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Be Less of a Doer and More of an Achiever

“Don’t mistake activity with achievement.” ~ John Wooden

Most of us spend a good part of our working days “doing” things that we believe are important and will generate desired results that help our teams or organizations. However, is the act of doing tasks as relevant as the process of achieving targeted goals and objectives?

The connection between doing and achieving are core concept within time management and performance measurement. After all, if we do things that generate identifiable achievements, we are using our time in an optimal manner and we are being productive. While this statement is true, a variation may also be relevant, In other words, we produce identifiable achievements by the things we choose to do.

Prioritizing what we hope to achieve before deciding what we need to do can be very important in attaining the best possible results. Here are a few reasons for this.

- Focusing on achievements usually necessitates a bigger-picture perspective which, in turn, generates a better idea of desired results and their potential impacts.
- An achievement often reflects a cluster of actions, providing a broader perspective on what is actually being done and for what reason(s).
- Identifying a targeted achievement can help to sort out a seemingly overwhelming list of tasks, creating a sense of order to perceived chaos.

“It is not enough to be busy... The question is: what are we busy about? ~ Henry David Thoreau

Persuading staff to focus on achievements rather than the completion of specific actions can potentially enhance morale and enthusiasm within the workplace. This is not to say that doing a task is, in itself, unimportant. Instead, prioritizing an achievement adds meaning to a multitude of tasks that may, otherwise, seem isolated and unimportant. So, how can we create an “achievement” culture within the workplace?

- Focus on achievements when describing projects to employees. Instead of saying “we need to fix the air conditioning system in the building, so that staff and visitors are comfortable and safe from health issues,” use the phrase “we need to protect facility staff and visitors from discomfort and health issues by fixing the air conditioning system.”
- When beginning a project, spend time initially to discuss the expected achievement and/or objective, ensuring that all stakeholders embrace the same message. Then, discuss the things that need to be done to achieve the desired result.
- Encourage staff to become invested in the overall work product or service being accomplished; completion of individualized tasks can be “personal” achievements, but attaining a range of tasks within the group leads to a sense of “team” achievement.

Being a doer can certainly be important in contributing to the success of a team or organization. However, choosing to be an achiever will add perspective and meaning to the many things that we do during the day. This not only helps us to focus on the most relevant tasks, but also provides a stronger sense of purpose and enthusiasm for our work.

“A desire presupposes the possibility of action to achieve it; action presupposes a goal which is worth achieving.” ~ Ayn Rand