




Management Concepts Series – 2010

** Common-Sense Guidelines for Successful Organizations **

	Management Concept #15 <i>Fear, Accountability, Focus on the Future, and The Big 21</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Active Management Pillar Applicability</p> 	<p><i>This will be controversial and politically quite incorrect. But here it is anyway:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Absence of fear is a recipe for indolence, sloth, and failure. Guarantees without consequences breed corruption and government bailouts. In general, progress is based on a mix of a vision of the future and fear of the consequences of failure.</i></p> <p>The carrot and the stick is a common idiom. Rewards and consequences: another way to express the same thing. Rewards without consequences lead to stagnation and failure. Consequences without rewards lead to any number of bad things (including loneliness; nobody wants to hang out with people that beat them up all the time).</p> <p>Setting and Managing Expectations</p> <p>There is a key to balancing this equation. It's the ability to manage expectations and make sure we're all on the same page. Here is the mix:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarity of expectations 2. Consistency: Establish patterns that are reasonably predictable around the your expectations 3. Agreement: Get agreement on meeting the expectations (if you blind-side your staff with unstated expectations, it is as counter-productive as not having the expectations in the first place) 4. Consequences: Establish a culture of accountability around commitments and meeting expectations (just like dealing with teenagers: if you say you're going to ground the kid if he returns home after midnight, then you better do it) <p>But. . . This isn't high school</p> <p>Here is the flip side. If you are repeatedly stepping through the above, there is something wrong. You risk becoming an enabler and a crutch. The establishment and management of expectations should, over time, become a subtext of your culture. If the steps above are required over and over, your staff is not growing into their responsibilities. This is a team and just because you don't ask the specific question, doesn't mean they can bail. And there are some things, like gravity, we expect people to know about. The more experience, the higher the pay, the loftier the position in the organization, the more we expect behavior in a proactive rather than a reactive model.</p> <p>Here's the good news, living in a cycle of expectations, commitment, and accountability rapidly leads to a performance culture. When that happens, the absence of any of the three will be noticed very quickly.</p> <p>The Conversation of Accountability</p> <p>In all the aspects of your enterprise (profit, nonprofit, school, other) you must have a conversation of accountability. Below is a list of 21 questions that are a foundation for your conversations. The list shown below is crafted to apply to business and a discussion around a project, product, or change. But with slight modifications it could be applied to an operational unit.</p>

Keep it Simple – 21 Questions

Stick to the basics and don't get distracted. This list gives you the script to keep the discussion on focused. Demand simple answers. Has the new computer system improved our efficiency or not? Has the marketing plan produced increased market share and sales? Is the department running efficiently and producing results? By focusing on a relatively few questions consistently, your team will begin to internalize the expectations and answer them before you ask. They will have investment and attachment to the things they have committed to, and they will get the job done.

<i>The 21 Questions</i>	
<i>Why are we having this conversation?</i> Both of these must be answered	
What problem are we trying to solve?	1
Why do we need to solve it?	2
<i>Does it fit and enable our success?</i> The answer to all three must be yes.	
Does it support our mission and our outcomes?	3
How does it fit within our strategy?	4
Is it a good business practice?	5
<i>What is the justification? Why should we?</i> At least one of these must be yes	
Does it sell business?	6
Does it retain business?	7
Does it increase our profits?	8
Does it increase the value of the organization?	9
Is it necessary to our effective operation?	10
Is it required by law?	11
<i>Have you thought it through?</i>	
How much does it cost?	12
What is the return?	13
How will we harvest the return?	14
What is the ongoing support commitment?	15
Is that a value? (based on the market)	16
What are the alternatives?	17
What are the downsides and the risks?	18
What is the exit strategy?	19
What is the confidence of a success? Based on. . .	20
May I see the numbers?	21

What just happened?

We have obtained a commitment to results and knowledge that there are consequences attached to not living up to our commitments. We have started to institutionalize the carrot, the stick, and solid business thinking.

Post Script: All of the above is true and in the vast majority of situations, will serve you well. That said; remember management is an art and a science. If you do need to do something that violates the above, do it purposefully and with your eyes open. Not by accident or inertia.

About Agovia Consulting

Agovia is your partner in crafting common-sense plans, execution governance, and management practices that are laser-focused and, by design, create your results and your success. We help you solve your problems today and help assure your success tomorrow through management practices built on outcomes, results, and achievement.

Managing to Success

Success requires the alignment and coordination of many factors. Enterprises must be competent at, not only the elements of their core mission, they must also have the ability to create and maintain the infrastructure that surrounds and supports that mission.

What We Do

Agovia is a management consulting firm. It's what we do. Picture us a management fitness coach. We help you develop and strengthen the skills you need to succeed. We have provided consultation and solutions to multiple industries including: Information Technology, Insurance, Universities, and Homeless Services. We bring you the support, advice, and driving facilitation that allow you to stop "planning" and start getting results.

Services

- ❖ **Positioning for the Win**
- ❖ **Identity Development (Mission & Vision)**
- ❖ **Team Effectiveness Coaching**
- ❖ **Strategic and Tactical Planning**
- ❖ **Planning and Governance Training**
- ❖ **Organization Turn-Around**
- ❖ **Retreat Facilitation**
- ❖ **Runaway Project Services**
- ❖ **Problem Solving – A Cultural Effective Approach**
- ❖ **Conflict Mediation**
- ❖ **Team/Function Start-Up**

Trust yourself

Experience tells us that most of the time you do know what you are doing. You are the expert in your core domain area. The challenges businesses often encounter are nuts & bolts issues: organization, clear vision, discipline, management infrastructure, and communication. Sometimes you just need a catalyst.

We can help.

We listen.

We pay attention.

We work with you

