

MASTERING MANAGEMENT

with **Mark Taylor**



No One Makes It Alone

“No one makes it alone.” (Malcom Gladwell)

Last month at the PARCEL Forum, about a dozen executives sat around a conference room all day helping each other tackle the most challenging issues they faced in running and growing their operations.

It was a candid give-and-take, where trusted peers asked each other tough, in-depth questions that got to the heart of any shipping and operational problems they were facing. Participants received direct and honest feedback and derived actionable ideas that they could take home and implement.

provide their perspective, solution or recommendation. Finally, we ask the presenter what they heard and what actions they are committed to taking. This is important because it creates accountability and results. The process works best when one person takes the role of facilitator.

The next time you need some help, try brainstorming ideas with a group of your peers. ■

SO I'M HAVING THIS PROBLEM...

Some of the issues were the following:

- ▶ How do I reduce shipping charges?
- ▶ What can I do to gather the right metrics to measure for my department?
- ▶ How do I break down silos in my company?
- ▶ How do I hire the right employee?
- ▶ What can I do to get my team to work together?

A beautiful thing that happens in a group like this: people help one another. I am constantly amazed at the power of a group to make a difference. Vistage developed a process for discussing issues over 50 years ago. I know from my own experience that this process works. I have been a part of it no less than a couple of hundred times. The steps are listed in the side bar.

The important part of this process is that after the issue has been presented, the group does not jump to providing solutions. On average, the team should spend at least 30 minutes asking questions for greater clarity. Sometimes, we discover that the original issue is only on the surface and the real issue is something different. After the time, the questions will begin to die down. Then it is appropriate to have each group member

STEP-BY-STEP

Here is the process for discussing issues and opportunities:

What is the issue or opportunity that you would like help with? Be concise; state it in one or two sentences that get to the heart of the matter. Is it a concern, challenge, opportunity or problem?

Next, tell us why it is significant. What is the effect on dollars, time, people, products, services, customers, family, timing, the future, etc.?

What is your ideal outcome? What do you really want to happen?

Give some relevant background information. Short bullet points on: How, When, What, Why; Various options you could take, have taken or plan to take.

What specific assistance do you want from the group? For example: higher confidence on the right decision; possible solutions; alternatives; identification of consequences; where to find more information; critique of current plan.

MARK TAYLOR is the Chairman of a New York City think tank composed of CEOs focused on “outperforming” their competition. He is with Vistage International, the world’s leading chief executive organization. He applies his 30 years of experience as an accomplished CEO and corporate manager towards increasing the effectiveness and enhancing the lives of CEOs. Mark holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix and is a graduate of the Coaching and Organizational Learning Program through George Mason University. He can be reached at 212-867-5849 or mark.taylor@vistage.com.