

■ Becoming a Critically Reflective Manager

By Dr. John Drozdal

This article first appeared as a "Business Tool Kit" article for the "InBusiness" section of The Rio Rancho Observer, Thursday, December 29, 2005.

Business Tool Kit

12/29/05

If you search Amazon.com for books using the keyword "management," you will get about 189,000 results! While there are some great nuggets among these titles, I'd offer that there is much managers can learn from other fields.

About ten years ago, Stephen Brookfield's book *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* first appeared. This book encouraged teachers to review their practice and showed them how to do it. Managers at all levels could also benefit from a critical self-review of how they do their work.

Brookfield defines "critical reflection" as a discipline that helps identify the underlying assumptions influencing the way we work. He encourages teachers—and others—to follow this process at regular intervals. By keeping a "managing log" on a weekly or monthly basis focusing on answering the following six questions (adapted from Brookfield's), managers can begin to get a sense of the patterns of behavior that shape the way they work:

1. What were the moments when you felt most connected or affirmed as a manager or the times when you said to your-

self, "this is what it means to be a manager?"

2. What were the moments when you felt most disconnected or disengaged from your work or when you found yourself just going through the motions?
3. What was a situation that caused you great anxiety or distress—one that you would not want to repeat?
4. What event took you totally by surprise, caught you off guard, or even made you feel unexpectedly happy?
5. What would you do differently as a manager if you had the chance?
6. What do you feel proudest of in your role as a manager?

The beginning of the New Year is a great time to start a managing log. When you look at your answers, what assumptions were you making about being a manager that impacted the events that you noted? Then ask yourself, one year from now, what results you would like to see in your practice as a manager. By reflecting on the answers, you can take your managerial effectiveness to the next level. ■

Dr. John Drozdal, Principal Consultant and President of The Drozdal Company, provides organizational development and training services to teach managers and workgroups how to get work done by and through others in a way that is both satisfying and effective. His recent clients include General Mills, Pulte Homes, The Nature Conservancy, Land O'Lakes, and Xcel Energy. In addition to starting The Drozdal Company in 1991, Dr. Drozdal's experience in organizational development includes more than 15 years as a practicing manager in both the public and private sectors, as well as a doctorate in educational leadership and an MBA. Contact Dr. John Drozdal at 822-1468 or jdrozdal@drozdalcompany.com.

All content copyright ©2005 The Rio Rancho Observer.
Reprinted with permission.

jdrozdal@drozdalcompany.com
www.drozdalcompany.com
Albuquerque, NM: 505.822.1468



TheDrozdalCompany

Strong Managers, Strong Teams, Strong Companies