

rB Ten Minute Conversation | Rod Brace

<http://rodbrace.com/article/tenminute>

We tend to over-complicate, in leadership, just what it takes to be successful. New books flood the leadership genre daily; each selling the next 7-steps to successfully achieve what you have never achieved with the previous multitude of 7-step wonders. We tend to over-complicate.

 If I were to reduce leadership down to the essence of what we need to accomplish, I would say it is to align the people of the organization with the purpose of the organization. An organization is really a team of individuals, so we must first start with aligning individuals with their part of the organizational purpose. It is simple, yet not easy. As successful leaders, we begin to believe that our audience is the masses who long for our emailed wisdom related to strategy, world-change, personal enlightenment, or whatever the latest 7-step book evangelizes.

We believe, given our stature, that one-on-one conversations with mere mortals are beneath our position. The leader that refuses to engage on a personal level, with a frequency of unprecedented proportions, will not endear others to his or her leadership nor will they align individuals with the organizational purpose. Leaders must engage with individuals.

My simple approach is to insist that every person in the organization have at least a 10-minute conversation with their direct supervisor every week to successfully align individuals with organizational purpose. In that conversation (which implies talking and listening) we educate and test for comprehension an individual's understanding of their role as it relates to the purpose of the organization.

In that encounter we ask:

What is your role in fulfilling our organizational purpose?

What barriers do you encounter in fulfilling that role?

What can I do to facilitate your role?

What improvements in other areas of our organization can we make to fulfill our organizational purpose?

By asking individual role oriented questions related to your organizational purpose you clarify role misperceptions and align personal activities with organizational purpose. A 10-minute conversation becomes your management style. Your team becomes more engaged. Accountability levels increase. Unaligned employees are identified so that corrective measures can be pursued. The organization, overall, becomes more fluid and efficient.

For leaders to effectively deploy the 10-minute conversation approach, they must have a

manageable span of control (preferably no more than 25 employees) and must re-organize their time and workflow to accommodate these conversations. When effectively achieved, the weekly conversations tremendously reduce the previous work time spent on correcting issues of misaligned efforts thereby increasing the leader's time to engage in conversations.

To align your team with your organizational purpose, return to relationships built on clarity and conversation. The conversation begins with you.