

7 Tips to Stop the Dripping Faucet in YOUR Organization

Each day thousands of workers spend 8 hours or more at their respective jobs with many contributing to the dripping faucet within every organization. This faucet much like the leaking kitchen or bathroom faucet's steadily waste drops of a precious resource – water – every minute of every day until fixed. Yet, the dripping faucet is considered a minor annoyance until the drips become steadier. During this time, thousands of gallons of water are wasted costing the owner probably more money than it took to correct the problem.



Organizations also have dripping faucets not only in their physical plants, but within their people's productivity. During the last 6 years, I have surveyed thousands of individuals who all believe that their plates are full, but admit to wasting a minimum of 12 minutes each day. For employees who are paid \$30,000 not including benefits, this amounts to \$14.42 each week for the one lost hour of work or \$721.12 annually. If you have a facility with 50 people, the annual cost is at least \$35,056. For organizations with at least 1,400 employees, the annual cost rises a minimum of \$1,000,000. Dripping faucets are very expensive!

How can you repair this expensive drain on your limited resources? **First**, consider that most people don't intentionally come to work to waste your resources. Their performance in many cases is a result of lack of knowledge and skills supported by negative attitudes and habits. These negative attitudes and habits probably contribute much more to their performance.

Second, begin to ask questions about how the organization is communicating its message. If you were to survey 10% of your employees from upper, middle and front line levels and asked them to name the top 3 goals of the organization, would you receive the EXACT SAME ANSWER from each individual. Different responses contribute to people not knowing what they may need to do next and contribute to the ongoing dripping faucet.

Third, determine if your employees truly understand how to plan and achieve their personal goals. If your employees are achieving their personal goals, the likelihood of them achieving corporate goals has been greatly diminished. Time management is the apex of goal planning and achievement. If individuals don't have goals, then why worry about time?

Fourth, as you train your employees include interpersonal development along with the job specific skills. If your company promotes from within, the individual is recognized for her or his job specific skills. However, as these individuals moved up through the organization, job specific skills become less while interpersonal skills become greater. Yet, much of the training fails to develop these individuals and the result is that these individuals leave which increases bottom line costs or return to their original position again increasing bottom line costs.

Fifth, think about the words that you select. For example, ask your employees how they are investing their time instead of spending their time? Frame your questions and statements using

positive words that generate powerful mental images. People hear words, but they think in pictures.

Sixth, align your systems, strategies and people to create loyal internal customers that discover those "moments of truth" leading to external customers. Southwest Airlines understands the power of alignment.

Seventh, finally, adopt a quality program such as Baldrige, Lean Thinking, Total Quality Management or Business Improvement Process based upon reducing waste at all levels

These are just 7 tips that will help you begin to repair your dripping faucets.



So, grab the toolbox and begin to create a culture of inspirational leadership that does not support wasting your resources, but instead looks to invest them. Remember, the faucet is dripping and this is very expensive.

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