
Obtaining Buy-In & Addressing Resistance

Posted by mcerkas - 2008/01/29 21:14

I am working with other managers to implement a new 'team' approach that will create two sets of teams; a function-centric group of 4 IT system development teams (under my supervision) and a technology-centric group of 10 'teams' or technology areas with an indirect report to me and to the CTO.

Both teams are comprised of the same 19 individuals. They are just a different cut or perspective of the group. The 19 individuals are very experienced and talented IT professionals who currently function fairly independently.

My challenge is to 'sell' them on the need to create and live in this new team environment, which is really intended to nurture professional development, build bench strength, provide concrete process documentation, and leverage the skills and knowledge of all the team members.

Our business is software development/sales and the team of 19 is currently operating on a salary + bonus compensation model. They are worried if they begin to spend time organizing and living the team approach, that this will reduce the time they spend working on billable projects. Executive management has acknowledged this to be a concern and have committed to research it and develop a remedy...

In the meantime, I still need to work to answer their concerns. They want responses to their questions about teams in operational terms, yet, at this point, the benefits of teams are somewhat intangible, as they have not yet begun... I need ideas or types of approaches that I can effectively follow to increase their comfort level and respond in an operational manner to their questions... Ideas?????? Thanks.

Cerk

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Re:Obtaining Buy-In & Addressing Resistance

Posted by deniseoberry - 2008/01/29 21:16

Cerk --

You have a major, but not insurmountable, challenge ahead of you. Typically IT folks have been hired for their talent and independence and now they probably feel like you are changing the rules of the game. Additionally, it sounds like key individual goals (billable hours) may ultimately work against you.

The best way to get this effort moving in the right direction is to involve these employees in the process and communicate as often as you can about what's happening. You and the other managers should create the framework for the move to teams -- number and type of teams and the ultimate goal. And then involve the employees in the definition of the specifics. This could be accomplished by each manager being responsible for the definition of a specific team and its scope and boundaries. Their job would then be to pull together the employees in a subteam and hammer out the details, then bring them back to the large group for concurrence.

This will enable the employees to have some skin in the game, leverage their independent thoughts by contributing to the greater good to the group and allow them to experience the team effort first hand. It should reduce or eliminate you having to "sell" them on this process.

Two tools to help you get those teams started are "Managed Empowerment - An Oxymoron" and the "Team Start Up Guide." You can pick up your free copies by going to our Team Building Tools page and entering your name and email address to get the instant download.

Change is hard and selling it to people rarely works. They have to see what's in it for them. The best way to do that is for them to be part of the development.

Let us know how this works out for you.

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