

REDUXES Reduce Productivity And Profitability

Why "Play It Again Sam" Is Not Good For Business

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There are many ways to typify or characterize a leader, yet in the business environment, one of the most persistent portrayals, and perhaps most important, is that as a steward of organizational resources. It is becoming increasingly clear that in order to be efficient stewards, leaders must become even more effective communicators.

The opportunities for miscommunication between yourself, your team, or your associates are practically limitless. The reasons are legion, and the consequences are lethal to organizational growth, productivity and profitability. The key tenet of this thesis is that when miscommunication occurs, we must then go back and correct the resulting mistakes, mishaps, and misappropriations. It is in having to take these duplicative corrective actions that the organizational bottom line is adversely impacted.

The concept of stewardship suggests that we take good care of that which is not actually ours. The resources entrusted to us as leaders don't belong to us, they are simply under our authority and attention. A good and faithful steward is one who endeavors to leverage all resources to the fullest actualization of their potential. This includes communicating in a way that enables, empowers, and equips those in your sphere of influence to efficiently deliver what is asked and expected of them.

Today, miscommunication - and its resulting reduxes - cost organizations billions. The problem is, in fact, a two-headed monster. One head is the behavior of leader, while the equally menacing second is the behavior of the associate.

Often leaders will give instructions or make requests that aren't as detailed as they should or could be. Because the leader is clear (in his or her mind) as to what is being requested, the leader assumes the associate has the identical level of understanding and clarity. It's similar to what happens when a Master Chef speaks with a novice. It's assumed that you already know how to make a white sauce or how to make a wine reduction.

The monster's second head is the reticence and reluctance of the associate to ask clarifying questions. It is what I call psychological proximity. When psychological proximity is at play, associates opt not to get the clarity and grounding necessary to execute the task in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The result is a very predictable and painful redux.

Squandered resources, as a consequence of reduxes, are not the hallmark of an efficient steward. The unnecessary repetition of a task undermines the very essence of any enterprise.

The business shorthand, acronyms, and jargon that pervade most workspaces take time and effort to master. Leaders who fail to adjust their communication to the level of their associates are setting themselves up for frequent and expensive reduxes.

As associates present what they feel are completed projects, if you are hearing yourself asking questions or making statements such as those listed below, odds are you are squandering resources via reduxes:

- What is this...?
- What happen here...?
- I thought we were clear...?
- That's not what I asked for...
- How'd you draw that conclusion...?
- This is (very) different from what I expected...

With constricting budgets, dwindling resources, and escalating global competition, no leader can afford the setback of frequent reduxes. The ageless adage, *measure twice, cut once*, is sage advice for all leaders striving to create a positive impact on the bottom line.

Leadership Lesson: Reduxes reduce productivity and profitability. As a leader, each of us looks forward to making a difference and achieving certain goals. And we desire to achieve those goals in ways that are efficient, smart, and fiscally responsible. In the end, the goal is to hear our associates and constituents to say, "Well done good and faithful steward."

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