

effective environments newsletter



CONSULTANTS TO NONPROFITS, SMALL BUSINESSES & ENTREPRENEURS

THE POWER OF INTENTION

It's Not About Time

Rather than focus on time, we invite you to focus on *intention*. We often ask the groups we address, "How many of you have ever had the experience of having more to do than you have time to do, and you managed to get it done anyway?" Almost always, every hand will go up. We then ask, "And how many have had something to do, PLENTY of time to do it, and it didn't get done?" Again, every hand will go up. The point? More often than not, our ability to accomplish something is not so much a function of the time we have as it is of our intention to ensure that it is accomplished. Our focus, our commitment, our planning and our willingness to marshal all the resources available to us to produce the result -- all these factors affect the outcome far more than the amount of "time" we have available to us.

Generating intention

Bringing your intention to bear demands clarity about what, in fact, you intend to accomplish. the process of identifying that intention has been variously

referred to as "creative visualization," "beginning with the end in mind," and "getting clear on what you want." We invite you to be rigorous with yourself in articulating your "purpose" and your "intended results" (your "P & IR") for any activity you undertake.

Your purpose statement is meant to inspire you. As you formulate your purpose, consider how the activity you are about to undertake will forward your commitments this year and fulfill the objectives you have established to measure your success. Your purpose will express the overall difference this activity will make, or what impact will be made on the quality of life.

For example, the purpose in clearing your desk or revamping your files might be "to generate an environment in which I am highly effective and have space to create extraordinary results." The purpose for installing a new accounting software system might be, "To empower ourselves to manage our financial records with impeccability, integrity and velocity."

Inside that purpose, your "intended results" will name *all* the outcomes to be achieved. Sometimes, naming all outcomes requires some imagination and forethought. For example, it may not be enough to have installed a new accounting software system that allows for expanded record-keeping capacity. You will also want a system that is affordable, that is readily mastered by your staff, and that can be installed within a time frame that works for you.

Interestingly, your willingness to name on paper *every one* of your intended outcomes in connection with a given project or activity bears a direct relationship to your ability to produce to those outcomes. Conversely, an incomplete list can lead to outcomes that are less than fully satisfying.

It is important to state your intended outcomes clearly and precisely. There is a vast difference, for example, between "have a meeting about the new accounting software" and "have the committee align on which software package we will install." State the result you really intend



Published by: effective environments • Editor: Sunny Yates • Call or e-mail us for your free subscription.
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to have, and be bold about it.

When to use a P & IR

At some point, of course, this process is cumbersome and unnecessary. Few of us, for example, will gain much benefit from drafting a P & IR for brushing our teeth. (Keep in mind, however, that one advantage of this process is to remind us of our commitments and our choices in the matter of what we undertake - and to eliminate the tyranny of "shoulds"!)

For major projects and significant events, a P & IR will contribute immeasurably to your success. On a more day-to-day level, many of our clients have found this technology useful in generating satisfying vacations and interactions with family. On a smaller scale, using this process to clarify your intentions before you make or take a telephone call can make your communication clear and effective. In each these cases, ask yourself what outcome or outcomes you want. Be sure to include not only what information you mean to convey clearly (or acquire) but what relationship you are generating and what experience you mean to leave with everyone involved.

Conclusion

The power of human intention is widely acknowledged, yet often forgotten. When we consider the number of human accomplishments that were at one time *known* to be impossible, we can remind ourselves that there are few, if any, limits to what is possible beyond those we impose on ourselves. As Mahatma Gandhi

once said, "To believe what has not occurred in history will not occur at all is to argue disbelief in the dignity of man."

Tips for Effectiveness

Check our web site each month for the latest in "tips for effectiveness." Each month we publish a new set of ideas and ways to be effective. You can read them online or print them in Acrobat Reader pdf format. Simply go to www.effenv.com and click on "tips for effectiveness."

Management Development Program

There is both an art and a science to managing people in a way that empowers accountability while providing strong support for your staff.

We've designed a new six-month program that expands your capacity for personal effectiveness and leadership, and your ability to empower individuals and teams.

The program incorporates a model for effective management and addresses practical issues confronting today's managers. For more information, call Gary Yates at (707) 433-4055.

Thank You
to Ann Moreno of AVM Graphics for the new design of our effective environments newsletter!

effective environments Services

Our services are designed for both individuals and groups. Our

focus is on the human factor and the principles and practices that unleash people's passion.

We offer a practical and powerful set of tools for achieving results, including:

- A streamlined technology for designing and managing projects
- A system for "time management" that focuses on enhancing results and quality of life
- Principles for effective communication for individuals and teams.
- Support in establishing and fulfilling priorities, including knowing what to work on today
- Strategies for developing effective teams and expanding their capacity to produce uncommon results.