

WORKING FROM YOUR DESK IS A GREAT WAY TO GET OUTSOURCED

You may be a technically gifted guru, but if you rely on electronic communication rather than personal engagement, your role is in danger of being outsourced.

Technical skills are available more cheaply from other parts of the world.

Success depends on meaningful engagement between practitioners and decision makers. That's you and your stakeholders

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING

For most of us, our role is about achieving outcomes that involve other people.

We need to engage with those people. We need to make sure that the outcome we provide is the outcome they are seeking. We must ensure we understand their requirements before offering solutions.

Here we run into a complication, which is that people typically don't discuss their real problems and issues with 'strangers'—colleagues they don't know—hence the need for a personal connection. This doesn't come from sitting at your desk and communicating electronically.

It stands to reason that you can achieve much better rapport by engaging in person. I refer to emails as rapport-filters because they are so effective at filtering out any chance of rapport.



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REACTIVE MANAGEMENT IS NOT APPRECIATED

When our action list is compiled from our inbox, we are being reactive.

Several problems arise from this approach. First and foremost is that the more we brand ourselves as someone who reacts, the more we will get used to this capacity

As a result, we will acquire a long list of things to do, with limited time to do them in, so creating a master-servant relationship between our stakeholders and us

There is an issue of recognition here as well. If stakeholders throw stuff at us to fix, and it goes back to them fixed, even if it's been done really well, there's not a great deal of recognition.

If all we do is what we are told to do, we need to acquire a reputation for doing it quickly because there is little else, other than the speed of response, for the stakeholder to judge us against. Whatever we did, was simply what they expected us to do.



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Success depends on meaningful engagement between practitioners and decision makers. That’s you and your stakeholders.”

“When our action list is compiled from our Inbox we are being reactive. The only way to get praise and recognition is to do something above and beyond the initial requirements.”

FAME AND RECOGNITION COMES FROM BEING PROACTIVE

Measuring returns is where many people have difficulty and give up. Returns come from the impact of behavioral change on productivity. If we don't look for them, they are easy to miss. We might put good results down to good luck or inherent competence.

JHW conducts post workshop discussions with participants to understand how their behavior has changed and how that impacts productivity. We have found that major areas for productivity improvement stem from:

- More effective use of time: Addressing the important rather than just the urgent (often low value) tasks. Focus on outcomes rather than being busy with tasks.
- Better outcomes from meetings: Getting the results, commitments and agreements we need more often, more timely and with less effort.
- Greater stakeholder/client engagement leading to greater cooperation, higher customer satisfaction, repeat business and a heightened perception of value in the eyes of the stakeholder.
- More thorough understanding of stakeholder requirements leading to better and more effective solutions and less rework.
- Reading stakeholders' and colleagues' temperaments thus reducing workplace conflict and irritation and achieving better outcomes more efficiently.

In addition, good training provides a morale boost for staff. It demonstrates corporate commitment to staff development and provides a framework of commonality to help relate better. After attending the Engagement Skills Workshop staff return to work feeling energised and enthusiastic and this is infectious. Motivated staff leads



BEING CORE TO THE BUSINESS, NOT COMMODITY

An overseas subsidiary of a major Australian institution had become the “client from hell” for the IT Support Group

Shortly after attending the Engagement Skills Workshop, the account manager found himself providing this client with an update on process changes.

He decided to change tack. Rather than telling the client what he was going to do next, he spent the first hour asking about their needs, their priorities, their business destination and their support requirements.

The relationships immediately warmed, Historically there had been little interest or time given to understanding these needs or challenges. The account manager later said, “Without realising it, we must have come across in a rather arrogant way when we were telling them their solution, without taking any interest in their needs. We have more work to do but I am optimistic.”

BEING CORE TO THE BUSINESS, NOT COMMODITY

The ERP Support Group of a major international corporation attended the Engagement Skills Workshop, and then as a group made a point of applying some of the messages of the workshop.

In particular they each made greater effort to build stronger engagement with their stakeholders, and listen more to their problems and needs.

Some months later due to economic downturn, the organisation decided to downsize the entire Shared Services Division, with the pain to be equally shared across the board.

The business stakeholders of the ERP group, made an impassioned case that the ERP Support Group was providing a vital service to the business and that business would be severely compromised should the cutbacks occur.

JHW Workshop

- Engagement Skills Workshop
- A Seat at the Table
- Consulting/Engagement Skills Refresher
- Gaining Commitment
- Project Launch
- Makin' Movies (Team Building Dynamics)
- Effective Presentations
- Outcome Focused Meetings
- Win/Win Negotiation
- Facilitation Services
- Power Without Authority
- Video Conference Ready

The ERP Support Group was the only part of the Shared Services to escape the cut. They had lifted their perception from a commodity, or necessary but inconvenient cost (like the rest of Shared Service), to value adding and part of the core business.

REACTIVE OF RESPONSIVE

A new starter joins an organisation and tells IT, “I need a laptop connected to the Internet. The IT technician promptly provides a laptop with a connection to the Internet.

One week later the new starter is thoroughly frustrated because they still have no permission to access some of the systems required to do their job properly, and blames the IT technician for his incompetence.

The IT technician says, “You didn’t ask for access to those systems.” The IT technician gave his stakeholder what he asked for (reactive) but didn’t take the trouble to understand what he needed (responsive).