Perception - it's not what you think it is … [2]

So now we recognise the degree to which our perception is altering our thinking let's look at how to deal with that.

You should be familiar with the need to resist discrimination when employing staff - it's a legal requirement that has forced the recruitment process to change. Things like anonymised CV's have become the norm to prevent our natural prejudices interfering.

That's all well and good when it comes to recruitment but what about deciding how to deal with a problem that is causing the business some pain? What steps **ought** we to take to prevent those same perceptive errors sending us down the wrong path?

In truth there's frequently a huge pressure to act fast and in so doing we act on instinct not necessarily facts. If you think the problem is due to processes in the despatch department, that's where you will start to redesign. But what if the problem is actually due to something in production? How will you know?

The Cardinal Rule

That's why you should **ALWAYS ASSUME YOUR PERCEPTION IS WRONG**. That may sound like overkill but actually it is best practice. Why? Because assuming your initial perception is wrong means that you know you will have to dig deeper and therefore you will do this every time.

> I've talked elsewhere about the retail client that was moving their HQ to new premises about 60 miles away. Their initial focus was on retaining the top level merchandising management. *(They had 11 Category Manager positions - although two were vacant and, although these are important people, the business could clearly operate without a couple for a few months. Yet the Board of Directors' natural perception was that senior people are the most important.)* In fact the most important staff were two levels down the hierarchy because they were doing the work and could - between them - cover any senior gaps for a short time without disrupting things.

Ask yourself the question - which group are the most critical to your business? Now assume that you haven't got them. Will your business still function? Who will step in to plug the gap?

As a second round, mentally take out that group instead. Now how are things going to operate? Who will cover **their** roles and how effective might that be? Your perception of the business and relative strengths of individuals and departments will start to shift.

Frankly this kind of exercise is relatively uncommon. Why? Because, again, we rely on our preconceptions and our own (unique) perspective of what needs to be done and by whom. Yet the fact remains that, in order to get the right change going, you need to understand what problems you are really trying to solve. For every business leader who sets out on a change journey without sense-checking their perception I can guarantee that there will be a failed project or at least one that has to be reconfigured part-way through.

Are you really looking at things from the right perspective?

So - what are YOU going to do to get an objective assessment of your own perceptions? Not just about which groups are the most important but other aspects of the operations. How are your relationships with suppliers? Really? Are you sure? Are your procurement models actually delivering what you need? Keep digging - you may find that things are completely different when reviewed in this way.

If you want help - you also know where to ask. With decades of experience in getting things right first time we've delivered £billions of value for clients - often by simply avoiding the costly blind alleys.

You can get in touch at https://robwherrett.com/contact/ and let's have a conversation - it will almost certainly save you a small fortune. What have you got to lose? Are your perceptions of what things might need changing truly objective or could an external assessment help? It costs nothing to have an initial chat and find out more.

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For more information you can also visit https://robwherrett.com