

Commentary on Organizational Theory and Research Applied Project

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DOL 860B: Advanced Seminars and Praxis in Leadership

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The application project for this domain offered this writer numerous opportunities for applying best practices and learning how to lead in an organizational setting. The project, a team-building intervention, was being implemented at Support Care, one of the main business lines of ViaQuest Incorporated. ViaQuest is a multifaceted organization with numerous business lines in Arizona, Ohio, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania (ViaQuest, n.d.). The project involves shifting the work culture from one that is task-oriented and position-oriented to one that is based on teamwork. Results have been evidenced in a recommendation letter included within.

This writer recognized the need for an application project that enhances socialization, offers a training component, and results in close-knit professional relationships between members of work units. The process required interviewing longer-serving employees with the goal of extracting their expectations along with past experiences. The first members of the team to be interviewed were the four Support Service Coordinators (Appendix A). Support service coordinators (SSC) handle the daily activities at the various sites with the help of their own teams of Support Service Specialists (SSS). The consistent message for SSCs and SSSs continues to be the need to refocus on working together. Team members continue to be reminded that their positions should not reduce role relationships with other employees but should enhance interrelationships that facilitate attainment of the organization's mission.

To facilitate an understanding of the organizational design strategies required, this writer undertook visits to each of the eight Support Care sites with the goal of seeking information on past experiences and critical incidents that have limited team functioning (Appendix B). One SSS at the sites mentioned a number of critical incidents in which he had felt that he could have gained more cooperation from a colleague but due to workplace friction did not (A. Bernard,

personal communication, March 16, 2010). Part of the process included the resolution of conflict between service specialists and unit coordinators.

The writer developed a ten-month training program, Dream Builders, which continues to be utilized for team building (Appendix C). Buy-in for the program took place at a much quicker pace than this writer, as the primary leader of this unit, had anticipated. The organization's director became a champion for this project and assisted greatly in ensuring corporate buy-in into the process. The level of excitement within the organization was elevated as the team embraced a call to work together in making the dreams of our consumers a reality. Team members put in extra effort to embrace the task at hand and its expected outcomes.

The Dream Builders Manual, along with the ANCHOR series, provide evidence of my leadership skill in an organizational setting. Both were developed by the writer and are currently in use for staff development within the organization. There were three key objectives for this:

1. Clarifying and communicating a clear strategic direction. It was imperative to formulate a unique strategy that would inspire employees and challenge them to buy-into the new initiatives. This provides an avenue for connecting with employees and establishing trust.
2. Building top management support for the change effort. Senior management and leadership are the driving force of transformation in the organization. By communicating the dream building vision to them, they assist in enrolling all employees into the process.
3. Establishing and demonstrating new cultural values. Any change initiative calls for new approaches in the organization. Leaders must establish new cultural values and champion them within their organizations. This was essential at SupportCare and the manual facilitated that process.

Organizations dwell within an environment of other organizations which are competing for similar resources. They have to remain engaged in an exchange process with their surroundings, which ultimately determines whether they will thrive, or not. The Dream Builders Manual is designed to ensure SupportCare's excellence in its field and continued success within the current environment. Environment is the totality of physical and social factors that are taken into account in the decision-making behaviors of individuals in a system. This interaction with its environment is what ensures that the organization is effective in fulfilling its purposes. One common approach utilized in this process is a goal approach to effectiveness. This consists of identifying an organization's output goals and assessing how well it is attaining them.

Team members were encouraged to make 'notes to self' during team meetings on critical discussion points that would aid them in improving their productivity. Dialogue and discussion between team members facilitated the clarification of roles and new customs in which SSCs and SSSs saw each other as one team. Management meetings were utilized for the identification of presenting problems, sharing information, providing feedback, and making recommendations to colleagues. For instance, this writer presented a new format for displaying an overview of all staff working at program sites on one page (Appendix D).

The team-building project endeavored to develop a culture of task interdependency between team leader, coordinators, and staff (Schein, 2004). On a more general level, task interdependency necessitated a commitment to reiterating the connected nature of everything we do, hence the need for a theme like dream-building, which ensures focus on teamwork and team-building. The writer's challenge has been the fact that consumer service ratios are a long established tradition in the organization and a key anchor to its structure. Consumer service ratios are determined by the organization's funding sources as determined by service needs

identified during annual consumer team meetings. This process enabled the writer to focus clearly on the program's critical elements and enhance service efficiency. This was noted by the organization's President (Appendix E). As progress continues on pursuing more efficient processes in the organization, this writer will continue to monitor results, encourage accountability, and champion the need for commitment to the process.

Ultimately, this project has enabled richer, more productive interactions between team members through attending to one another, reflecting on shared knowledge, inquiring as issues develop, expressing positions openly, and synthesizing interventions. Team members were enabled to make clear contrasts between what was and the new elements within the organization's culture. The Director's recommendation letter details efforts that continue to be made in enhancing organizational design at Support Care (Appendix F). As a project director, this writer is committed to ensuring a work culture that facilitates organizational growth and development for his team at Support Care.

References

- Mintzberg, H. (1981). Organization design: Fashion or fit? *Harvard Business Review*, 59(1), 103-116. Retrieved from Business Source Premier Database.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership* (3rd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix A

Support Service Coordinators



Appendix B



4847b Business Center Way
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246

phone 513-942-4555
fax 513-346-2747

Memorandum

Notice of Site Visits by New Program Director

To: All Staff (SSSs and SSCs) of Herman Najoli's Team

CC: Julian Robb, Director

From: Herman Najoli, Program Director

Date: 3/15/2010

This is to inform you that I will be visiting all twelve sites over the course of this week. You are all encouraged to share past experiences that have made your work easier and expectations that we can work together as a team to make a reality.

I look forward to seeing you.

Thank you.

Herman Najoli

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Appendix C

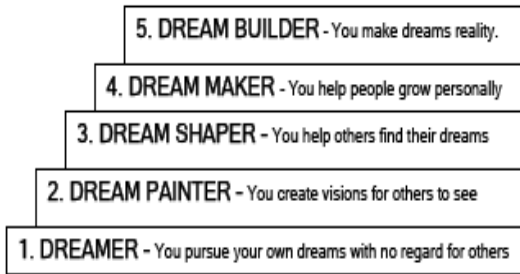
Training Program Cover

10 Minutes every month is all you need to learn how to ...

- Build the dreams of our consumers
- Become a top performer
- Convey a Yes! Attitude to everyone
- Learn what consumers care about

Here's my challenge to you:

There are five levels of living:



What kind of person do you want to be? Do you want to always be identified by your title and talk or do you want to soar and be an excellent dream builder? By committing to applying the Dream Builder's course to your service to others, you can turn Values into Vision and Principles into Practice!

About the Dream Builder Course Developer

Herman J. Najoli is a Program Director at SupportCare South in Cincinnati, OH. He has a passion for developing leaders and equipping people to achieve their full potential in both their personal and professional lives. Herman is a graduate of Nairobi University (BA, Education) and a Certified Toastmaster (CTM). He is trilingual and enjoys interacting with diverse people. He may be reached at herman.najoli@viaquestinc.com.

From The Desk Of Herman Najoli

DREAM BUILDERS



Hello Dream Builders!

Your personal and professional development matters to me. This manual will walk you through our Dream Builders development course, "10 Minute Guide to Dream Building".

I am so excited about joining your team and believe that we shall be a great outfit, working together to produce excellent results for the people we serve. 10 minutes every month for the next twelve months can make a huge difference in your ability to build your own and other's dreams.

We all have different titles and roles - but the truth is that we are dream builders and can become better leaders if we choose to learn how. This journey will guide us towards EXCELLENCE IN DREAM BUILDING. By doing what we need to do today, we can all become who we need to be tomorrow and thus achieve all that we can possible achieve in life.

Turning

VALUES INTO VISION

And

PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

©Dream Builders Team, 2010

Appendix D

New Format for Site-Wide Staffing

HERMAN'S PROGRAM-WIDE SITE STAFFING

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	Code / SSC	Address / Consumers	
	0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 5 1 4 7 8 8 8 3 9 1 2 5 9 6 5 5 9	0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 5 1 4 7 8 8 8 3 9 1 2 5 9 6 5 5 9	0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 5 1 4 7 8 8 8 3 9 1 2 5 9 6 5 5 9	0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 5 1 4 7 8 8 8 3 9 1 2 5 9 6 5 5 9	0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 5 1 4 7 8 8 8 3 9 1 2 5 9 6 5 5 9	0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 5 1 4 7 8 8 8 3 9 1 2 5 9 6 5 5 9		
12A	P R L T C W J H	L F L X H S J I	L R N X H W B I	L T T T H W H H	P R T T C W S H	013 - T W	3650 S. Broadlawn - B H, J C	
1	P R L T C W J H	L F L X H S J I	L R N X H W B I	L T T T H W H H	P R R T C W S H	019 - J W	1921 Lakenoll Dr - G M	
2	P R L T C W J H	L F L X H S J I	L R N X H W B I	L T T T H W H H	P R R T C W S H	021 - I W	2620 Losantville - G W	
3	P R L T C W J H	L F L X H S J I	L R N X H W B I	L T T T H W H H	P R R T C W S H	052 - T W	6229 Fairhurst - M R, V B	
4	P R L T C W J H	L F L X H S J I	L R N X H W B I	L T T T H W H H	P R R T C W S H	115 - J W	6745 Gracely Ave. - K H	
5	P R L T C W J H	L F L X H S J I	L R N X H W B I	L T T T H W H H	P R R T C W S H	149 - J W	749 Northland Blvd. Apt E - B B	
6	P R R J T C W S S H	P R L J X C W J S I	L R J L J X H W D J S I	L J N J T H D B S H	L D J T J T H S D W S H	176 - A C	2711 E. Tower Dr. Apt 501 - Y M, M M	
7	P R R J T C W S S H	P R L J X C W J S I	L R J L J X H W D J S I	L J N J T H D B S H	L D J N A J T H S D B C S H	185 - I W	2620 Losantville - R F, J W	
8	P J E R J C Y N S S	P D L J J C D J S	L D J L J J H D D J S	L D J N J J H D D B S	L I J J N A J J H W D B C S	189 - A C	699 Glensprings Dr - L F	
9	J E R E Y N S C	D L E D J C	D J L E D J J C	D J N E D D B C	I J N A W D B C			
10	J E J E Y N W C	D E J E D N W C	D J J E D D W C	D J N E D D B C	I J N A W D B C			
11	J E J E Y N W C	D E J E D N W C	D J J E D D W C	D J N E D D B C	I J N A W D B C			
12P	J E J E Y N W C	D E J E D N W C	D J J E D D W C	D J N E D D B C	I J N A W D B C			
1	J J E J E Y D N W C	D J E J E D D N W C	D J J E J D D W C S	D J N E E D D B C W	I J N A X W D B C I			
2	L J J E J E I W Y D N W C	L D J J E J E I W D D W C W	D J J E D D D W C S	D J N E E I D D B C W	I J N A X W D B C I			
3	P L J J E J E I C W Y D N W C	L L D J J E J E I H W D D W C W	L D J J E D H D D W C S	L D J N E E I H D D B C W	P I J J N A X C W D B C I			
4	P L R J J E X I C W J D W C I W	L L D J J E J E I H W S D W C W J	L R L J E D R H J W W C S L	L N R E I R H E S C W L	P F N A X E C S B C I J			
5	P L R J J E X I C W J D W C I W	L L D J J J N E I E H W S D K B C W J	L R L J E D R H J W W C S L	L N R E I R H E S C W L	P F T A X E C S W C I J			
6	P L R J J E X I C W J W C I W	L L D N E I E H W S B C W J	L R L J E D R H J W W C S L	L N R E I R H E S C W L	P F T A X E C S W C I J			
7	P L R J J E X I C W J W C I W	L L D N I E H W S B W J	L R L J D R H J W W S L	L N R I R H E S W L	P F T A X E C S W C I J			
8	P L R J J E X I C W J W C I W	L L D N I E H W S B W J	L R J D R H J W S L	L N R I R H E S W L	P F T A X E C S W C I J			
9	P L R J J N X C W J W E I	L L D N N H W S B E	L R J D H J W S	L N R S H E S	P F T A X C S W C I			
10	P R J L N X C J J E I	L D N N H S B E	L R J D H J W S	L N T H E W	P F T A X C S W C I			
11	P R J L N X C J J E I	L D N N H S B E	L R J D H J W S	L N T H E W	P F T A X C S W C I			
						NOTES		
						Site 185	Mon 4p-9p EJ w JS	

Appendix E

Email Recognition from the President of Viaquest

Page 1 of 1

You replied on 5/29/2010 9:36 AM.

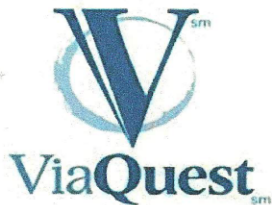
Herman Najoli

From: Rich Johnson **Sent:** Tue 5/18/2010 11:11 AM
To: Herman Najoli
Cc: Julian Robb; Mitch Snyder
Subject: Thank You
Attachments:

Herman –

I have had several reports from our billing department about you and the fact that you take full ownership of the timesheet process and do not make excuses, you simply work to get it done right with a "can do" attitude. This is exactly the type of leadership we need at ViaQuest and I cannot thank you enough for all that you are doing to help us be successful. Thanks so much Herman!

Richard D. Johnson
President/CEO
ViaQuest, Inc.
525 Metro Place North, Suite 300
Dublin, OH 43017
Phone: (614) 339-0813
Assistant: (614) 339-0867
Fax: (614) 339-1813



Appendix F

Organizational Theory Recommendation Letter



November 22, 2010

RE: Herman Najoli

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Herman Najoli has been employed with SupportCare Inc. since February 2010 and it has been an extreme pleasure to have him as part of our team.

Mr. Herman Najoli has integrated his unique interpersonal and motivational skills along with his strong leadership and organizational qualities creating an engaging and inspirational atmosphere within our organization. Herman has completed components of ViaQuest University trainings which are our organization's training program for frontline supervisors and Business Area Executives. The Dream Builders series which Herman has implemented with those he leads has brought a new energy to his team. Combining the philosophy of the ANCHOR series along with our organizations mission, vision and values has only enhanced the ethical leadership example displayed by Herman.

Mr. Najoli's growth regarding Organizational Theory and Research has continued to be a welcomed delight. Herman demonstrates the ability to engage in professional leadership development, while navigating ever-changing situations that occur daily within SupportCare Inc. Sensitive to the impact of working with so many different cultures, he has remained effective through service efficiency and staying true to the tasks at hand. Intentionally changing the mindset of those he leads from one of task oriented philosophy to that of servant leadership has not been a simple task. Yet Herman has been diligent to see that organizations philosophy on stewardship has been carried out.

I have been extremely impressed with the leadership performance of Mr. Herman Najoli. He truly has been a shining example for all within our organization. Herman has made a strong impact not only on the administrative and service teams of SupportCare Inc. but also he has made an ever-lasting impact on those we serve. I would strongly recommend Mr. Najoli as a capable ambassador of the ANCHOR curriculum and an asset to any organization.

Respectfully,

Julian Robb
Director

Community Health Improvement Services **SupportCare** Center for Independent Living
Crestle Care | HealthCare Connect | HomeCare | HomeCare | HomeCare | HomeCare

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