

STOP SITTING & GET MOVING WITH YOUR TEAM

by [Steve Brown](#)

A new study by Swedish researchers finds the more time people spent without muscular activity (e.g. sitting, watching television, etc.) the more likely they were to be obese and develop diabetes, heart disease and cancer - even if they exercised during other periods of time. The study found that for every hour spent watching television, people had an 18% greater risk of dying from cardiovascular disease and an 11% greater risk from all causes of death. So, if you want to stay healthy, keep moving around and sit as little as possible.

Speaking of getting moving, one way banks can gain traction this year is to take a moment and reflect as a management team on the management team. Focus on whether you are working as a team and if not, why not? Getting the team on track is much more than just something to do, it is also a way to boost productivity by as much as 40% according to studies.

Here are underlying traits of some of the strongest management teams in a variety of studies. Starting with the CEO, the key is to focus not on being "right," but rather to produce results. Management teams should know their ideas and voices will be heard and acted upon. It is great to have a vision to go along with it, but a vision without listening and modifying direction based on management input is not ideal.

Studies also find the best management teams actively share ideas and have healthy group dynamics. Key traits most often found in the strongest management teams include direct dialogue, an openness to discussing new information, optimism about the future, a willingness to take risks, group cohesiveness, strong ethics and decision-making based on the facts at hand.

When it comes to management in general terms, each team member is responsible for getting specific jobs completed by employees in the most optimal and efficient manner. To do that, managers should set clear goals and objectives. Then, to wrap it all up, managers should provide an underlying structure that gives employees the training, flexibility, and resources needed to accomplish their goals and objectives. Finally, to support it all, the best managers will also have a regular supervision and feedback loop to ensure goals and objectives are being met as expected and blockages are removed from the process.

Now that we know what makes a good management team and a good process, we can also review the same studies to see what traits weaker managers tend to have. To begin, weak managers tend to be inflexible and controlling. Rather than empowering team members to succeed, these managers tend to micromanage processes. Instead of telling the employee the "what" and "why" of each decision and leaving the "how" of execution to the employee, these managers apply a strict and overbearing approach that squeezes out creativity, innovation and employee development. Studies show the worst offenders will also tend to belittle employees, try to replicate themselves in their hiring decisions and communicate negative feedback to employees in front of others. This approach not only saps employee self-confidence, but it eliminates the motivation to raise the bar and excel.

No matter what sort of manager you think you are or what kind of team you may belong to, recognizing those things you are doing that may not be helpful to the process is a good first step to improving the environment. We all know there is plenty of stress to go around in the banking industry these days, so management teams need each other now more than ever. We are all in this together, but the good news is that the financial stress we are feeling should not return for another 100Ys. To help ease the pain, wherever and whenever possible, get active and focus on the positive as you build a more cohesive team.

BANK NEWS

IRAs

In the President's State of the Union Speech tomorrow, Obama is expected to reveal a new proposal that would give tax credits to incent retirement savings and would create a system of direct deposit workplace IRAs. Both ideas, if passed, would help lower bank's cost of funds.

Bank Losses

SunTrust reported a \$316mm loss for the 4Q and a \$1.7B loss for the full year (increased ALLL by 33% to 2.76% overall, loan balances declined 12% from 2008, deposits increased 14% YOY, TDRs increased 35% from 3Q); Huntington reported a net loss of \$369.7mm for the 4Q and \$3.27B loss for the year (24% increase in provision YOY to 4.16% overall; grew core deposits 16% YTD). Zions reported a \$177mm loss for the 4Q and a \$1.23B loss for 2009 (restated 2Q & 3Q due to accounting treatment of sub debt; ALLL was 3.95%; loan balances fell 2.6% from 3Q).

Jobs

43 states and DC experienced a rise in unemployment over Dec. MI yet again tops the list at 15%, followed by NV at 13%, FL at 13%, SC at 13% and CA at 12%.

Record Amount

Research finds a record 88.5% of all mortgages originated through the 3Q had some form of government support.

Small Biz

The FDIC indicates insured institutions provide more than 60% of all credit to small businesses.

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