



BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENTIATION

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I just read an article in Harvard Business Review entitled "What Really Works." The authors conducted a "groundbreaking, five-year study" that revealed the "must-have management practices that truly produce results." They claim that business must excel at four primary practices: talent, innovation, leadership, mergers and partnerships. I had to ask myself why it took five years to reach such glaring statements of the obvious. Oh, I'm not questioning the conclusion; indeed, companies that have not mastered these management basics are unlikely to succeed much less rise to the top of their industries. This graduate business school prescription for success is sound, no doubt, but it's a given, a ticket to the dance; but the question remains, can you dance?

Well, you can't if you haven't mastered the art of causing your organization to exemplify positive Behavioral Differentiation at every customer touch point.

~ Bob Flynn

YOUR PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOR IS NOT PART OF YOUR BUSINESS – YOUR PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOR IS YOUR BUSINESS!

Jim Collins's best seller Good to Great is a case in point. His Level 5 Leaders are great examples of business managers who not only exemplify BD but create it. He describes them as having "a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will"; infected with an incurable need to produce sustained results. However, the most important assessment he makes is...

These leaders are more plow horse than show horse; they give other credit, they build strong teams because they enable others to fulfill themselves. They ask consistently... and often "What do you need from me to be successful?" How can I help? What can I do?

What Collins describes as Level 5 Leadership, I would label as Positive Leadership Behavioral Differentiation. And it's the key ingredient in positively positioning your organization because...

IF YOU DON'T GET IT RIGHT ON THE INSIDE, YOU AIN'T GONNA GET IT RIGHT ON THE OUTSIDE!

And when you get it right on the inside you get the HUGE pay off of...

Discretionary Effort

This is the level of positive BD the employees of your organization could give if they really wanted to. It's the absolute key to creating positive BD. When you achieve it, you don't have to concern yourself with commoditization because your competitors can't copy it; it's a cultural thing, it's hot wired into the very fabric of your enterprise. It simply can't be achieved without paying the price and most refuse to pay it.

See, the more your rivals claim to be positively different but behave otherwise, the more they play right into the hands of organizations that have learned to create positive BD. If you are one of those organizations, you win by default.

According to many recent surveys, over 40% of all employees work significantly below their capabilities. They produce far less work than they could and they behave in ways that displease prospective and existing customers. Why is this? The answer is also revealed in the surveys; varying degrees of management ineffectiveness. It's not that management isn't trying, it's simply that management does not understand the process of motivating discretionary effort within the organization.

The Facts:

- Effectively motivating discretionary effort is determined by precise laws that govern human behavior.
- It is the degree of discretionary effort that people willingly give that determines your ability to create and sustain positive BD.
- Most managers are not effective motivators because their motivational approaches are not based on anything more than personal experience and limited observation. Additionally, their methods are typically underpinned by emotion, perception and the way they prefer to be motivated.
- With escalating competitive pressures, a business cannot rely on trial and error to determine the behavior of its workforce. Managers must know that what they are doing will produce positive BD with great predictability.

The Two Most Effective Methods of Creating Positive BD.

1. Antecedents

- Set the stage for positive BD.
- They do not cause positive BD.
- Inform people of what you want to happen.
- Have a limited effect on behavior.
- May cause behavior to occur once or at best a few times.
- To have any lasting effect they must be repeated.
- The only thing that gives antecedents sustaining behavioral influence is when it is paired with a consequence.
- Antecedents get behaviors going.
- Consequences keep behaviors going.

Business invests inordinately in antecedent activity such as: Training, Policies, Mission/Vision Statements, Slogans, Memos, Proclamations, Meetings, Posters, and Buttons.

2. Consequences

- Behavior is a function of its consequences.
- Follow the behavior.
- Alter the probability that the behavior will reoccur.
- Cause the behavior to occur more or less frequently in the future.
- The role of consequences is to sustain desired behavior.
- Without the reinforcement of consequences no behavior, [either desired or undesired] will last.

Here's the Bottom Line...

PEOPLE BEHAVE THE WAY THEY DO BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM WHEN THEY DO IT.

Here's the other Bottom Line...

IF THE BEHAVIOR YOU DESIRE IS NOT OCCURRING, CONSEQUENCES AIN'T HAPPENING!

The major impediment to positive BD is that management has not identified the exact behaviors they want at every customer touch point and then determined the antecedents to get the behaviors going and the consequences to keep them going.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

The Facts:

- Both positive and negative consequences increase behaviors.
- Positive consequences cause behavior to increase because a positive meaningful consequence follows the behavior.
- Negative consequence causes a behavior to increase in order to escape or avoid some unpleasant consequence.

It is essential that you understand the difference between positive and negative consequence because the characteristics of the behavior generated by each is VERY different.

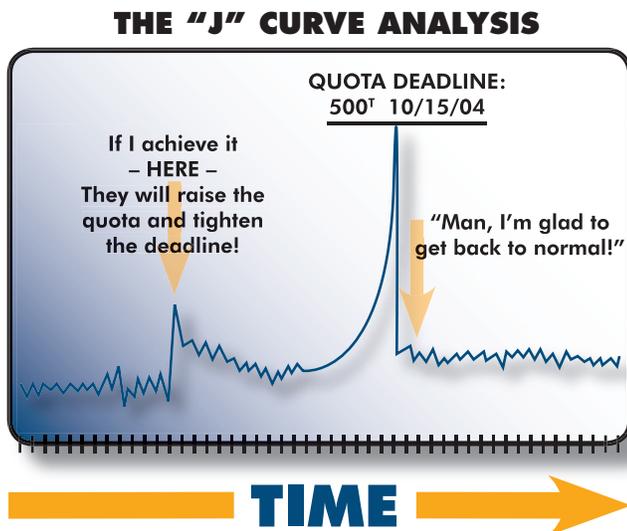
The use of negative consequence can often motivate behavior that helps achieve short-term goals, but...

The long-term use of negative consequences can never sustain the high levels of discretionary effort required to achieve lasting positive Behavioral Differentiation.

The "J" Curve Analysis

Negative consequences are quite prevalent in today's management scheme of things. It's the norm because it's more expedient than positive consequences and it's what most managers [at all levels] grew up with, in both their formative years and their years invested on the job.

Take a look at the highlighted statement above; when I say **"the characteristics of the behavior generated by each are very different,"** I'm referring to the comparison of positive versus negative consequences. When negative consequences are the most pronounced form of reinforcement, behavior varies accordingly.



As you can see from the graphic above, behaviors "spike" to meet the demands of the negative consequence then immediately return to "normal," which is far below the optimum behaviors that could be exhibited if the employee really wanted to.

The Continued Downside of Negative Consequences

Negative reinforcement achieves a level of behavior that's just enough to get by. Positive behaviors generated by negative consequences tend to increase at the last possible minute. The short-term "victories" of negative consequences often produce "seeds" of future defeat. And worst of all, negative reinforcement is only effective when all that is required is *minimal* compliance or performance.

Without the addition of positive reinforcement, the improved behaviors achieved through negative reinforcement will soon disappear. The undesirable behaviors of the past will resurface and are usually worse than the original ones.

You can only achieve Positive Behavioral Differentiation if you maximize the discretionary effort of the work force. That will never happen if negative reinforcement is the norm Why? Because it arouses passive aggressive behavior preventing people from performing at their best.

Positive Reinforcement Maximizes Positive BD

Positive reinforcement is clearly the most effective method of achieving positive Behavioral Differentiation. So there is no misunderstanding...

Positive reinforcement is any consequence or feedback that follows a behavior and increases its frequency.

You can only achieve Positive Behavioral Differentiation if you maximize the discretionary effort of the work force. That will never happen if negative reinforcement is the norm Why? Because it arouses passive aggressive behavior preventing people from performing at their best.

- We flip the switch and the light comes on.
- You pull on your desk drawer and it opens.
- You press your pen on a piece of paper and it makes a mark.
- You call someone's name and they respond.
- You press a key on your computer and a letter appears.

"SO WHAT?" YOU ASK...

If positive reinforcement were not built into these performances the behavior would stop!

As managers and leaders it is our responsibility to design work so that positive reinforcement occurs as a natural part of the process.

THE TWO TYPES OF CREATED POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

1. Tangible Reinforcement

This type of positive reinforcement has "salvage" value: a bonus, an appliance, a piece of furniture.

2. Social Reinforcement

Some examples of social reinforcement are: providing positive feedback, a congratulatory note, praise, encouragement, a plaque, and acknowledgement.

The most available form of created reinforcement is social reinforcement. You do not have to have a budget for it; you don't need permission to give it; and when administered correctly...

IT HAS TREMENDOUS POWER TO MOTIVATE POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENTIATION!

Coming up in the June Issue

We will continue discussing the process of gaining discretionary effort leading to Positive BD. The main topics will include:



- Unintentionally de-motivating desired behavior.
- Sustaining Positive BD.
- Pinpointing specific results and corresponding behaviors.
- Effective behavioral feedback.
- Feedback and reinforcement.

As always, if you have suggestions, comments, or questions; email me rjf@pworks.info

For information about PeopleWorks services visit our website: pworks.info

We Offer Consulting Services In Behavioral Differentiation And These Courses

The Customer Perspective Selling System

Managing Key Accounts

Winning Proposals

Value For Value Negotiations

Coaching To Win

Presenting To Win

Influencing Without Authority

Time Management

The 12 Absolutes Of Personal Effectiveness