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## BOOSTING YOUR TEAM'S PERFORMANCE

BY BUD BILANICH

In 2002, I wrote a book called *4 Secrets of High Performing Organizations*, in which I suggest there are four keys to running any successful organization: clarity of purpose and direction, the sincere commitment of everyone involved, skillful execution of the things that matter, and mutually beneficial relationships with important outside constituencies.

Today, lots of people are involved in the effective marketing of pharma products. There's the product team, of course, the administrative help, and the sales force. Then there are the R&D, regulatory, medical, manufacturing, and logistics professionals in your company. Finally, at least one agency is usually involved. All these folks need to be committed to working together and to ensuring the success of the product you manage. As a product manager, you have the responsibility of coordinating the efforts of people from these diverse functions. Here are my five best common sense ideas for creating a team of highly engaged and committed colleagues.

### **First, always act with complete integrity.**

Integrity and consistency are intertwined. People who are consistent in their actions are seen as people with a high degree of integrity. Be consistent in your words and actions. If you practice situational ethics—doing the right thing only when you're in the public eye—you aren't really a person of high integrity, you're just pretending to be one. Besides, it's hard to act one way in public, and another in private. So to be safe, do the right thing because it's the right thing to do—not because you'll get credit or avoid getting into trouble.

**Second, be transparent.** When you are transparent, freely sharing information with everyone involved with the creation, positioning,

marketing, manufacturing, selling, and delivery of your product, you create ownership. When people feel they're in the know, they will do whatever it takes to guarantee the success of your product. When you say what you mean and give information freely, people trust you. When you don't, they don't.

**Third, use questions to create buy-in.** You can use questions to help people articulate what they already know and point them in the right direction. These types of questions help build the self-confidence of the people working with you and provide some gentle on-the-job training. Most of the people I know in the pharma industry are pretty sharp. A well-crafted question can get them moving in the right direction—and your brand moving forward.

**Fourth, never underestimate the power of a compliment.** Almost all people thrive on sincere compliments. Providing a sincere compliment isn't difficult. All you have to do is: 1) identify what the person did; 2) why it is important or how it helps the product; and 3) that you appreciate him or her for doing it. It's as simple as that and will help you gain the commitment of the people working on your product.

### **Fifth, don't tolerate poor performance.**

Unchecked poor performance can destroy commitment to your product. Don't chastise people in public. However, meet with underperforming team members. Explain what you expect from them. Describe in some detail where they're falling short of your expectations and then jointly develop a plan to get their performance back on track. In this way, you won't have to deal with the frustration that inevitably comes with a consistent lack of performance.

If you follow these five tips, you should be able to build a committed and engaged product management team. In these days of specialization, commitment and engagement are more important than ever.

I have a few extra copies of *4 Secrets of High Performing Organizations*. Send me an email with "Request for 4 Secrets" in the subject line, if you would like one. Include your snail mail address in the body of the email. ○

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