ClearPath ALLIANCE

The Advisor

Delivering Project Value: VAMOS!

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ClearPath Alliance is a GPS for executives navigating change. We enable leaders to accelerate strategic initiatives for superior results.

How effective are your project teams and PMO (Project Management Office) at delivering forecasted business benefits?

Do they employ a customized, outcome-oriented Organizational Change Management (OCM) approach and tools matched with the experience-level of your people? Is the approach matched to how work really gets done in your company (aka, culture)? Read on to learn about the VAMOS approach and five key ingredients essential for delivering project value

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Delivering Project Value: VAMOS!

A large global life sciences company, with thousands of employees, engaged **ClearPath Alliance** to lead the collaboration, design, development, and launch of global job matrices for their Operations and IT groups. The original intent was to better define employee career opportunities at the job-level by building on prior career frameworks and jumpstart efforts that had been stalled for months.

Start with the End in Mind:
One challenge was that the project objective was broadly defined. Details matter - there was no elevator speech or defined business case, and few could clearly articulate the desired outcomes; hence, the project's delay due to "other pressing needs". The solution to this common dilemma was simple and straightforward - be deliberate - be explicit - be descriptive!

What Do You Want?
The senior team recognized great products and market-share would only get the company so far. In order to fuel future growth, and meet or exceed forecasted earnings for the Street - they would also need to make meaningful investments in people, innovation, and new technology. Upon further dialogue with the project sponsor, the SVP of Global Compensation & Benefits, the project objectives were refined and crystallized:

- *Strengthen our competitive advantage* -- via a qualified incumbent in every role
- *Reduce undesirable operational risk* -- by retaining and recruiting key talent
- *Enhance our employee engagement* - via identified career and development opportunities
- *Inform acquisitions* and org design/span of control -- via defined job requirements
- *Accelerate development* of our 'enterprise-capable' leaders

Five Key Ingredients - VAMOS:

Working with the project lead and their team, **ClearPath Alliance** facilitated a Current State assessment. The results suggested they had fallen into a common trap - Ready-Fire-Aim (vs. Ready-Aim-Fire). Therefore, some basic OCM (org. change) block-and-tackling was necessary. Top priority actions following the VAMOS approach (Spanish for "Let's go!") included:

1. V-ision - agree and communicate a clear 'one'
2. A-ccountability - agree and communicate who owns what
3. M-etrics - define, agree, and communicate what success looks like
4. O-perationalize - build a practical, phased action plan
5. S-takeholders - engage both supporters and advisories

1) Vision:

People appreciate, and can get behind, something that is simple to understand and easy to remember (e.g., "We will engage the business using a job matrices approach to create consistent career path frameworks for all global job codes."). A clear compelling vision, with well articulated elevator speech outlining "why change" (or what may happen otherwise) goes a long way to securing support. Collaborating with the project team, **ClearPath Alliance** developed a concise story evoking engagement and action:

- The "Why" - project purpose, risks to be addressed, and benefits
- Facts and data (e.g., corporate goals, employee engagement survey improvement areas)
- Emotion via humanized messages with manager and employee quotes
- The "How", time commitment, and a plausible action plan
- The "ask" of each audience (e.g., what was needed from them for project success)

2) Accountability:

With numerous departments impacted by the project, it was crucial to define and gain agreement on who owned what. Equally important was defining new performance goals, incentives/recognition and consequences to ensure follow-through; therefore the sponsor asked us to:

- Create a RACI straw-model to ensure progress on all critical tasks and work-streams
- (e.g., matrix of key project process steps vs. owners and level of involvement)
- Provide advice and counsel on effective stakeholder management and tools

3) Metrics:
Defining "what success looks like" was essential to demonstrate the project's value to stakeholders. Few baseline metrics or improvement goals existed, so selected qualitative and quantitative metrics were identified and recommended, including:

- \# and % of Job Functions, Job Families, & Job Codes complete as of MM/DD/YY
- Improve overall employee engagement score to 72% by MM/DD/YY
- Achieve 90% retention rate of identified key talent by Q4
- Improve safety by 10% year-over-year
- Feeder jobs for business critical roles identified by Q2

4) Operationalized Plan:
A customized action plan served to reestablish credibility with stakeholders, as well as regain their trust, support, and advocacy. The plan demonstrated how the project could, in part, forward their own agendas/goals, and benefit them as well as the company. Major elements included a:

- Robust project playbook - including a weekly activity and meeting check-list
- Communication Plan for the business and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Proposed roll-out and implementation plan - socialized with the business, HR and related functions

5) Stakeholder Management:
Line managers were quick to actively support the job matrices project. Surprisingly, some HR business partners were initially somewhat resistant to it. The managers saw the huge payback for their time, involvement and support. However, HR already had many top priorities, and asked for a sensible solution regarding their involvement. Together, with the project lead, **ClearPath Alliance**:

- Defined, optimized and communicated anticipated time commitments and key responsibilities for each stakeholder group
- Facilitated candid dialogue, addressed concerns and enlisted support and advocacy

- Reminded stakeholders of the corporate goals and metrics they were responsible for (e.g., career development, employee engagement and retention)

Summary:
Project metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be significantly improved (Prosci 2012) by incorporating the VAMOS approach (Vision, Accountability, Metrics, Operationalized Action Plan, Stakeholder Management) into every project.

In this case, the organization focused on career and development opportunities with goals around: inspiring and emboldening their employees, accelerating product innovation, and improving employee retention (e.g., voluntary turnover). Having a qualified incumbent in every role enabled their competitive advantage, revitalized their core business, and improved their financials!

Successful strategy execution and value creation promised to shareholders depends on the right people, in the right roles, at the right time. Can you and your business recover if you lose key people? In your organization, are clear roles and people development treated as optional versus business as usual?

Actions to Take Now!
ClearPath Alliancehas worked with numerous leaders and teams to capture forecasted project benefits for improved results. If you're thinking your company would benefit from a readiness assessment and customized action plan we can help. **A conversation or meeting is free** - and may be the next step you need to move forward in achieving break-through results for 2013.

Free Business Self-Assessment Survey
The "Organizational Survey" is quick and effective way to determine the health of your business. Click on the link below to download a free survey and conduct your own confidential self-assessment.

Organizational Survey