

## What happens when it's broken at the top?

*By David Nour, Managing Partner, The Nour Group, Inc.*

If you are a senior executive and your relationships, mutual trust (and we define trust as credibility + empathy), and respect for your senior team is broken, questioned, and in short, dysfunctional, what kind of effect does it have on the rest of the organization?

In our experience working with a multitude of client companies, we see many high level executives who face similar challenges when it comes to getting the team to work closer together. Recently, I met with a division president and a handful of his business unit leaders – with both overt and covert trust and respect challenges. In what one could argue is a fairly manageable sized team in close geographic proximity, fairly complementary product lines, and what should be logically integrated functions (such as sales, marketing and professional services) they have managed to build fortified silos of product offerings, fiefdoms of service resources, and a culture that does not foster teamwork.

Organizations like this one are commonplace in today's market and make it extremely difficult for team members to work together. Though the outward appearance of these organizations may be "rosy," they are truly broken at the top. And by the law of cascading effects, this brokenness often crumbles all the way down throughout the organization.

So, what's the answer? The team needs a common cause or a common enemy; key strategic initiatives towards something or a battle against something such as a competitive market position or what they perceive to be unfair legislation or oversight. That which they believe will benefit not only the overall division, but their respective business units as well. If an independent, outside perspective can help them embrace the collective shared intellect, individual performances and deep relationships with customers, distributors, and key employees in an optimized series of processes, could they deliver critical milestones on those key strategic initiatives? If they collaborated, communicated, and worked closer as a team, could they double or quadruple their top lines, reduce employee attrition, and outperform the very competitors they are beaten by today?

**Is your team broken at the top? How do you know? Check out the checklist of the Top 5 warning signs below, or call us at 1-888-339-1333 or e-mail us today at [info@nourgroupp.com](mailto:info@nourgroupp.com) to discuss your relationship-centric culture challenges.**

### Top 5 Warning Signs that Your Organization is Broken at the Top:

**#1 – Key leaders are more concerned about their next job than the current one.** Whether they wear their ego on their sleeve or are constantly jockeying for succession positioning, they are more concerned about their next job than performing the one they have today. As a result, key initiatives drag on, valuable resources are wasted, and the organization generates more excuses than results.

**# 2 – The senior team seldom meets, collaborates or communicates.** How can you possibly keep your finger on the pulse of the business, the *real* business of the firm, based on a stack of reports?

**#3 – The organization is afraid of retribution.** The courage to fail – fail fast, fail cheap, and fail forward – and then learn from that failure to enhance the overall performance of the organization, can only come from the top. It doesn't come from a title or prescribed, carefully chosen, bland keynote speech, but from real actions, unconditional support, and encouragement to constantly push the edges of the envelope.

**#4 – Few people in the organization understand where the ship is headed.** Beyond the "wall art" of mission, vision, values, and the empirical, people are your biggest asset. Very few people in the organization truly

understand the direction in which the organization is headed. I equate this to having a lot of machetes, sharpening these machetes, and cutting down lots of trees, but never stopping to first ask, *Are we in the right jungle?*

**#5 – Shift happens.** Companies that fail are not those that refuse to adapt, but those that simply cannot adapt quickly enough to outpace fundamental market trends. Bureaucracy, politics, and jockeying for glory create barriers to execution, which in turn hinders the adaptability of any organization in motion.

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*David Nour is one of the foremost thought leaders on the quantifiable value of business relationships. A native of Iran, David came to the U.S. with a suitcase, \$100, limited family ties and no fluency in English! Fast forward 25 years and he has built an impressive career of entrepreneurial success, both within large corporations and early stage ventures. David is an author, a senior management advisor, and a featured speaker for corporate, association and academic forums, where he shares his knowledge and experience as a leading change agent and visionary for Relationship Economics® - the art and science of relationships. To learn more, please visit: [www.relationshipeconomics.NET](http://www.relationshipeconomics.NET) or call 1-888-339-1333.*