

Job, Career, or Mission

Submitted by Richard Barrett

Group Exercise:

Materials required: Three flip chart stands with pads, magic markers. Paper and pens for each participant.

Instructions:

The group facilitator writes “Job Mentality” at the top of one flip chart page, “Career Mentality” at the top of the next, and “Mission Mentality” at the top of the third. The facilitator then asks the group to brainstorm meanings of “Job”, then “Career”, then “Mission” and these are written on the flip charts.

Next the facilitator asks group members to write down which five words best fit the way they see their work and why. If time permits, people can share what they wrote in dyads or triads.

Using new flip chart pages the group brainstorms: “What do you give in a job, a career, a mission?” Then; “What do you get in a job, a career, a mission?”

The following definitions can then be provided:

Job: A job is primarily about short-term security. We give time, energy, and skills to get money for survival and pleasure. A job fulfills our physical and emotional needs.

Career: A career is primarily about long-term security. We give time, energy, skills, and knowledge to advance to higher levels of status and earning potential. We get comfort, security, and an opportunity to learn and grow. We also get a feeling of accomplishment. A career fills our physical, emotional, and mental needs.

Mission: A mission is timeless. It is work that corresponds to our inner passion. We give our deepest selves. In return we find meaning. Our intuition and creativity come alive. When our work is also our mission and we have an employer who treats us fairly, we have an opportunity to find personal fulfillment.

Discussion Questions:

1. Would you rather be working in a job, a career, or a mission?
2. Which do you think your employees would prefer?
3. Which of these mentalities is most likely to lead to organizational effectiveness?

After some discussion the following brief lecturette can be delivered.*

Lecturette:

In the twenty-first century, corporations will be building competitive advantage by nurturing creativity. This means they will be seeking ways to encourage every employee to have a mission mentality. Four conditions are necessary for this to happen:

1. Everyone in the organization must feel a powerful sense of connection to the “organizational identity.” This requires a strong corporate culture with a shared vision and values that are in alignment with the employee’s personal values.
2. The organization must (a) give everyone the opportunity to find work that corresponds to their inherent talents and passion and stretches them to become all they can become, and (b) link the overarching mission of the organization to the individual mission of every employee.
3. The organization must create a culture and working conditions that allow employees to find personal fulfillment – to meet their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs.
4. The organization must support employees in finding personal fulfillment by providing both professional and personal growth training.

(Barrett, 1998: 45)

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the three mentalities of work does our organization tend to promote?
2. What business reasons might exist that might require us to move towards a greater mission mentality?
3. Do the four conditions described by Barrett exist in our organization?
4. If not, what steps do we need to take to create an environment that is more supportive of a mission mentality?

*For further information on these concepts see Liberating the Corporate Soul: Building a Visionary Organization by Richard Barrett, Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998.