

Are You Kidding? They're Speaking With Each Other!

By *Tamás Jeviczki, LHEP®*

When I got the opportunity to have a workshop with this agency, the CEO said that there weren't serious problems. I was asked just to help them become a group. As one of the main features of The Human Element-based workshops is that it has various positive effects in the long run, I prefer to get additional information after the workshops. So, after the Cornerstone workshop I asked the CEO whether he could tell me of any improvement since then. His answer became the title of this article.

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This was a labor exchange agency in Hungary, which worked well overall. The agency was better than its rivals, was alive, made profit, and had a positive image and reputation. But, I had the opportunity to speak for an hour with each of the leaders in it, and a considerably different picture emerged. Although all of them liked their jobs, they did not really like each other. They were seriously stressed, some of them were not motivated, the personal relationships were not satisfying, and some of them were avoiding each other. This was a kind of company that really required teamwork. They worked with thousands of students and hundreds

of companies. The leadership team had about fifty workers, whose work was not well prioritized. The deadlines were always frustrating, and nobody had time to rethink their work methods. The leaders did not know whether they were working well or not, or if the company was succeeding or not. They did not know what strategic direction to take. There were too many projects, and nobody knew which was important and urgent, and which was just an idea. The workload was too demanding, and some of them had already planned to change their jobs. Some of them had not been speaking to each other for months. As is sometimes the case, the CEO did not know most of these problems existed before The Human Element® Cornerstone Workshop.

During the three-day Cornerstone workshop, the eight leaders (including the CEO) began to address the human problems in their organization. They hadn't taken the opportunity before to talk these over, and although this was not the main aim of the Cornerstone course, they used this opportunity to



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plunge in. Even in the intervals of the workshop and after the long day together, they continued to follow the work — in the manner that the problems should be spoken about — searching for the solutions without blaming. They cleared the air, started to understand each other, and realized that they can change. One of the newly promoted staff members decided to get back to her previous job that she enjoyed more and felt competent in doing. The most rigid team member started to rethink his behavior. The unsure leaders got some feedback from the CEO, and they had the opportunity to return feedback as well. The CEO started to give information about strategic goals, priorities, successes, and invited them for brainstorming sessions. Although it was on the weekend, and they were tired, they were getting more and more excited about the changes they were making as a team.

At that time there was a special Coca Cola activity that involved using different signs in the bottles. During the first day they brought one with the sign "Share a bottle with team mates". During the third day they brought a bottle with the sign "Share a bottle with friends" in it.

Months later I spoke with some of the participants. They had solved a lot of issues, and had much better social connections in their workplace. The changes in the human level of the workplace that started during the workshop were continued, and with improved communication, they had helped a lot.)