

How to Enhance Your Reputation as a Supply Manager

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Abstract. In today's collaborative business environment there is more to enhancing your reputation as a supply manager than having superior technical ability. The relationships we must form with subordinates, bosses, peers, customers and suppliers don't just hinge on what we know but how well our personalities, motivations and work styles align with, complement and compel others to help us achieve key objectives. As never before, organizations are recognizing that experience and working knowledge are only part of what turns a group into a team, and a manager into a leader. The other factors are interpersonal and without them no professional reputation or corporate success can be maintained for long. People buy into people first, their message is secondary.

This workshop will not only identify and discuss three essential characteristics of top performers who have developed the art of maintaining excellent reputations, it will demonstrate how delegates can develop and leverage each of these factors for themselves.

The Opportunity. Three key success factors that contribute to an enhanced business reputation are:

- Finding your passion
- 'Managing up'
- Understanding 'thought diversity'

Finding your passion: "The more we need to work through others, the better we need to understand ourselves," writes Joan Magretta. In particular, we need to understand where our passions lie and how to develop the sort of intense emotional payoff that ensures our work is meaningful, rewarding and fun. Why is that important for your reputation and long-term career success? Because passionate people are dynamic, engaging and exciting to be around. They provide the direction and focus that attracts others to them. They have the energy that unites disparate parties behind a common goal.

The benefits are not confined internally, however. Studies have found that "customers gravitate towards companies that appeal to them on an emotional level. If they sense passion within an organization, a passion they share or relate to, they're far more likely to buy that organization's goods or services."

Anyone who wishes to enhance their reputation in their organization needs to first find their passion. By attending this workshop, even those who don't feel this way about their role as supply managers currently, will learn how to discover and leverage this essential factor for themselves.

Managing up: Arguably the most important champion of your professional reputation is your boss. But few managers realize that this relationship is one of mutual dependence. They therefore don't pay enough attention to what makes their boss tick or modify their work style to accommodate their boss' needs. This has nothing to do with manipulation or "sucking up", it's a strategic approach that works for employees at all levels who desire to enhance their department's effectiveness – and their own reputation in particular – by reducing the amount of interpersonal conflict that typically goes on.

By considering how the boss prefers to process information and therefore the best way to deliver communications, what is their decision-making style, how he handles conflict, etc., supply managers can elevate their reputations by being regarded as folks who are in tune with, and respectful of, the boss' goals. Illustrating this point with real life examples, delegates will learn that managers who focus on their boss' personal and professional objectives not only gain greater credibility as achievers, but attract the trust and respect they need to gain buy-in on future projects that are important to them.

This portion of the workshop will outline how to master the skill of managing imperfect people which, let's face it, are the only kind of people anyone is ever likely to meet.

Thought diversity: Learning to 'manage up' is great preparation for enhancing another vitally important skill – getting the most out of your subordinates and peers by understanding 'thought diversity'.

As former German Chancellor, Herr Willi Brandt pointed out recently, if he wants something from you he will obviously speak in English, but if you want something from him he'll expect you to speak to him in German. Likewise, if business professionals want to elicit supportive behavior from others, it behooves them to a) understand themselves really well (which connects to the first part of this workshop) and b) realize that others may have a very different way of processing information. 'Thought diversity' refers to the way in which highly successful, well respected managers have learned to be sensitive to clues that indicate the different ways in which other people think in order that they can modify the way they behave and communicate. This helps avoid the situation in which the manager's communications are not really 'heard' by the other party, resulting in failed or undesirable outcomes.

Again, this is an important skill to master for anyone wishing to capture the hearts and minds of their subordinates and peers, elicit the best possible, consistent performance from those folks – and enhance their own reputation into the bargain. Research shows that leaders think they are better at two-way communication than their subordinates and peers perceive them to be – hence even those who consider themselves to be superlative communicators and managers will find something to learn from this portion of the workshop.

Objectives. Our objective is to engage, inform and entertain delegates concerning three vital sets of skills that will contribute to their on-going career success as supply managers. We will accomplish this by outlining the strategic reasons why the factors of 'passion', 'managing up' and 'thought diversity' are so important, offer case history examples as illustrations, then demonstrate how these factors can be practically applied within any supply chain position.

Cognizant of the different learning styles among our audience, our approach is designed to appeal to audio, visual and kinesthetic learners. This sixty-minute workshop will include lively presentations from two highly-experienced professional speakers, supporting hand-outs and Powerpoint slides, plus at least one participative exercise that delegates can do in their chairs.

At the end of this session it is expected that delegates will walk away with a clear understanding of the principles of 'passion for work', 'managing up', and 'thought diversity' but, more importantly, be able to apply this knowledge within their own working relationships.

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