RHA, LLC

Guiding Teams – Building Success

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

Welcome to Newsletter No. 3— RHA's focus this quarter is on developing, managing and improving relationships. It almost sounds like family counseling, and in a way, it sort of is…..think about it. As always, we'd like to thank you for downloading or clicking on the email—Enjoy and don't be afraid to contact us if you have any follow-up questions or comments. We're always looking for feedback!

RELATIONSHIPS…..the dreaded "R" word that makes many of us uncomfortable….thoughts of group hugs, trust falls, and who knows what else. It doesn't have to be uncomfortable. In fact, without relationships, working to accomplish common goals is rather difficult.

I mentioned family counseling at the beginning. If you think about it, we spend more time with the people we work with than our own families. So, in a way, we should think of each other as family, some may be the family members we don't really want to spend a lot of time with, but, they are still family. The reason I mention this is that we must continually focus on managing those relationships effectively, and this takes many things. Some of the elements that RHA focuses on in our Partnering workshops, internal team workshops and training relate to:

- Communication

- Trust

- Effective Problem Solving & Issue Resolution

Managing our Relationships Takes Perseverance

RHA continues to realize the importance of relationships in the teams that we are involved with from the client to each individual team member. As is stated, TEAMWORK, requires work, it doesn't happen on its own. The major part of this is the relationship we have with one another. Our relationship actually impacts our ability to communicate, solve problems and resolve our differences. If we have a "good" working relationship, we are more open and receptive versus a "poor" working relationship which often leads us to be defensive and guarded; let the letter writing campaign begin!

RHA stresses these things during training and when we are working with your teams. We know how important this is to a project and team's success. For ways to better understand and possibly improve your own behaviors, read on…..

Communication & Trust

In our first newsletter, we briefly touched on the importance of Trust in Communication. I would like to take those discussions a little further in this newsletter, because it is so important.

So, what happens when you feel you cannot trust someone, how do you normally communicate with these individuals? Human nature would be to be very careful with the information you have and how and if you share it.

Then when you don't communicate with others, they may believe that you are not being open, that you may be hiding things or they may perceive you as being dishonest or deceptive. This perception alone can lead people to not trust you. So now, you don't communicate with them and they don't communicate with you. Where does that lead you!

Communication & Trust (Cont'd)

If we think about it, what we end up with is a vicious cycle of very little if any communication, which will continue to perpetuate difficulties with our relationship, project and team!

To put it all into perspective, how do we solve problems or resolve our differences if we don't talk to one another. We sometimes wonder why our teams seem to fall apart and I would bet that 8 out of 10 times it is all because of how communication and trust have impacted our working relationship.

No Trust — No Communication
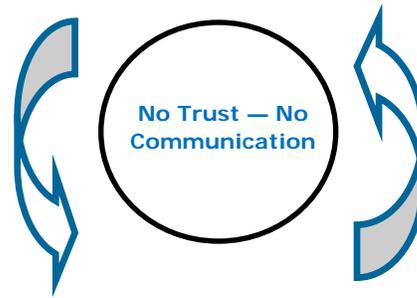
What Impacts Our Ability to Trust

- Team members must perceive each other as **Open, Fair, Honest** and willing to **Listen**

- Team members must have **confidence** that their team members and supervisors will **support** them

- Establishing trust in a team **requires** open communication, accepting others, sharing common goals and respecting the opinions of others

Mutual Trust   vs.   Mutual Suspicion

The challenge with trusting someone and not being suspicious, can sometimes be tied to RELIABILITY. So consider this, depending on the industry we are in, and those of us in construction, we rely on things that we have little and sometimes no control. However, we often get frustrated with these things and sometimes blame others and even believe they are being or acting in an untrustworthy fashion. You need to ask yourself, is that a fair assessment? We must be careful how we perceive trusting behaviors. We must also consider our own personal conduct and how it can impact our trusting relationships.

- **Do you have erratic conduct**—saying one thing and doing something else, too often. This can even be impacted when we have organizations providing different directions. Let's relate this to a construction project: you are working two shifts, the lead inspector for the day shift allows you to work in a specific fashion, the night shift lead inspector starts his shift and immediately tells you that you can't do it that way. So, you do what you want, regardless.

- **Do you communicate carelessly**—this occurs by saying things that can be interpreted as commitments. This can be referred to as the use of "wiggle" words. Such as; "approximately," "close to," "around," "should," "might," "could," "maybe," and so on and so forth. Do any of these sound familiar to you? I would suggest that you stop using these words and if you hear them, your job is to get a confirmation versus thinking that someone has made a commitment.

- **Do you treat clear promises lightly**—when you make a promise, do you follow through? If you can't follow through with a commitment, make sure that you contact the person you made the commitment to and explain why you can't do what you had committed—before the event.

Effective Problem Solving & Issue Resolution

In a continuation of the communication discussion, let's relate how this may impact how we solve problems and resolve our differences together. Individuals solve problems and resolve issues differently. Based on their Styles or Traits; some will want to have time to plan for problem solving and decision-making, they do not like shooting from the hip; some do not need formal activities and enjoy the free wheeling discussions without structure; and some like to stir the pot to help encourage innovation and creativity. Which one are you? The problem we have is that we are not all the same and some like some things, others do not. This is why we struggle with one another. Then on top of this, we all are willing to accept risk differently; some will be very accepting of taking risks and trying new things, some want to accept risk but only consider the positive aspects; some accept risks and look at both the negative and the positive; and finally, some are very uncomfortable with taking risk, period. Think about your teams and your job sites. This is how we often struggle, we see things and handle things differently and we can't understand WHY others can't see it the way we do! This all must be considered to achieve success. You can't always "have it your way."

Using Partnering to Aid in Problem Solving & Issue Resolution

Problem solving and issue resolution are two of the most critical elements in the partnering process and the effective management of our *relationship*. Team members must have the experience, empowerment and desire to help all sides succeed through effective problem solving and timely issue resolution. One of the main goals of problem solving and issue resolution is to help each team member gain a better understanding of the issue at hand. This can only be done through an open and honest exchange of information, otherwise known as the Problem Solving and Issue Resolution Process that you develop at the beginning of every project.

The Problem Solving and Issue Resolution Process in the Partnering Program must include more than just the issue escalation plan (ladder). Team members should focus on opportunities to educate one another on needs, expectations, and approaches to work elements. Taking a pro-active approach to understanding work elements helps teams to identify issues earlier, leading to fewer project concerns and constraints.

Using the identified elements during this process will help team members focus on the following objectives:

♦   Helps the RE and the contractor PM resolve issues in a timely and effective manner.

♦   Encourages upper management to take a more active role in the issue resolution process.

♦   Helps team members learn how to handle similar issues in the future.

♦   Helps field staff, both owner and contractor, to understand some of the specific, standard challenges that occur on similar projects and how and when to escalate these issues.

♦   Helps all team members better understand the roles and responsibilities at the various escalation levels.

Don't over simplify the process, but also don't make it difficult. Commitment to the proper use of the problem solving and issue resolution process is critical to organizational, team and project success. Stay tuned for additional tips and ideas in future issues.

Guiding Teams—Building Success

Hopefully this Newsletter has been informative and enlightening. RHA has been working with teams over the past 25 years to help build success.

This Newsletter has had a strong focus on helping to improve the value of our teams and our projects. We have outlined just two opportunities and there are many more. If you would be interested in more information on Partnering, value engineering or risk analysis, RHA provides many presentations and training for organizations.

RHA will continue to focus our future newsletters on other skill sets as well. They may include leadership, communication, issue resolution, negotiation, conflict resolution, goal setting, and much more...

We look forward to hearing from you. Our information can be found on the back, look us up!

RHA is a professional firm specializing in training and facilitation services. RHA, LLC is certified as a WBE/DBE/SBE/VSBE in several states and provide services throughout the nation and abroad.

Services

Partnering
Project Scoping (Alternative Delivery)
Value Engineering
Team Building
Strategic & Process Planning
Community Outreach
Training (Value Engineering, Risk, Partnering, Alternative Delivery, Facilitation)
Risk Analysis

Firm Experience (From A to Z)

Transportation (Highway, Bridges, Rail, Bus, Airports)
Flood Control & Drainage
Water & Wastewater
Buildings
Environmental Projects
Specialty Disciplines; fuel farms, seismic upgrades, etc.

LIKE WHAT YOU'VE READ.....OR THERE IS SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE

GO TO WWW.TEAMRHA.COM AND SIGN-UP!

Corporate Office
6677 W. Thunderbird Road,
Suite K183
Glendale, AZ 85306

Phone: (602) 493-1947
Toll free: (800) 480-1401
Renee@TeamRHA.com
Patrice@TeamRHA.com
Laurie@TeamRHA.com
Ann@TeamRHA.com

We're on the Web

www.TeamRHA.com

Introducing Are Staff Members

Staff Members

Renee Hoekstra, CVS is the managing partnering of RHA, LLC, a company she started over 24 years ago. She provides all program development and facilitation services for partnering, scoping, value engineering and risk analysis as well as facilitating internal and process development teams.

Laurie Dennis, P.E., CVS-Life, LEED AP, has provided civil engineering design, program management, and construction management services since 1977. As a registered professional civil engineer and certified value specialist (CVS), she specializes in value analysis, technical interface management, project estimating, budgeting, scheduling, project controls, and administration.

Russell Van Natta— Russ pretty much does it all. He handles all of the accounting, IT and all of our DBE/SBE certifications. He is also responsible for the Partnering on-line, web based rating program as well as designing and managing the company website. He has worked with the company almost since our inception in 1992.

Patrice M. Miller, CVS is a managing partner of RHA, LLC and provides professional facilitation services for design, alternative delivery and construction projects. Her recent experience includes providing facilitation of value engineering and risk analysis workshops.

Ann Jamison, CVS, AICP, She has over 35 years of experience in planning, design and construction of major public infrastructure projects. Ann's work has been with both public and private sector clients, supporting her ability to draw out and define project issues and challenges. She excels at breaking down complex issues into understandable elements.

Cole— Security Officer Cole is an 8-year old Bull Mastiff/Boxer who works as the RHA Security Officer. He works diligently to ensure there are no unwanted visitors to the office and patrols the area with constant vigilance.

He works for dog cookies!