
Success-ions (Education)

Education is the third critical element in our Success-ion series. Webster's dictionary provides the following definition, in part, for the term 'education':

- the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction
- a body of knowledge acquired while being educated
- information about or training in particular field or subject
- an enlightening experience



For the purpose of success, education means developing the changing capabilities necessary to support the direction and the desired results that you have communicated in your Vision and Mission statements. Your people won't get the education they need to utilize their full potential and reach those lofty goals by osmosis, it takes action on the part of leadership... that's you.

Critical Elements

Educating and developing your people into their changing roles takes time, effort, and attention in three inter-related areas:

- **Attitudes:** What does the term 'attitude' bring mind? It's likely you think about attitudes in terms of positive or negative, and that is certainly important. You have probably experienced a situation where two similarly skilled individuals had wildly different levels of performance based solely on their attitudes. What are attitudes?

Attitudes are the 'Want To Do'. We define attitudes as feelings or your outlook. They are internal, and drive your outward reactions to people, circumstances, and situations. We also say that attitudes are 'Habits of Thought'. In other words, you have thought a certain



way about something that it becomes your attitude on the subject. For example, imagine that you have a team of six people working for you, and you realize that there is a serious communication issue amongst you and the team. You also believe that those six people are the biggest jerks that ever walked the face of the earth! You may know everything there is to know about communicating, but you will never solve your communication problem. Why? Because you think they are jerks! Your attitude about the team trumps any skill or knowledge you may have relative to the issue.

The bad news about attitude development is that most (95% according to top behavioral scientists) of the attitudes we carry with us throughout our lives were developed prior to age five... and they tend to be more negative than positive, especially with respect to change.

The good news is that attitudes were 'learned', so that means they can be changed... you can chose to develop habits of thought that will move you closer to your idea of success. What would happen in your organization if you and your people had a substantially more positive attitudes about themselves, the company, your customers, and each other? Studies indicate that a full 85% of individual and organizational success is based on attitudes. What are you doing to help your people develop the internal attitudes they need to succeed?

● Skills and Knowledge

Knowledge is the 'What To Do' of the equation. Do your people have the information they need to carry out your strategy to its fulfillment? Since your Vision and Mission describe a destination that is substantially different than where you are now, doesn't it make sense that their knowledge base will have to be different? If knowledge is the 'What To Do', skills refer to the 'How To Do'. Do your people know how apply what they are learning? You must have, as part of your business planning process, committed the resources and tactics for continuous upgrading of your awareness and training tactics. Having skills and knowledge in and of themselves won't guarantee success, but even the most motivated people will struggle mightily if they don't know what to do.



● Meaningful and Measurable Goals

Without specific goals that are important to them as individuals, people won't apply their talents and resources effectively. You must help them discover for themselves "What's In It For Me", and then help them set written goals and action steps that are aligned with your overall strategy. Everyone wants to be somebody, or to be part of something special. Help your people understand how they fit in to the overall plan. Help them see how their day to day decisions and actions directly contribute to achieving the Mission, which will in turn move everyone towards the Vision.

Let's take a look at how these three elements are inter-connected. If you have a great attitude about yourself, your employees, your business, etc., you have great skills and knowledge, but you don't know where you are going... what is the likelihood that you will use your full potential and achieve the Vision? Or, what happens if you have great skills, a very clear picture of where you are going, but don't believe you can get there? Chances are you wouldn't put much effort into that scenario, would you?

I think you get the picture.... minimize any one of the three elements of education and you will severely limit your success. Leverage all three at the same time, and you build tremendous and sustainable momentum to making your Vision a reality!

