

Betwixt and Between

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How to Align Workers for a Productivity Reboot!

Betwixt is an archaic expression. It has survived only because of the phrase “Betwixt and Between.” In our context today, it literally means that some employees are working from home and some are limping back to the office.

Another meaning of Betwixt and Between is that people are nervous and wondering what the future holds. In my entire lifetime, I have never seen so much disruption of the economy and I can assume that it is the same for most of you. The pressure on individuals, teams and companies is astounding ... and we are told that more pressure may be on the horizon.

In the future, Betwixt and Between may come to mean that some work in the office on certain days and at home on other days depending on how many are allowed in the same office space.

Learning to manage employees moving back and forth between onsite and virtual, which may become the new normal, has challenging elements.

Logistical Challenges

The challenges bring Excedrin-size headaches for managers.

Here are a few:

1. Maintaining the right equipment at home and at the office
2. Keeping team members connected
3. Hosting effective meetings with onsite and virtual workers
4. Ensuring deadlines are met

These issues focus on the management side of ensuring work gets done. Now let's turn to leadership elements of getting teams productive. Whether working at home or in the office, the common need employees have is rational alignment, or aligning members behind the team's purpose and vision.

Rational Alignment

The alignment of members behind the team's purpose and vision, reminds me of an often told story of the consulting team that was tasked with discovering what would increase productivity and quality of work on a construction site. At this construction site were two crews of workers doing the same work: chipping rock.

When the consultants interviewed the first crew, they said: "Tell us about your work. What do you do all day long?"

With a shrug of their shoulders, the crew members answered, "We chip rock." Probably unsaid was "Open your eyes. You can see what we are doing."

The consultants went to the next crew and asked the same question but received a vastly different answer. The second crew responded, "We're part of a team that is building a cathedral as a monument to our God."

The consulting team found the answer to increased productivity and quality: The vision and purpose from the eyes of the workers.

At this moment in time, it is imperative to ensure your teams understand your purpose and vision. Create for them a vision of the future.

This allows employees to rationally, logically and cognitively align with the future and the organizational objectives that are set. Rational alignment

includes setting deadlines and pushes employees to set their daily routines and task lists so they are pushing organizational initiatives forward.

Avoid the Floating Leaf Syndrome

A leaf floating in the water has no effect on its future. It drifts passively in the pond. In an hour, a day, or a week, it may land on the shore across the pond, remain floating on the water or sink to the bottom.

Don't let your workers who are in the process of leaving the quarantine behind and are working to establish productive routines drift and float like the leaf, or worse, sink and drown in uncertainty.

Get them productive again with purpose, vision, direction and deadlines.

You'll get a productivity reboot.

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