

January 2005

Problem Solving

- ◆ Means to improving productivity.

Past Issues

Sales Planning

- ◆ Minimizing the risk.

Target Accounts

- ◆ Developing key customers.

Competition

- ◆ Their value to you.

Sales Performance

- ◆ An equal measure of expectation and accountability.

Skip Flinn

I send this letter out to all my clients as a reminder to address the basic questions and issues on a regular basis. If you'd like more information about this topic, or would like to receive this newsletter on a regular basis, contact me at: skip@flinnassociates.com

Problem Solving – Whose monkey, is it anyway?

When a problem arises, are you satisfied with the level at which you are involved? Or do any of the following sound more familiar?

- ◆ A member of your staff removes themselves from the responsibility of creating a solution and thereby resolving the problem themselves?
- ◆ Individuals are encouraged to seek solutions without your involvement, but rarely do.
- ◆ Based upon your title, regardless of the issue, are you the one who is called upon to provide the solution?

A decision making process, utilized at all levels, will become an effective management tool to insure only when absolutely necessary will you need to be made part of the process.

Where to start?

- ◆ Establish a procedure for understanding the root cause of the issue at hand.
 - What got you to this point?
 - How important is it?
 - What would happen if you did nothing?
 - What is the impact of addressing this issue now?
 - What are the options?
 - Will the ideal option put your company at risk?
- ◆ Teach your staff how to approach you, in a productive way, after they have followed the above steps.
- ◆ Re-enforce the process. If their solution does not put you at risk, go with it.

Why?

- ◆ Your time, which is extremely valuable, is now spent addressing real opportunities to grow your business.
- ◆ In the decision making process the 80/20 rule always applies; 20% of the time your involvement is necessary, but 80% of the time it is not.

Summary

Developing procedures for resolving problems and addressing opportunities will in the end, improve productivity of your staff. Engaged employees will be responsible for providing appropriate solutions, based on a decision making model, seeking management's help only when necessary.