

There is old saying that always stays current: **People Trump Strategy**. In fact, people often trump processes, procedures, and methodologies. It is not that these other things are not important, it is that their effectiveness or ineffectiveness is driven by the people executing the processes, procedures, and methodologies. You don't really say: "That process let me down!" ...you say; "That person let me down!".

CHANGE is really 80% **PEOPLE** and 20% the rest...if we use the traditional 80/20 rule.

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To drive successful CHANGE, it is often about getting The Right People at the Table; and there are **two outcomes** that successful leaders invest more focused time to create than others.

- 1. Quality of the Output from the Meeting**

(Driven by the quality of the discussion and that is from the quality of the people)

- 2. Quality of the Influence after the Meeting**

(Driven by the attendees' ability to influence others to take action on the output)

These two outcomes determine who needs to be there, and if the right people are not there; the perceived quality of the output of the meeting is always suspect.

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### ***Consider this situation:***

You have a meeting on the change, and another department only provides you someone that is available; and not their best person (knowledgeable and with influence both inside and outside his/her department). Now the key questions...

- **When others see this person attending the meeting, do they feel this meeting is important?** *Probably not.*
- **What will others feel about the decisions/solutions coming out of the meeting?** *They would probably have low expectations given the person who is attending.*
- **When this person goes back to his/her department, do you feel anyone will be listening to him or her?** *Again, probably not, because they do not have the respect from their peers. They were just available!*

As you can see, the people you get to your tables (the meetings) have an impact on the quality of the meeting before a word is even said, and then any influence on the results after the meeting too.

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There are **three key habits** I have seen in leaders who get The Right People at the Right Tables, and if you practice these two habits; you will have more success getting the right people to your tables.

- 1. Frame Meetings to Achieve, not to Discuss**

How many times have you been invited to a meeting with this phrase: We need a meeting to discuss... Probably all the time, and now here is a great question: Is discussion an activity or

an outcome? Right, it's an activity, and this is why these meetings you are attending are wasting your time.

When you frame the meeting as a discussion, what do you get more of? Discussion! Also, you often get people talking not because they have something useful to say, but because they just like the sound of their own voice!

If you want to run more successful meetings, you need to frame the meeting as an **OUTCOME**, not as an activity. You need a meeting to **ACHIEVE**.

From a leadership perspective, the majority of your meetings only have three outcomes...because you need:

1. **ACTION** *You want progress, and people owning their Action.*
2. **DECISION** *You need a Decision that enables more action.*
3. **ALIGNMENT** *You want Alignment that drives teamwork and more effective action.*

Next time, don't frame your meetings as an activity (to discuss), but as an outcome (to ACHIEVE)...and more of the right people will want to come to your table.

## 2. Build the Key Relationships Before You Need Them

If you remember the story about Noah from the bible, did Noah start building the ark before it started raining or after it started raining? Before, right? You need to build your key relationships before you need them. In getting the right people around the right tables, it often comes down to the quality of your relationships with other key stakeholders. When you have built strong relationships, you then have more influence in getting the right people from their organizations to come to your meetings.

To gain that key influence with others, you start by wanting others to listen and engage with you, and that means starting with them (not you) and using:

**...their Door:** You enter the door of what they are most interested in (their self interests), and then wrap what you want within what they want. This has them wanting to listen. How many times do you instantly switch off at the start of a conversation when others begin by talking about only what they want!

**...and then on their floor:** You focus the conversation on the level of details that they are most interested in discussing. This has them wanting to engage with you because you are having the conversation at their level of interest. If you are a leader, you have probably experienced this...your people come to you and want to tell you all the details before getting to the point! They say that a leader's maximum patience is about 90 seconds in this situation. If you want more influence with others...enter their Door (so they listen) and discuss on their Floor (so they engage). Also, teach your people this and they will package their conversations with you in more concise ways.

## 3. Choose People Who Can Both Contribute and Influence

There are many leaders who look at the organization chart in determining who they need to be at their meeting representing that department or area of the company. However, the most successful leaders *never think in terms of represent*. They think in terms of **contribution** and **influence**.

*The Right People* you need at all the tables are the people who can **contribute** the most towards gaining the best decisions and solutions, and who can then go away and **influence** others within their own areas and organizations across the company. It might be difficult to gain both of these in the same individual and therefore you will then need to invite two people to gain the impact you need both in the meeting and after the meeting. Far too many managers think of the meeting only, and not about the impact after the meeting (when the action is needed and has to be reinforced with others).

Lastly, there are two feelings that fuel people to support the decisions in meetings and to take the necessary actions after the meetings. They are:

### **It's Worth It and I Can Do It.**

These two feelings are what drive people to sustain the right mindset and keep taking action.

#### **It's Worth It** (They ask themselves...*What's in it for me?*)

People need to feel that it is personally worth it to them? Far too often you share why it is worth it to the company, but real change happens at a personal level. A company change is simply the collection of enough personal changes. That's why people who are great at driving change are also great at adapting their communications...because that's the way to make it personal to others.

#### **I Can Do It** (They ask themselves...*Can I handle the conflict?*)

This is a confidence and character issue. Decisions often require doing something different and differences drive conflict. Most people don't change because they feel they are not able to effectively deal with the conflicts they will have with others. They say that people rise in organizations to the level they can deal with the conflict that comes with the role.

Therefore, next time you need to get **The Right People at the Table**, consider these:

#### **Two OUTCOMES**

Quality of the Output from the Meeting  
Quality of the Influence after the Meeting

#### **Three KEY HABITS**

Frame Meetings to Achieve, not to Discuss  
Build the Key Relationships Before You Need Them  
Choose People Who Can Both Contribute and Influence

#### **Two FEELINGS**

It's Worth It  
I Can Do It.

When you focus on these two outcomes, three key habits and two feelings, you will get more of *The Right People at the Table*....and **GAIN** you *more influence* and *more achievement*.