snap us awake and make us realize that we are at a critical decision point in our process.

Decision Model Guidance Notes:

Finally, in order to achieve success using the "WRAP" Decision Model, how should we execute each step in the decision-making process?

- The model steps should be applied in a sequential order so users can view it as a process and apply it in a practical way to make better decisions that produce desired outcomes.
 - In other words, **W-> R-> A-> P**
- The model depicts an iterative process. This means that model steps may be revisited (in order) after a survey is performed to obtain feedback or when new information has been discovered – to improve the effectiveness of the ultimate decision.
- During each step in the model process the user should evaluate and incorporate feedback to increase the probability of achieving his / her decision goals.

While many ideas and paradigms exist for improving our decision-making, the above model is a logical, systematic approach that is designed to overcome the four villains and help us achieve optimal decision outcomes in both business and non-business situations.

Our Offerings Include The Following:

Developmental Services

Skill Building Programs

Seventeen Gorman Advisors offers a wide range of services to improve individual and organizational performance and support achievement of goals.

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Seventeen Gorman Advisors is pleased to offer a range of programs that are designed to develop competencies and enhance skills.

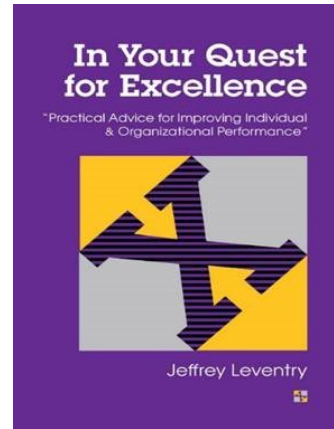
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