SACRAO Annual Meeting
Mobile, AL

Building Effective Business Relationships

Session: M1.03
Monday, February 2, 2015
8:15-9:15 AM, 201C
Presenters

• Jeremy Gray
• Reta Pikowsky

• Georgia Institute of Technology
One way to settle issues...
Discussion Points

• Conventional wisdom...
  • Definition of a good business relationship
  • Different approaches for different constituents
  • Developing and maintaining effective business relationships
  • How do you know the relationship is broken?
  • Repairing damaged business relationships
  • Knowing which battles to fight

• Different way of looking at it...
  • Knowledge management

• Things you need to know and do
• Managing your reputation
Georgia Tech Basic Facts

- Public
- Located in Atlanta, GA
- Fall 2014 enrollment: Undergraduate – 14,682, Graduate – 8,427 (23,109 total), up 7.63%
- Global presence
- 31 staff members in the Registrar’s Office
- RO reports to Vice Provost for Enrollment Services who reports to the Provost
- Usual array of functions, with the exception of classroom scheduling
Conventional Wisdom
Defining a Good Business Relationship

Key characteristics that define a good relationship:

- Trust
- Mutual Respect
- Mindfulness
- Welcoming/Valuing Diversity
- Open Communication

Source: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/good-relationships.htm
Trust

Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc.
of a person or thing; confidence

Source: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/trust
Mutual respect is when two people may not agree on everything, but they don't get upset over little things. They are willing to work things out because they care for each other, their common goals and objectives, and for the health of their organization.
Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience.

Source: http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/mindfulness
Valuing diversity is what institutions and members of communities do to acknowledge the benefits of their differences and similarities. They work to build sustainable relationships among people and institutions with diverse memberships.

Open Communication

Open communication occurs when all parties are able to express ideas to one another, such as in a conversation or debate.

Positive communication occurs when all parties involved feel that they were heard.

Different Constituents, Different Approaches

- Students
- Faculty
- Administrators
- Information technology division
- Parents
- The public
- Co-workers
- Colleagues
Ultimately, a relationship-management strategy helps align IT resources with customer requirements, and it can help alleviate the following common criticisms of IT:

- Lack of responsiveness to academic and business needs
- Ineffective use of IT resources
- Inability to effectively and quickly deploy new technology
- System silos organized around business units and technology
- Poor communications between IT and its institutional constituents—faculty, administrators, and students

Source: https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ERB0313.pdf
Building and Maintaining Good Relationships

Encourage honest feedback...

Encourage constructive criticism and be brave enough to suggest ways your constituents can help your office perform better. “If you know where you stand, you can stand stronger.”

Source: http://www.inc.com/guides/201101/how-to-build-better-business-relationships.html
Developing Good Relationships

Listen more than you talk...

It's counter-intuitive, but being a good listener highlights your virtues much better than being a big talker.

Source: http://www.inc.com/guides/201101/how-to-build-better-business-relationships.html
Communicate

“My wife has a slight impediment in her speech. Every now and then she stops to breathe…”

- Jimmy Durante
Developing Good Relationships

Make a routine...

Devise a system to routinely stay in touch with your contacts.

Source: http://www.inc.com/guides/201101/how-to-build-better-business-relationships.html
Developing Good Relationships

Be honest...

It’s important to have others on campus see you as an expert in the things you do, but if asked a question that you can’t answer, just say you don’t know.

Source: http://www.inc.com/guides/201101/how-to-build-better-business-relationships.html
Developing Good Relationships

- Take notes
- Give more than you receive
- Be proactive
- Be real
- Turn blunders into opportunities
- Make it personal
- Meet face-to-face

Source: http://www.inc.com/guides/201101/how-to-build-better-business-relationships.html
How do you know it’s broken?

What are the symptoms?

- “Us against them” mentality
- Failure of team members to communicate critical information
- High attrition rates
- Failure to reach target milestones and timelines

Source: http://iveybusinessjournal.com/topics(strategy/the-relationship-relaunch-how-to-fix-a-broken-alliance#.VFqJvGNGWiA
Repairing Damage, Fixing it

• Diagnose the root causes.
  • Conduct a survey
  • Conduct interviews
  • Get a sense of perceived strengths and weaknesses on both sides

• Try to determine if you *can* move forward.

• If you stick it out, reset the “contract,” make it clear what expectations are on both sides.

• Take the risk of exploring what team members feel are the obstacles and challenges that threaten the relationship.

Source: http://iveybusinessjournal.com/topics/strategy/the-relationship-relaunch-how-to-fix-a-broken-alliance#.VFqJvGNGWiA
Repairing damage, Fixing it

- Understand the different types of problems.
  - Tactical – not enough people to do the work
  - Procedural – the two groups operate differently
  - Systemic – differences in the way the two partners resolve conflict, make decisions, or manage change

- Implement a procedural agreement, agree on how you are going to operate.

- Implement “ground rules.”

- Learn relationship management skills and tools.

- Have a plan for moving forward.

Source: http://iveybusinessjournal.com/topics/strategy/the-relationship-relaunch-how-to-fix-a-broken-alliance#.VFqJvGNGWiA
Repairing the Damage

• Acknowledge it
• Visualize the alternative
• Communicate
• Get commitment
• Be consistent
• Be proactive

Source: http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/05/10/6-steps-to-repair-damaged-professional-relationships
Repairing the Damage

Acknowledge it...

- What caused the damage?
- What was/is your role in it?
- What have the consequences been?
- What are the future consequences if you don’t fix it?

Source: http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/05/10/6-steps-to-repair-damaged-professional-relationships
Repairing the Damage

Visualize the alternative...

- What you do want it to be?
- You don’t have to be friends, but you can be friendly.
- A working relationship should be polite, civil and productive.

Source: http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/05/10/6-steps-to-repair-damaged-professional-relationships
Repairing the Damage

Communicate...

- Speak privately.
- If possible, make it face-to-face.
- Don’t gang up on the other person.
- Remove emotion from the conversation.

Source: http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/05/10/6-steps-to-repair-damaged-professional-relationships
Repairing the Damage

Get commitment...

- Create an alliance.
- Create a verbal contract.
- Follow through, take action.

Source: http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/05/10/6-steps-to-repair-damaged-professional-relationships
Repairing the Damage

Be consistent...

- Actions speak louder than words.
- Don’t regress.
- Changes won’t happen overnight.

Source: http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/05/10/6-steps-to-repair-damaged-professional-relationships
Repairing the Damage

Be proactive…

- People can’t read your mind.
- You are not a mind reader.
- Be intentional.
- Be upfront.

Source: http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/05/10/6-steps-to-repair-damaged-professional-relationships
Pick Your Battles

You don’t have to attend every argument you are invited to.

Source: http://tracingechoes.blogspot.com/2011/12/pick-your-battles.html
Emotional Intelligence

The ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others.

• Three keys:
  • Emotional awareness
  • Ability to harness emotions and apply them constructively
  • Ability to manage emotions, both your own and the emotions of others

Source: http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/emotional-intelligence
Emotional Intelligence

Why is Emotional Intelligence important?

• Allows leaders to perceive emotions as they arise in response to an action or situation.

• Leaders are better able to address problems, maintain relationships, and continue productivity.

• Helps leaders to keep his or her own emotions in check.

• Allows leaders to sympathize with others by putting themselves in their shoes.

Source: http://leadchangegroup.com/5-reasons-why-emotional-intelligence-is-critical-for-leaders/
Prejudging and Filtering

• Prejudging and filtering can be barriers to effective communication
  • Looking at things from “our point of view” as influenced by our beliefs and values may mean that we judge quickly and without all the information.
  • We can filter out what we are hearing to the extent that we actually miss out on valuable information that may come out.

• We need to be careful about prejudging and having our filters turned on to the extent that we are actively *not* listening.
Prejudging and Filtering

• This works both ways...

• It may be necessary to have some filters turned on in order to have productive discussions:
  • Debbie Downer
  • Chicken Little
  • Cry Wolf guy or gal
Different way of looking at it...
Knowledge Management

What is knowledge management and what role does it play in developing and maintaining good business relationships?
Knowledge Management

“Knowledge management is the process of transforming information and intellectual assets into enduring value. It connects people with the knowledge that they need to take action, when they need it. In the corporate sector, managing knowledge is considered key to achieving breakthrough competitive advantage.”

Knowledge Management

“Only when information is combined with experience and judgment does it become knowledge. Knowledge can be highly subjective and hard to codify. It includes the insight and wisdom of employees. It may be shared through e-mailed “best practices” memos or even sticky notes on a cubicle wall. And once we have knowledge, we can put it to work and apply it to decision making.”

Knowledge Management

Several trends will shape the field of knowledge management in the not-too-distant future:

- Emerging technology solutions
- Convergence of knowledge management with e-business
- Movement from limited knowledge management projects to more enterprise-wide projects
- Increasing use of knowledge management to enhance innovation
- Increasing use of tacit knowledge (rather than explicit knowledge)

Knowledge Management

“Knowledge management has been about breaking down barriers within the organization...”

Knowledge Management

For our purposes today, we are not talking about “knowledge management” as a software product (CRM or other type of technology), but rather about the concept applied to the human resources in your organization and how they can improve their business relationships by sharing what they know and helping to better inform each other.
Increasingly it is being acknowledged that the success of knowledge management initiatives is fundamentally predicated on having workers who are prepared to share their knowledge.

It is suggested that HRM concepts and frameworks could be utilized to improve our understanding of what shapes the willingness (or reluctance) of workers to share their knowledge.

The motivation of workers to share their knowledge may be shaped by their level of organizational commitment.

Knowledge Management

“Since the mid-1990s KM has emerged as a subject of great interest to both academics and organizational practitioners.”

“This is witnessed both by the enormous number of articles that have been published on the topic in academic and practitioner journals (Scarborough et al., 1999) and also from the vast number of organizations which have attempted to implement KM systems/strategies (Beaumont and Hunter, 2002; Kluge et al., 2001; Ruggles, 1998).”

“While much of the early KM literature was heavily focused on technological issues, this has changed, such that the importance of human and social factors has been increasingly recognized.”

“Storey and Barnett (2000), in a study of a failed KM initiative, suggest that knowledge is a resource with a significant amount of potential status and power, and argue that any attempt to manage, control, or codify organizational knowledge is likely to produce internal conflict and “turf wars”, as questions of who owns and controls knowledge are likely to emerge in all organizations, to some extent.”

“This point was reiterated by Scarbrough and Carter (2000) who suggest that it is problematic to assume that organizations represent a harmonious environment where people are willing and happy to share their knowledge.”

Knowledge Management

If you think about the Registrar’s Office as a repository of useful knowledge and the Registrar’s Office thinks of its counterparts on campus as repositories of useful knowledge, the focus can be on sharing, learning, and improving business practices as well as the work environment for everyone.

Knowledge Management

The more knowledgeable both or all parties are in a given discussion about something, the better the solution will be and the collective “brain trust” of the organization will be further enhanced.

If we look back to the IT example earlier, could we see that a recognition on both sides of the relative “knowledge base” would be helpful in improving that relationship?

Things you need to know...

- Building and maintaining good business/working relationships can make you more effective, more engaged, and more committed.

- Being invited into key projects, getting promoted, getting good pay increases are enhanced by having and maintaining good working relationships.

- To be effective, you need to be:
  - Honest with others
  - Avoid gossiping
  - Remember to compliment others on their good performance
  - Willing to share your knowledge and expertise with others

Source: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/good-relationships.htm
Things you need to do...

• Make time to invest in these relationships.

• Know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, and work to maintain and improve.

• Recognize that you are stronger together with your colleagues than you are alone.

• Work hard to be the best you can be, and don’t measure yourself against the accomplishments of others.

• Realize that you really can’t go it alone. No matter how talented or smart you are, or no matter what kind of job you are in, you need others, and they need you.

• Think in “common good” terms, not “what’s in it for me.” Others will see this and know that you are a team player who understands the value of collaboration.

• Don’t focus on winning the argument, or being “right.”
Managing Your Reputation

“You can’t build a reputation on what you are going to do.”

- Henry Ford
Managing Your Reputation

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.”

- Warren Buffett
Connectivity

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  Access Code: SACRAO
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