**Shifting the Culture**

**How to do it. Key points.**

**Early adaptors**

One of the ways of getting people to shift culture is for the manager to identify which people are regarded as the people that are early adapters. Getting these people on side is an important first step to moving the culture.

**Working with individuals as well as the team**

While working with a team or group is a useful way of building the team and ensuring that the same message is heard by all, the team building aspect cannot replace the need to deal with people as individuals. What one says in a corporate team setting is often not what is said in private. Working with individuals also attaches an added importance to the role of the individual in accomplishing the shift in culture.

**Understanding the gap**

Understanding the current culture is a first step to deciding how best to address the issue of change. Knowing that there has been a history of autocratic culture, or laissez-faire, can well signal which directions initial steps might take. Often the current culture can only be understood through means of independent objective reviews or through off-line discussions.

It takes time to understand the existing culture and time to make the change. Knowing how much to change can only be enhanced by measuring the gap between the existing culture and the target culture. Is it immense or just a small step away?

**Signs of progress**

Remembering that not all people will want to change is important. As change occurs, some will decide this is something they wish to do while others will resist the process. A sign of achieving little or no change may well be the fact that no one is leaving the organization; their having discovered ways and means of hanging on in spite of the stated desirable direction the corporation wished to take.

**Communicating with the recalcitrant types**

Letting people know that they are not fitting in is the best way to handle recalcitrant personnel. This is the fairest way. Providing the proper coaching and letting a reasonable period pass by are essential elements to this approach. Others in the organization are watching and aware of the ‘objectors’ and will take special note as to how objectors are handled in these potentially difficult times.

A well thought out and properly executed plan will go down well with those that are more in line with the ongoing culture change and will act to reinforce the shift, rather than derail the move.

**Performance reviews and objective setting**

Treating performance reviews separately from objective setting, especially in the time of introducing a culture shift, is probably not a constructive thing to do.

Uppermost in a manager’s mind and the mind of his staff, at the time of introducing change, are a whole host of concerns that need to be addressed and can only come out as one reassesses the role of key personnel and resets objectives for the corporation, the division and for individual staff members.

Since time is important, the annual ‘review’ is not a timely vehicle for bringing about change. Quarterly reviews are more in keeping with the urgency of introducing change; the need to sustain the momentum of change, and to make sure that staff are aligning in ways that are constructive. Keeping the pace for upwards of a year can be rewarding as people sense a new approach emerging, understand the reasons for the change, and know that they have played a part in bringing about this improvement.