



"What is Your Organizational Health Gap?"

The best teams know they need re-calibration periodically to ensure their focus and execution remains aligned with organizational goals and objectives. In these rapidly changing times, realignment becomes even more critical as organizations struggle with the economy - no one has room in their strategic plan to waste time or money.

In January, HR Logistics was fortunate to work with a forward thinking school system in California as they conducted their annual management retreat to realign their internal teams and develop their strategy for the next year. The school recognized it had reached a crossroads; its accelerating growth was demanding more and more from its management staff. In addition, the current economic climate was going to require even more commitment to ensure the strength of the school continued to support the needs of its students and families.

Working collaboratively with the HR Director, we developed a customized program for the school to focus on three areas:

- Good management - what it is and how to strive for it
- Strategic planning - how to incorporate good management and best practices into the execution of the strategic plan
- Leadership - the value of making a personal choice.

Using our experience in human resources, business consulting, and finance - and working with the school's team to understand their organization's needs - we designed a program to realign the top management teams of the organization and jump-start them for the year ahead.

But we also wanted the attendees to walk away from the day with a concrete understanding of how to apply the theories to their daily operations. We wanted to "connect the dots" and incorporate objectivity and quantifiable actions into the process. To accomplish this, we incorporated a new tool developed here in HR Logistics - the organizational health gap analysis - to measure the organizational health of the school's management.

The organizational health gap analysis was developed based on the work of management and leadership experts and financial assessment methodology to measure the effectiveness and health of the organization's management process. The content is founded on thinkers such as Jim Collins, Ken Blanchard, and James Hunter and measures the gap between operational effectiveness and strategic direction by measuring members' perceptions of the current state of operations and the importance of a competency, task or skill for future success.

The "OH!"[©] gap analysis contains approximately 90 questions around areas of leadership, workforce development, clarity and transparency, trust, and discipline. By asking questions specifically about how the organization currently performs in these areas, the teams identified the health of a particular area. The attendees were composed of board members, executive administrators, and managers. They each graded the gap analysis worksheet during the morning session. The worksheets were anonymous except



for the distinction of board member, administrator, or manager - a distinction that proved to be very useful. After the worksheets were completed - which took approximately 30-45 minutes - they were taken to a separate room and tabulated while the program continued.

The balance of the program was composed of a presentation on good management, breakout sessions for each peer group, then a final group session on leadership. During the breakout sessions, the different peer groups worked through their own agendas and focused on their strategic needs and goals for the coming year. The operational managers focused on improving specific management skills critical to their growth and success, the executive team of administrators discussed the content of the gap analysis and how it applied to daily operations, and the board focused on the strategic plan.

At the end of the day, the results of the gap analysis were announced. Interestingly - the Board perceived the organization to be functioning more effectively than the operational executives and managers. This is not too surprising, right? But here's the magic of the process -

- All management teams saw the results together simultaneously. This accomplished two important things -
 - The teams were all given equal status in receiving important information. This reinforces the message that all team members are equally important to the success of the organization.
 - The data rated the perceptions numerically. This reduces the subjectivity of the results and increases the objectivity. There were no words used to describe, soften or rationalize the results and the differences in perceptions were clear.
- The perceptions of where the organization needed to be to achieve future success were pretty consistent with little deviation in rating, regardless of the person's position within the organization.
- But most amazing and exciting was seeing the results of the largest gaps. Across the board, all groups rated the same area with the largest gap - revealing the area needing the most attention and improvement! The gap analysis had given everyone a voice.

The gap analysis revealed the weakest area in the school's translation of strategy to operations! The metrics rated the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's execution of strategy numerically from greatest gap to lowest. It's also important to remember that the five focus areas of the gap analysis impact each other. If clarity and transparency is weak, trust is also weakened. If discipline is weak, it will also drag down leadership.

The gap analysis clearly indicated where the organization should focus their attention. By providing a road map, the school could increase the success of their strategic plan by focusing their resources on specific areas to improve their management teams' execution. The school can use their resources more efficiently with less wasted effort and time which translates into financial savings. They have built a "team understanding" of the organization and can reinforce the message throughout the team and throughout the year by consciously working on the specific areas needing improvement. The retreat had revealed a



road map for them to move their organization from "good" to "great" and provided a clear picture of the health of their management process.

Imagine this - you want to drive from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to Irvine, California. You have a road map (your strategic plan) and have developed the route that is most expeditious. You considered stops for rest, food, and a little recreation along the way. And you've added in all of your anticipated expenses. There's just one problem - your budget can only allow so much for your transportation and you drive a 1973 Chevy. You can start the trip - absolutely. The question is - where will you finish it?

Kristie Evans

HR Logistics, LLC.

kristie@hrlogistics.us

(919) 616-6524