

## Highlight: Kinlaw's Pillars of Commitment

### *Summary*

Dennis Kinlaw has identified 4 pillars that are the foundation of commitment in organizations that are striving to recruit, build and then maintain a motivated, highly talented group of employees. These pillars are clarity, competence, influence and appreciation.

### *Value*

Understanding Kinlaw's pillars of commitment helps individuals:

- Clarify their roles
- Clarify their supervisor's roles and their employees' roles
- Understand what it takes to be competent
- Acquire and maintain competence
- Exert influence over their own work
- Obtain feedback from their supervisor
- Provide non-judgmental, descriptive feedback as requested by staff
- Build commitment amongst colleagues and employees
- Coach employees for commitment

### *Description*

Kinlaw's model helps managers to identify activities devoted to the creation of work environments that exhibit a high degree of commitment. These activities include the provision of a variety of learning and development opportunities aimed at helping organizations meet current and future requirements.

By focusing on the four pillars, leaders can find opportunities to continuously

build commitment throughout any organization.

### **Example**

Consider a project team. In order for the project to be successful, the project manager needs involved, committed people on the team. The manager doesn't always get that however. To build commitment and thereby increase the likelihood of having a successful project, the manager could:

- Communicate the vision and goals of the project in a variety of ways using more than one medium
- Provide timely updates to all individuals involved with the project
- Encourage employees to invite others to give feedback on competencies they are developing
- Be a model and seek feedback on new learning the manager is undertaking
- Consider the four pillars to guide coaching conversations with staff
- As much as the environment and the project allow, encourage staff to determine how the work will be accomplished
- Encourage staff celebrations to acknowledge and appreciate progress

### ***Process***

The manager or team leader of any group can undertake a variety of activities to increase and maintain the commitment of staff. In order to enhance clarity, the project manager would ensure that individuals know the vision, goals and direction of the project or team and are clear with respect to their own roles and responsibilities.

To support competence the manager would ensure that the employees possess or are developing the skills and knowledge required to do the job well. Also, their work needs to be sufficiently challenging.

In seeking the input of employees with regard to the way work is organized, the manager ensures that they have influence.

Commitment rises when employees are appreciated for who they are, the work they do and the conditions under which they work. Managers need to find ways to acknowledge this.

### ***Implementation***

Individuals who have incorporated the four pillars of commitment into their work know that commitment is a key requirement for superior performance. They will:

- Be clear about their goals and values and those of the organization
- Be competent to be able and willing to perform well
- Have influence over their job or work
- Feel appreciated for their contributions

