

## Creating Alignment with the Leadership Team Part 5

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### PROCESS CENTERED

Last month we covered the principle of Embracing the Total System which states we are constantly looking at how each part of the organization interacts with and affects an event, situation, problem, and other parts of the organization.

This month and in the coming months, we will cover the principle of being Process Centered. It will require multiple articles, since there are many facets to being Process Centered. Process Centered helps our understanding that both the process and the result that is achieved (paying attention to what is done and how it is done) are important. The result will not change unless we change the process. While being results focused can get us short-term gains, having a process orientation yields results in a more sustainable manner. Many managers focus purely on the results regardless of the process one has to follow in order to gain the result. Have you ever heard someone say, "Just get it done, I don't care how you do it"? Have you ever made that statement to your team? This may be an indication that you lack a process focus. If we focus on the process that yields results, we are more likely to be able to improve those results over time rather than just taking whatever we are getting while still failing to understand why.

### **PEOPLE WORK ON THE PROCESS > PROCESS YIELDS RESULTS > IGNORING PROCESS REDUCES CHANCE FOR RESULTS > IGNORING RESULTS RISKS MISSING NEW IDEAS!!!**

In the past we have found that we often define processes up to a particular point, and then for some reason (either lack of understanding or patience, for instance) we stop defining the process. Therefore, we have incomplete processes within businesses. However, the product must get shipped or the service must be delivered, so we put the process into action and let the people responsible for running the process deal with it. This leaves a "fog" in the process where the process hasn't been clearly defined. The people who get us through this fog are the operators of the process. Consider this. We are asking operators to put their livelihoods at stake while they are bridging the gap in the process, all the while those operators understand that if they make a mistake, they may face punishment or even termination. However, they do it for us day in and day out without issue in most cases. Most often each operator bridges the gap differently which creates a larger problem. This non-standard processing will give us inconsistent results. Those inconsistent results are passed on to the customer. It is short-sighted to believe the customer cannot see the difference.



Figure 1: Incomplete Process Definition



When there isn't a clear standard to run the process, and we leave how to run the process up to the operator, we find ourselves in the position of having processes that only a select few can execute. These people are considered highly valuable to the company. However, through no fault of their own, these operators' actions may be keeping the process running, but these actions also lend themselves to "tampering." The effects of tampering were first taught by the late W. Edwards Deming in his Funnel Experiment. The only way to deal with this tampering is to create the standard, remove the skilled operator, and have an unskilled operator run the process. When the unskilled operator faces an issue, he or she won't know how to tamper, so he/she is forced to stop and call for help. The process can then be corrected, the standard updated, and the process continued until the unskilled operator can run the machine as well as the skilled operator. In this scenario, the pressure is placed (as it should be) on the leadership and engineering teams to fix the process.

#### A TOYOTA VIEW

*"We get brilliant results from average people managing brilliant processes. We observe that our competitors often get mediocre results from brilliant people managing broken processes."*

Is your team process centered? Do you have brilliant processes that can be operated by average people? If you answered NO to any of these questions, Drive Inc. can help. We have experienced professionals who can coach your team through the process of gaining alignment around this principle and all of the other principles. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at [paul.eakle@driveinc.com](mailto:paul.eakle@driveinc.com) or 865-323-3491. Stay tuned for next month's newsletter when we will further discuss this principle to ensure your leadership team is aligned.

