

How to ALIGN BUSINESS PROCESSES with the right people

Lessons in aligning people and processes for a competitive advantage.



BY DOUG MEYER-CUNO
BUSINESS PROCESSES

Alignment is a buzzword business leaders like to use. “Strategic alignment,” “cultural alignment,” and “employee alignment” are oft-used jargon, yet it seems we do not hear much about aligning the job processes with the actual person performing the job.

That oversight happens frequently. The job’s purpose and value are ultimately dependent on the person charged with executing it. Therefore, it is critical for employees to be aligned with the company’s vision and how their role impacts the vision. Otherwise, it can be challenging to form alignment within your organization.

Over time, as I transitioned from being a boss to a coach, my maturation had more to do

with the balance of understanding how talent, skills, personality and processes intertwined. As we have experienced watching sports, great coaches do not just know the responsibilities and purpose of each position. They understand how to build players for each position. They know who to move to a specific position and why. They know how to coach up a player into a new position who was not hired or recruited for that position.

Adapting a position to the talent on hand took me years and a great deal of patience before I fully understood the importance of adapting a position to the talent I currently had or could afford. The same applies for business processes. We do not always have the right talent to carry out a specific standard operating procedure (SOP) of a position. When we take the time to learn the nuances of other departments, jobs and individuals, we tend to gain a much broader scope of how we can align our employees’ skills with the positions we need and the SOPs that are required.

From a managerial perspective, it is easier to focus on employees’ strengths and weaknesses than on processes. Therefore, we spend little time focusing on processes and more time towards focusing on the employee’s skills. When a coach or a boss learns how their employees work at their best, it is much easier to enhance their strengths to align with processes.

We have discovered assessment tests like DiSC®, the Kolbe Concept®, and StrengthsFinder™ are excellent tools to help align our employees’ skills with the company’s business processes, its culture and team chemistry. It certainly is not the role of a manager or leader to learn every employee’s DiSC® profile, but having enough knowledge to place the right people in the right seats on the bus is paramount to creating true alignment.

Here are a few lessons that have benefited me over the years.

1. Communication at the senior management level should be the first key step. Hold an annual meeting with your senior management team to evaluate employees’ talents, their profiles and how they align with the company’s processes.
2. When hiring new employees, an intense onboarding process is important to create alignment. Have your new employees meet with teams or company liaisons who shepherd a new employee during the onboarding process.
3. Always spend time scouting for talent and create a “bank of people” you could potentially hire when the right time arises.
4. Review the DiSC® profile, Kolbe® Index, and StrengthsFinder™ with your new employees. It generally is well-received and is an enlightening experience for a new hire.
5. Create an alignment six-month check-up.

It’s a wonderful way to monitor how you rate your company’s success with its alignment process. It also informs you how your employees access your success. ■

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