Practical ideas...on how to create <u>role clarity</u>

A major driver of individual morale and confidence is the extent to which individuals are clear about what is expected of them, how their work makes a contribution and the degree of autonomy they have in performing their roles. An important discipline of leadership is to assist individuals achieve high levels of role clarity. Of course, role clarity on its own is not sufficient to help people perform to their optimum, however it is often recognised as an important factor. It is sometimes said that *you don't manage people, you manage boundaries* – this is at the core of building role clarity.

Outlined below are a number of broadly stated actions, organised by six overarching themes, that maybe helpful in thinking about your actions and behaviours as a leader in order to generate role clarity in your team and for individuals.

How to create role clarity

1. Describe <u>organisational directions and context</u> and how their work fits in

- Spend time explaining the 'big picture' to those in your team, focusing on where the organisation is headed and <u>why.</u>

- Discuss the team's contribution to the bigger picture, highlighting the key strategic issues and ideas about how to deal with them.

- Provide context about their role and how it fits within the organisation and its direction.

- Discuss senior leadership team decisions with the team and explain the context of those decisions so that they understand organisational directions.

- Meet with the team on a regular basis to discuss what is happening at an organisational and Divisional level.

2. Engage the team in understanding the <u>team purpose, objectives and role</u>

- Engage in discussion with team members to develop a collective view about team purpose, objectives and role.

- Develop a high-level map of roles across the team that clearly describes the focus of all the individual roles and how they contribute to the whole.

- Organise business planning sessions at half yearly intervals where team goals and expectations are part of the agenda.

- Ensure that reporting lines are clear - this will help staff know who they are accountable to and where they can go for help with work problems.

- Provide an organisational chart that gives a clear view of the organisational structure and communication channels.

3. Work continuously with individuals to clarify their <u>understanding of their role</u>

- Ensure staff have an up to date role or position description, which includes the role purpose, reporting relationships and the key duties expected of them.

- Provide all new starters with a corporate and local induction and ensure they are aware of their role within their immediate work team or unit, program area and the broader organisation.

- When assigning new tasks/projects have a one-on-one conversation where, together, you confirm

How to create role clarity

expectations and the process for reviewing progress.

- In regular conversations, ask individuals to articulate their understanding of expectations.

- As part of the performance management process, check whether team members are clear regarding roles and expectations and, where appropriate, provide additional clarity in formulating updated performance plans.

- Define the work in terms of outcomes but leave the path to achievement undefined.

- Write a personal letter outlining role and expectations.

- Let staff tell you how they might deliver.

4. Set and maintain high standards of performance

- Set high, yet attainable, standards for work performance that are clearly communicated and understood.

- Continually and consistently reinforce performance expectations through feedback.

- When people do achieve the high standards, acknowledge, recognise and thank them.

- If a person regularly fails to meet expectations follow through and have the 'difficult conversation' – do not tolerate poor performance.

- Expect the best. Successful leaders set high expectations for themselves and for others. These can shape our own behaviour. High expectations lead to high performance.

- Highlight examples of excellent performance to others in the team.

5. Provide guidance on priorities

- Make judgement calls when staff have conflicting priorities.

- Provide timely guidance to staff on priorities when they are struggling with a long 'to do' list.

- Help people prioritise their workloads when under pressure.

6. Align authority with accountability

- Encourage team members to participate in clarifying their authority and boundaries so they have an appreciation of the process and feel engaged.

- Seek feedback from team members that they are comfortable to practice within these boundaries and their capabilities are commensurate with your expectations.

- Let staff know what results they are accountable for – be clear and explicit

- Delegate the authority along with the responsibility. Don't make people come back to you for too many minor approvals.

- Ensure individuals are given the necessary authority to do their job. If you have delegated tasks to them, ensure that you notify the necessary people so stakeholders deal directly with the individual.

Please help us add to the list. Let us know about other effective things you do to help provide role clarity for their staff.

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