

BLACKMORE FOUR

Stronger Performance through Partnership



What are the blocks stopping your organisation being efficient/effective?

Before we delve into the blocks that could be stopping your organisation to its full potential, we need to understand the difference between organisational effectiveness and organisational efficiency. In simple terms, the first can be described as the “what” an organisation delivers and its ability to match the intended outcomes from the leadership and business goals. Effectiveness is a measure of how well these outcomes have been met. Of course, this is not simple and there are many facets. In the case of efficiency, this is the way an organisation delivers the outcomes. Ideally, this will be with the minimal possible human, financial and operational resource. If you take the two together then there is massive potential.

The problem is that there are levels of complication and complexity in any organisation that needs to be understood for it to perform. Furthermore, there are inherent blockers that can hinder the performance. At this point, we will not be discussing the potential solutions, but increasing awareness of the blockers. We will try to cover some of the functional or process blockers and then some of the human or managerial blockers.

Functional or process blockers

If we think about classical change management models, such as the 8-Step Kotter model or the 10-step Jick model, then at the core to these improvements is effective communication. The term communication is used so much these days it be trite. What we are talking about is the ability to communicate the needs of the organisation to the workforce in a way that engages them. Furthermore, it can come with a predication that communication is minimal. We have seen many organisations where there has been over communication during programmes and initiatives to a point where it has turned staff off. Getting the right level of two-way communication is critical.

Lack of clear accountabilities and responsibilities can also be a hurdle. We have seen this on numerous occasions, even in sophisticated organisations where they have established protocols. We use a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consult and Inform) chart where we can, and specifically at the start of any transformation or initiative. Although some leaders do not necessarily see the value and have concerns about keeping them evergreen, we see that they bring a level of clarity and trigger meaningful debate.

Having clear leadership accountabilities and staff responsibilities are critical, but these must be supported by purposeful and relevant management structures. Leaders need to be able not just to communicate but execute work and decisions effectively. We will leave the debate for line vs function vs matrix for another article. The point is that management structure must be fit for purpose, with clear lines of authority. We have both experienced large organisations where the lines are ‘fuzzy’ which hinders progress and management effectiveness.

The next potential blockers are bureaucracy and inadequate management processes. It is not the same as the above, but is interrelated to the above, i.e., poor structure, communication and accountability. An overly bureaucratic system leads to far too many approvals and recycle loops. Where processes are overly

complicated or unclear, this leads to confusion and stagnation. This in turn hinders the organisation in terms of performance and agility, whether it be selling or operations.

Human or managerial blockers

An indirect hindrance to organisational efficiency and effectiveness is allowing internal politics to thrive. This tends to be less obvious by its nature but can be toxic. Again, this is also linked to the above, but generally founded and grounded in poor and inauthentic leadership. All the above can drive low levels of energy, both individually and collectively. Research through iPEC (Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching) shows that low levels of energy impede personal and team performance.

Finally, a lack of skilled and experienced managers with appropriate training also have a negative impact. There is evidence that 60% plus of would be managers take on a managerial role without the proper experience or training. Traditionally this was because the 'perceived glitter' around a managerial position was driven by a significant proportion of emotion in addition to logic. As the younger generations come through, they are generally more curious and open-minded to ask the right questions and get the right training.

Without getting into the mechanics and details, a considerable proportion of the challenges raised above can be dealt with through strong and authentic leadership, being aware to the potential blockers, role modelling appropriate behaviours and providing the relevant leadership.

Organisations such as the IoD (Institute of Directors) have their online learning academy such that leaders can be developed through a competency framework, which includes such topics such as leadership and governance. The CMI (Chartered Management Institute) offer similar programmes.

Aspire2BLean and Blackmore Four offer expertise in organisational change management that is context-rich and outcome-oriented. Our companies work in partnership where our combined perspectives work to integrate people and process solutions to deliver performance, growth, agility, productivity and effectiveness.