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The Outcome Thinking Model

Dr. Susan Cain, Ed. D | Corporate Learning Institute

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Outcome Thinking

Outcome Thinking is a thought-action process used by high performers to manage successfully. It is a combination of thinking differently to act differently to achieve superior results.

The Outcome Thinking Model is comprised of 4 distinct steps:

- I. **Desired Outcome** - a positive statement which identifies specifically what is needed, along with the expected benefits to the organization; to the customers; to the individual.
- II. **Clarity** – a series of specific measures designed to examine the pluses and minuses of the desired outcome; resources;
- III. **Manageability** – the desired outcome is viewed in terms of obstacles and whether they are in your control; you can influence or they are out of your control. This step helps make the outcome doable.
- IV. **Action** – having completed a quick analysis of the desired outcome, you are able to move to first step. Unless there is a measurable first step, you do not have a doable outcome.

Most managers already use Outcome Thinking at certain times in certain situations. However, they do so intuitively without recognizing the pattern or method they have used. When they hit certain obstacles, they shift to a problem-focus.

Learning the principles of Outcome Thinking gives managers conscious command of this powerful thought/action process, enabling them to use Outcome Thinking consistently, by choice rather than chance. It requires some practice and discipline.

Outcome-Focused Thinking

- accountability-driven
- quality decisions
- creates opportunities
- positive work dynamics
- moves to immediate results
- open communication

Problem-Focused Thinking

- places blame
- may fix symptom, not underlying problem
- a drain on energy
- wastes time/resources
- closed communication

Adopting an Outcome Thinking approach throughout the organization results in better decisions, interdepartmental cooperation and flexibility to respond to situations productively and in a timely manner.

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