

A Formula: Time, Focus and Feeling

Dr. Manuel Angel (Coco) Morales

It was the great scholar and researcher Peter B. Vaill who established that leaders of high competitive and performing organizations manifest high degrees of time, feeling and focus. Time refers to the consistently long hours leaders devote to their companies. They are almost compulsive workaholics, meaning that they are working all the time. Also, they typically stay in their jobs longer than those counterparts who are not in charge of high execution organizations. Feeling refers to the clarity with which they express their respect and devotion for the organization, for the people in it and for the love they have for their professions. They have a personal way of coming through as fairly intelligent and sensitive human beings. Focus means that they know the activity thoroughly and very well. They have an extraordinary ability to put their finger on the two or three things key and pending at any moment that most need attention to assure quick, visible and dramatic results.

THE THINGS EXECUTIVE FOCUS ON BEAR A MATERIAL AND CONCEPTUAL RELATION TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, MISSION AND HIGH EXECUTION STANDARDS.

The point is that this kind of leadership as a performing art is linked to the idea of concentrating on matters that pervade their organization's performance; matters relevant to the future of operations; and matters that everyone knows and agrees that are top priorities business.

Leaders of a high competitive organization find their work thrilling. Their understanding of what needs to be done is astonishing (focus), their availability and willingness to stay on something until it is done is refreshing (time), and through it all they are interesting, educated, memorable, sensitive and charismatic people to be around (feeling).

As it has been studied, THE BEST PURPOSING IS DONE BY LEADERS WHO POSSESS THESE QUALITIES OF TIME, FEELING AND FOCUS.

I have personally worked with some organizations to develop this kind of leadership and performance orientation, and once these attributes and behavioral patterns are acquired, subjects make their vision and sense of mission so real to others that everyone is ready to engage in any kind of difficult and complex work.

Of course, just last week good friends were inquiring us about the implications of these reflections inside the top team. We were sharing with these colleagues, and with some students that the biggest challenge with top team is overcoming the distorting of feeling! Top teams, by definition, hopefully already possess the willingness to commit time and energy, and hopefully they also possess or can acquire technical knowledge about strategy for nourishing the focus dimension. It is our experience that often they may feel puzzled about feeling. That's the main sensation-feeling puzzled. This has led some leaders to say that if it wasn't for the feeling dimension the job would have been perfectly fun!

How to resolve the puzzle? What can a top team do, regardless of the forces and tensions of competitiveness, suspicion and political gaming, forcing them to manufacture a superficial masquing of cordiality?

The sciences of organizational design and development point to team development solutions that can be use, but facilitators of this process have to be expert “surgeons” to work effectively with the behavior modification ventures for top teams.

Explicit team enhancement and development is a required leading edge that promises high results. The idea here is to engage in a healthy intervention integrating GOALS, ROLES, PROCESSES and INDIVIDUAL FEELINGS for increasing the team’s performance.

There are two other strategies that can be use concurrently to the first one to improve the capacity of the team to talk within itself, while at the same time benefiting the entire organization. The second strategy is that of extreme and intensive one to one and collective team intervention. The third strategy is that of offering profound knowledge education.

The three strategies for team enhancement can be a part of a project for working with the whole organization’s manifestation of the core challenge: the top team and its contribution to organizational health. This a critical issue because orthodox thinking stresses that the top team should press hard the rest of the organization.

It has been my empirical argument for quite a long time, but especially for these chaotic times, that the top team also has the responsibility or relieving some of the pressure on the people in the organization. Yes, these days pressure can be a privilege! But it is so as long as it is healthy, constructive and creatively demanding. Toxic pressure reduces performance. Healthy pressure increases execution.

The organizational design working question is how to improve the climate of the organization in order to improve the climate of the top team, and vice versa.

Finally, a very important point on executive education. There are three key points on this matter: 1) Education in strategic management is needed, and it is best framed through team education. 2) The top team gets stronger while learning and getting educated together. 3) If the education is real profound and educators superb, the top team will have a high learning experience together in a sophisticated setting. These three factors create a powerful synergy for the execute team and have a dramatic and positive impact in the rest of the organization. The huge results are that they: keep pace with shifts in markets, technologies, cultures and the competition; innovate by moving quickly from generating ideas to executing and diffusing them throughout their organization; employ distributed leadership to unlocked crucial, expertise, and new ways of working together, wherever time, focus and feeling reside within their company.

A profound curriculum will have to include at least four inter-related programs or comprehensive courses: 1) Strategic Leadership. 2) Organizations, Markets and Customers. 3) Anticipating the Future. 4) Personal Assessment and Development.

The challenge is to help the top team and their entire organization to be high in time, focus and feeling. This is the logic a competitive organization.