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UNDERSTANDING THE 8D PROCESS

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DULY QUOTED

"Sometimes it is better to lose and do the right thing than to win and do the wrong thing".

- Tony Blair

WISH WE SAID IT

"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime. Teach a man to create an artificial shortage of fish and he will eat steak".

- Jay Leno

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

Quality Over Quantity

We live in a society that encourages us to consume. We drive big cars, live in large houses, and eat huge meals. We treat our children to all sorts of electronic products that seem, ironically, to get more expensive the smaller they become. And while our kids are going for the mini cell phones and slim ipods, we are rushing out to get large screen televisions.

Many of these devices are really cool. The things we can do with tiny machines never ceases to amaze, and it is indeed this amazement that has us wooed and buying. We are mesmerized by the number of songs we can store or the number of hours we can record, that we don't stop to think how much time 20,000 songs would take to listen to or how much 100 hours of recorded television shows really is. We will never get to listen to all those songs, or watch all that television, but knowing we can is just about enough for us.

All these toys. All this consumption. It has clouded the standards of consumers and tempted us as corporations – temptations we have failed to resist. The consumer appetite for our products has caused us to test the boundaries of our quality and service. We have learned that their hunger for our products has reduced their demands and that we can now engage in a wide variety of consumer unfriendly practices with absolutely no consequence.

Companies that are masters at marketing – the consumer electronic companies – are leading the way in this new company-centric model. The results, Tudog fears, will be a sudden consumer awakening and the corresponding rebellion. Worse a competitor might spring up that will embrace customer service, leaving the current leaders out of favor.

Tudog is not pro-consumer because we think it is the right thing to do (although we do). We are pro-consumer because we think it is the smart thing to do. Because we think it is good business. Today, lots of great companies are caught up in bad practices. We think the day will come when the customer they sell to will realize the lack of value and the short term gain these companies now enjoy will turn into long term loss – of customer loyalty.

Ziggurat Solutions



EAG
Environmental Assets Group



UNDERSTANDING THE 8D PROCESS

By Craig R. Frank

The business environment is crowded with a myriad of business processes and operational procedures. Some of these are promoted by consulting firms trying to hype their process as distinctive and worthy so that they can generate business. Others are the result of academic endeavors, either research based or theoretical. The most interesting are those processes that are born from experience, when a company, or group of companies, are confronted with a business challenge that gives birth to a process that delivers a solution. The best scenario is when that solution can serve as a model for other companies and can be deployed across industries and company size.

Tudog views sharing and explaining the better of these processes with our readership as an obligation. In many cases the models are blueprints for operational remedies that can serve to address pains our clients experience. In other cases, the review of leading processes sparks thought and leads to new initiatives that, while not addresses current ills, serve to prevent certain deficiencies from appearing.

One of the recent models to make a splash in the business community is the 8D Process. The process is designed to help organizations to effectively solve pressing business problems. The name "8D" is derived from the 8 disciplines the process requires the practicing company to engage. These "disciplines" are really 8 steps that, in some form and to varying degrees, integrate various business disciplines.

As Tudog understands the process, when confronted by a problem, 8D recommends the following components:

1. Develop a Team

Under the principle that a team approach offers the benefit of multiple perceptions and multiple sets of experiences, the model recommends the first step is to establish a small team of people with the know-how, time skill, and authority to identify the problem and initiate (and enforce) corrective actions. Once the group is established, a group leader is selected so that the group has the structure necessary to move decisions forward.

2. Identify the Problem

Obviously a problem cannot be resolved if it is not first identified in such a way that provides the team with the ability to measure its affect both on internal operations and customers. By arriving at a measure, the team is able to understand the consequences of the problem, from which it can begin to construct its remedy.

3. Patch the Problem

The most immediate need is to protect the customer affected by the problem by shielding them from the inadequacy. Similarly, any internal consequences need to be patched so that the ill effects of their existence are controlled. These patches are not expected to be permanent solutions, nor are their implementation meant to alleviate the pressure to solve the problem. The efficacy of the patches should be empirically The patches are damage control only, making sure that long term affects aren't suffered while a long term solution is sought and executed.

4. Identify the Cause

Naturally you cannot develop and implement a long term or permanent solution to a problem if you have not successfully identified the root causes. In order to be certain that you have the right cause, you need to go through all the possible causes, eliminating those that prove not to be the underlying or most pressing problem. The search process includes testing each possible cause against the description of the problem and the data you have on the cause and effect. Along the way you will most probably find and correct minor problems, but you need to keep in mind that the objective is the discovery of the cause of the urgent problem that ignited the process. The way to ensure this is accomplished by identifying and applying alternative corrective actions to address and eliminate the root cause.

5. Verify the Solution

Once you have selected the corrective action you have concluded will remedy your problem you need to be certain that it does in fact offer you the relief you need. Also, you need check and be sure that the solution does not bring on any unanticipated side effects. Replacing a major problem by bringing on another problem, even if it is comparatively minor, is unacceptable. You need to make sure your solution is not only effective but also safe.

6. Execute the Solution

Once you are certain that the solution you have identified is effective and causes no peripheral harm, you can implement it in a manner that makes it a permanent throughout your organization. The most effective way to penetrate the solution into your operations is by including on-going controls into the process that allow you to monitor efficacy and adjust performance as required.

7. Eliminate the Possibility of Recurrence

In order to be certain that the same problem that created the crisis does not recur you need to embed the solution into your organization by updating training procedures to

include the new process, adjust work flow procedures to accommodate the new process, and improve operational practices to execute the new process.

8. Celebrate

Like most successful transformations, you will want to reinforce the positive attitude that is required to make it work by giving the implementing team the praise and recognition they deserve. Additionally you want to make the achievement known to your employees and customers, marking it as a milestone in your quest for excellence.

8D, like all the other business processes designed by consultants and academics to improve performance, is not a silver bullet solution. The trick is in selecting the right tool or process for your organization and the challenges you face. The secret is in the execution. Confronting and fixing operational problems is a business necessity. 8D, and solutions like it, are there to provide the infrastructure within which you take on your demons.

Craig Frank is Tudog's CEO.



BECOMING A GREAT MANAGER

By David Gilad

There are some people that believe that a great manager is born with the skills required to motivate and lead. Other people believe that, like most business skills, management is a learned competence that almost anyone with the ambition and discipline to study can acquire. Regardless of where you stand on the nature-versus-nurture debate, the undeniable truth is that management – as in leadership plus administration – can make all the difference in how a company performs and the value it creates.

Many experts believe that great management is really the exercise of common sense. Tudog does not disagree with the notion that common sense is a key component of great management, however we would add that its application needs to be at the exact moments when the common sense is most needed. The awareness that the situation demands great management and the ability to conjure up the proper blend of leader and strategist at the right time is the essence of great management. The courage of the great manager to do what has to be done with the confidence that inspires others is what separates mediocre leaders from those that transform companies and rise to greatness. Tudog has long pondered this critical skill and has concluded that it is comprised of five components. They are:

1. **Gatekeeper** - The great manager makes certain to have access to information and materials he/she needs to make the right decision. By having his/her finger on the pulse he/she is able to both spot prospective problems before they become full fledged crises. Moreover, the information provides the foundation upon which a quick decision can be made. The control of information, and its proper dissemination, also allows the leaders to gain respect and subordinate compliance, as the information controlled is needed and coveted by all members of the team.

2. **Guardian** – The great manager protects his team from the uncertainty of bad decisions and the whims of company policies made in haste and with insufficient data. The strong leader makes certain that his/her team remains focused on the important tasks and sets goals that are simultaneously ambitious and possible. Moreover, the great manager makes sure to be there when a member of his/her team has a problem, helping to resolve the issue. By being the guardian, the leader remains the center of strength for the team, the individual to whom each member turns for leadership and guidance.

3. **Planner** – The great manager knows how to anticipate need and plan for the acquiring and allocation of resources as they become needed. The team members rely on the leader to provide them with the tools they need to accomplish their mission and will look to the leader as new needs arise. The ability of the manager to foresee the need and understand how to acquire all that will be necessary places not a burden, but an instrument of allegiance at his/her disposal.

4. **Standard Bearer** – The great manager knows how to both provide his/her team with the freedom needed to explore opportunities and solutions and experiment with ideas, and the boundaries within which acceptable activities take place. The leader sets the standards by which others will be judged, including when it comes to risk taking, accepting responsibility for actions, ethical behavior, and the enthusiasm and commitment with which the assigned tasks are approached. Setting, and more importantly adhering, to high standards provides the manager with the ability to demand a great deal from his/her team, as well as the moral grounds on which to discipline violations.

5. **Visionary** – The great manager offers up a vision of the future that is concurrently exciting and realistic. The excitement is generated not only by the goals set, but by the belief of the team members, inspired by the leader, that the goals can and will be met. By demonstrating not only the picture of the future, but also the path to getting there, the great manager shows his faith in his/her team to meet the challenge, thereby encouraging and pushing the entire team to excellence.

Being a great manager goes beyond being a competent leader or able administrator. The elements separating the functional from the fantastic are the very characteristics some would claim are innate, while others would claim are learned. Either way, the difference between a competent manager and a great one can be the difference between a company that inches along and one that soars. That alone is reason enough to strive to be a great manager.

David Gilad serves on Tudog's Board of Directors



FINDING THE RIGHT HIRE

By Ofer Kahane

There is a concept in economics called “adverse selection”, whereby people of lesser abilities put themselves forward as candidates for positions for which they are minimally or perhaps even poorly qualified. They do this because the incentive for them, in pursuing a job that is above their abilities, is greater than the incentive for someone who is in fact qualified. The step up is greater and therefore people are inclined to “give it a try”. Adverse selection is actually quite widespread. The result is that companies are hiring under-qualified individuals, suffering from the poor performance and the loss of investment in training once they conclude that the individual needs to be let go.

So how does a company bypass the expensive, focus diverting, and unpleasant experience of hiring the wrong person? The answer lies in the hiring process. Tudog believes that the process has 8 crucial steps. They are:

1. Create Clear Objectives – when you set up your employee objectives make sure that they are clear and easy to understand. Having confusing objectives leads to the introduction of subjective criteria that can dilute the qualifications of the candidate in favor of less necessary qualities such as friendliness or ambition. Make sure you define your objectives first and foremost in terms of what you want the employee to accomplish and what benefit you want the employee to bring. Only then can you determine what skills and characteristics are necessary in order for the tasks to be accomplished and the benefits delivered.

2. Set Up Procedures – you need to set up procedures that will guide the process. Once again, the key necessity is the elimination of any opportunity for subjective considerations to sneak into the hiring process. Therefore your procedures should include (a) the selection of a hiring team so that the decision to hire a candidate is the result of a consensus among a few executives, (b) the setting of a timetable within which the right candidate will be found so that the company doesn’t rush into a hire or prolong the process indefinitely, (c) the selection of the exposure channels the company will use to post the opening, including print, agencies, and online options, and (d) the preparation of search process material such as the employment application, the interview questions. Make certain you follow the same procedures for each candidate in order to ensure consistency in the conclusions you draw at the end of each process.

3. Prepare Announcement – you need to make sure your job announcement provide enough information to screen out at least some of the people who will recognize themselves as unqualified. The announcement should include (a) the position and title, (b) description of responsibilities and tasks, (c) the qualifications being sort including on-job experience and level of education, (d) any advantages or positive elements of the job you wish to highlight, (e) how, where and whom to apply, and (f) any legal language required such as non-discrimination statement. There are some experts who advise you do not put salary level, and even others who recommend that you not even give the name of your company. Tudog does not necessarily agree with either of these suggestions. We believe the information could be useful in attracting and secure a highly qualified candidate as the highly qualified typically shy away from responding to blind ads.

4. Have Measurable Criteria – you need to review the criteria you have established for the position and develop a way you intend to measure candidate qualifications and interview responses. You may want to have a point system or some other means of measuring responses so that you are able to compare one candidate against another using the same basis for evaluation. Make sure you keep all the elements the same from candidate to candidate, including questions asked, the room the interviews are held in, number of people (and who they are) doing the interviewing, and the amount of time allocated for each meeting. This will help you keep the information you gather equal for all prospects and increase your chances of selecting the right person.

5. Get the Word Out – getting the word out that you are looking for a highly qualified person for a specific position goes beyond ads in newspapers and online job sites. There are also industry associations you can contact, employees you can request recommend friends, and networks you can leverage in your search. The broader you cast your net, the more likely you are to reach the person most qualified for the job.

6. Interview Properly – it is not a given that everyone knows how to conduct a good interview or analyze properly the results of an interview. The questions you ask need to be designed to elicit dialog from the candidate. You want the person talking so you can gain some insight into the person and his/her skills. Make sure your questions are somewhat open ended and require that the interviewee bring into his/her answer how past experience would serve his/her performance in this new job. Keep in mind that “yes” and “no” questions run the risk of being transparent, in that the applicant can figure out the answer you want to hear, as well as too narrow, in that they do not require of the applicant to build upon his/her answer. Getting the applicant talking will demonstrate verbal and non-verbal skills and behavior and give you a good understanding of the person behind the application.

7. Investigate – be certain, after the interview is over, that you follow up on references. Keep in mind that the applicant provided only those people as references that he/she is confident will provide a positive report. Therefore you need to be prepared to ask penetrating questions to the references and make certain you are getting more than a friend’s rubber stamp.

8. Use Probationary Periods – it is not cynical to work under the assumption that every new hire is an unknown until proven otherwise. The way to get around messy dismissal situations is to have every new employee begin their engagement with the company under a 3 month probationary period. At the end of this period the individual is either

hired, having proven his/her skills, or let go, having demonstrated weaknesses not revealed in the interview process.

Adverse Selection and other quirks of human behavior make hiring someone a tricky process. Add to this the cost of hiring the wrong person, and the need to engage better hiring practices becomes apparent. The idea that some initial time and some background checking can determine whether someone is right for your company is absurd. The best one can hope for is a good system that weeds out the obvious and not-so-obvious flawed candidates and leaves you with the best person standing.

Ofer Kahane works with Tudog in Israel.



CALM DOWN! STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

By Ilan Sarid

Any doctor will tell you stress is a killer. As with any human vulnerability, there are companies out there trying to turn a buck by providing toys, massages, how-to books, and seminars to help us lower our stress levels. Personally, I find it all quite stressful, having to choose between a squeeze ball and the strong, penetrating hands of a masseuse. Therefore, with Tudog's blessings, I set out to discover ways I can reduce stress without having to deal with the tension associated with giving someone else the only benefit of my stress – my money.

I must confess that in addition to health concerns, I have been told by those close to me, including some whose opinions I trust and perhaps even value, that when I am stressed out, I am a bit unpleasant to be around. Personally, I don't see it, but I suppose even my own mother can't be completely wrong.

The thing about stress management techniques is that they are only effective if they are easy to do. While most of us know the dangers of stress, we don't really have the time to take breaks from our busy schedules to deal with it. If we were to take the time, we would fall behind on our work, which would, of course, be very stressful. So in my search for the master stress reduction techniques, I looked only for those I knew I could, and maybe even would, actually do.

I came up with 8 techniques that I have begun to practice, and with the exception of my mother, almost everyone is telling me how relaxed and calm I seem. The 8 techniques are:

1. **Stay Away from Stressful People** – like the flu or a rare tropical disease, stress is contagious. When you are with someone who is stressed out, the tension is thick and you cannot help but feel it. Moreover, stressed people typically do not like to be tense alone, and so they do and say things designed to cause stress in those around them. The best thing you can do is remove yourself from the stressful situation, perhaps later on, once the tension has lifted, going back to explain to the person who was stressed why you left and what they might do to lessen their stress (thereby lessening the stress of everyone around them).

2. **Breathe Deep** – keeping in mind there is a difference between heavy breathing for stress control purposes and obscene breathing that can lead you into a sexual harassment lawsuit, the use of breathing exercises to reduce stress is physiologically proven. Breathing slowly and heavily can slow down your heart rate and counter the harmful physical effects of the stress.

3. **Understand What Causes You Stress** – knowing what causes you stress is a huge advantage in your quest to reduce it. Sometimes there are certain circumstances that cause greater amounts of stress than when you engage in the same activity under other conditions. So too is it true about people. Some people cause you more stress than others. Also, there can be environments such as the office or holiday gatherings that cause stress, and there can be products such as coffee or candy that get you stressed. By knowing your stress triggers you are able to avoid or contain them, thereby reducing your stress.

4. **Follow the Calm Person** – in all kinds of stressful situations there is always one person who seems as calm as can be. Your initial thought could be that he/she simply does not understand the gravity and urgency of the situation. Then you might think that he/she knows something you don't, making them understand things aren't as bad as you're imagining. Finally you simply come to understand that this individual just doesn't let the stress get to him/her. This is the person you need to follow. Not in the sense of walk around after them, but in the sense of allowing their calm demeanor to affect yours, making you calmer – and in the end more effective.

5. **Stop the Stress** – whenever you feel that stress ball developing in the pit of your stomach and you come to the point when you know your blood pressure is hitting the edges of cardiac arrest, stop the stress by disengaging, at least for a short while, from the process that is causing the stress. There is no reason, whether it be deadline or a boss breathing down your neck, that you need to literally get sick. Stop the stress, and then go back to what you were doing.

6. **Slow Down** – there is no way you can eat only fast food consider 5 hours a full night's rest, and count a slow jog to the refrigerator as exercise and not have both your body and mind revolt against you. Stress comes from all the hectic ways we live catching up with us. Slow down – eat right, sleep well, and exercise and you'll find yourself calm and relaxed.

7. **Laugh** – let's face it; life is funny. Sometimes it is funny in an odd sense and sometimes the humor just sneaks up on you. In most cases a good laugh will drain all the stress right out of you. So not only do you need to lighten up a bit, but you also need to look for the humor in situations that seem not very funny at all. You'll find, even if you have to really dig deep down, that somewhere in the mess you're in is something to laugh about.

8. **Embrace Stress** – as strange as it may sound some levels of stress may actually help you perform. Sort of like adrenaline, stress can raise your awareness and push you to do things that you might normally not be able to do. As long as the level is just enough to motivate you, but not enough to hurt you, stress can be an ally.

The irony of stress is that when it exceeds a certain level it reduces performance, making us less good at what we do, thereby increasing our stress because we are not

completing what we need to get done. When we are so worried or under tremendous pressure that all we are thinking about is the pressure, it is bad for our health, and our business. Like all things, stress, when taken in excess can be harmful and make you, so the people close to me claim, unpleasant to be around. Reduce the stress and you will not only be more successful, but perhaps even more popular. The very thought of it causes me stress...

Ilan Sarid specializes in sales. He resides in Montreal, Canada



BETTER MANAGEMENT VIA UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE

By David Feingersch

Understanding people is crucial to business success because the human factor plays a central role in how every company performs. There are so many critical business moments that come down to a set of independent variables and how a particular person performs in a specific situation. Companies try to offset this unpredictable factor through training and a series of rewards and punishments to control compliance. While overall this works for most employees, every company struggles with violations and breakdowns in human competence. Tudog believes that the better we understand people, the more likely we are to construct a system that maximizes the potential of our human resources, while diminishing the occurrences of non-compliance and willful disregard.

Sometimes dealing with your people is seen as a distraction from the more pressing business demands of meeting customer needs, competing with well positioned competitors, and managing cash flow. It is easy to take the attitude that these people are being paid to do a job and their feelings need not become a management issue, diverting critical attention from the very activities that make sure there is enough money to pay their salaries.

If only were mere humans weren't as fragile as we really are. We have emotions, ego, and a whole slew of social matters that basically require management when we come together in a corporate environment. Add to that the competitive impulses, jealousies, romance, and all the other potential dynamics and you come to realize that if you do not manage your staff, you risk the consequences of dissatisfaction and anger.

Neutralizing the risks associated with poor human performance – beyond what training can provide – comes from an understanding of people and how managers can gain the respect, confidence, and loyalty of their employees so that they will want to perform well to please and support their leader. In many ways the root to good relations comes from a number of simple habits managers can adopt that show their employees a genuine concern for them and their wellbeing. Naturally good communication skills make for a good manager, but the communications need to revolve not only around work related mandates, but also demonstrations of acknowledgement and concern. For example, inquiring about the health of a child after an employee left the office the day prior to pick the sick child up from school, or asking people how their weekend was on a Monday morning (and waiting and listening to the answer), show people that you see them as more than functionaries who assist you (are used by you) in reaching a work related objective, the concern for which may or may not be shared by them.

Another behavior you can control and that will have a dramatic affect on your operations is the availability and openness you have with your employees. If you are unavailable or make it be known that you do not wish to be disturbed, the chances are your employees will leave you alone. This may sound good initially, but soon you will find that you are in the dark with regard to problems, not being asked for clarification when they don't understand instructions (leaving work undone or perhaps done improperly), and most of all your employees will feel neglected. Without their sense of your support, their loyalty to you will dwindle, and when you need them to come through with a great effort, their enthusiasm and team spirit may be a bit lower than you hoped.

Motivating your staff is not a short term objective. Every manager needs a sustainable approach to keeping his/her staff enthusiastic and committed. Herein lays the complications. Our instincts would tell us that if we pay our workers fair wages, and we provide good working conditions, we will have happy employees. Our instincts would be wrong.

The reality is that once the salary level has been established as fair and the work environment has reach a satisfactory level, the employees start looking for the "inner satisfaction" that makes being at work not a function of economic survival, but rather a fulfilling endeavor.

Leading psychologist suggest that this fulfillment comes from the satisfaction of 4 basic needs. They are:

1. **Achievement** – people need to feel like they are getting the job done. It makes them feel accomplished and useful and gives them the sense that there is an end that can be marked, before a new task marks a new start. The manager can understand this very human need and construct the tasks and operational targets to provide the team with a sense of achievement. By providing a series of targets the team gets to meet the objectives along the way, getting the sense of progress and the satisfaction of completing each phase. When constructing the phases you need to be certain not to make them difficult to the point where failure is possible, nor easy to the point where no sense of achievement is possible. The balance is in the task, and the sense of achievement is in the completion.

2. **Recognition** – the completion of the task won't (and can't) be felt without the manager stepping in and acknowledging the successful conclusion and the job well done. This is an excellent opportunity for the manager to highlight specific achievements and give his/her team the praise and respect they seek. The manager's role in recognition is absolute, because only recognition from the manager can provide the employee with the satisfaction he/she wants to receive for the work performed.

3. **Responsibility** – while there are certainly some employees that seek to avoid responsibility, many others view it as an indication of approval and respect, and therefore they welcome it. The manager has the ability to assign and distribute responsibility for every project and should attempt to do so in a manner that limits internal conflict and avoids the creation of a competitive environment. By adding responsibility to an employee's role the manager indicates confidence and respect, and gives the employee the opportunity (and motivation) to demonstrate worthiness.

4. **Advancement** – employees often view advancement in two ways. The first, by increases in salary and promotions, is a structured advancement that comes with annual reviews. The second type of advancement comes with the opportunity to gain new skills or broaden experience. These advances are functions of operational necessity, task completion, and the strengths of the employee.

The ways you interact with your employees with have a profound effect on how they perform. Communicating with your employees serves to keep them positive and dedicated. As a manager you can reinforce good behavior through praise, adjust unacceptable behavior through constructive instruction, and motivate through the articulation of a series of obtainable goals.

Understanding people as a path toward better management is really just a question of recognizing the human dynamics in your organization and working toward making certain that an appropriate level of contentment prevails. Not only is this the way to have satisfied employees, it is the way to run a good business.

David Feingersch works with Tudog in Florida.