



Manage for the 21st Century

Flexibility: A Critical Leadership Skill

Workshop Description

Organizations around the world are beginning to recognize the importance of creating flexible, responsive work environments to remain competitive in today's fast-paced, global marketplace. What organizations around the world don't necessarily discuss is how to develop and coach leaders to be effective in this environment or how to shift a command and control leadership style to a flexible, responsive style. The goal of this workshop is to begin a conversation with managers on how to shift mindsets in order to become flexible, responsive leaders for the 21st century.

As we move into the 21st century, work environments will need to be more flexible, dynamic, and fluid, to not only adapt to change in today's past-faced marketplace but also to meet the needs of today's complex, ever changing workforce. The dramatic impact of the electronic world has influenced how both employers and employees operate. Today's employees have access to an incredible amount of information; they are more self-directed and self-motivated, capable of managing multiple tasks. Generation Y who grew up with the Internet and technology are more likely to *question authority* and have difficulty adapting to a command and control 20th century work environment and leadership style. At the same time, Baby Boomers who were once comfortable in this work environment are now questioning its long-term effectiveness recognizing its lack of flexibility is forcing them into early retirement, something they are not prepared for.

As the tension builds between the old command and control work environment of the 20th century, and the needs of today's 21st century workforce and marketplace, both managers and employees experience increasing stress, conflict, and pressure that end in a zero sum game with both losing. At this point, it is essential that managers step up to the plate and harness their leadership skills to effectively manage these situations. Flexibility and responsiveness is key as well as the ability to manage the whole complex of human needs rather than managing work as separate from the rest of one's life.

Managers who develop a 21st century leadership approach become key players in reducing the tension between employee and employer. So how do managers begin the process of growing flexible, responsive leadership skills? This workshop will begin by addressing changes in workforce demographics and larger systemic issues impacting the workplace, which set the stage for why managers need to develop new skills to succeed in the 21st century. This workshop will then go on to address 4 key principles that managers will need to master to think and lead more flexibly, such as (1) Expanding Boundaries, (2) "Both-And" Thinking, (3) Judging, Listening, Guiding, (4) Working *with* Resistance.