

“Mind The Gap”

How To Avoid Tumbling Into The Abyss

By Kendall C. Wright, President of Entelechy Training and Development, Inc.

If you’ve been fortunate enough to travel throughout England via train, then you are aware of the plethora of stenciled admonishments garnishing the train platforms. They simple state, “Mind The Gap.”

Even the infrequent passenger has seen, or surely heard of, travelers who were distracted or otherwise preoccupied and fell victim to the menacing gap between the landing platform and the door of the train. In failing to “mind the gap,” those travelers tumbled to the unforgiving concrete; their pride often more bruised than their knees.

In today’s extremely demanding business environment, an environment in which people development is, for many, an “after-thought,” it is easy for leaders to forget to mind the gap. Like those tumbling travelers, the leaders know where they are (on the train), and they know where they want to be (off the train). But because of ignorance, arrogance, or both, they neglect thoughtful consideration as to how to execute the transition (minding the gap). Consequently, they plummet and humiliate themselves.

In reality, if your organization employs people, you probably need those people to be competent, committed, and creative. To help ensure you have all your “talent” aboard, mind the following 3 gaps:

Potential vs. Performance: When potential is slow to come to fruition, the leader must ask tough questions. Is the deficiency an issue of willingness or an issue of ability? Are there impediments in the environment hobbling the individual’s demonstration of his or her skill set?

Busy Work vs. Business Work: Over time, organizations develop bureaucracy or procedural steps that may have outlived their usefulness. Ask your associates for insights on how to streamline your operations and add to your efficiency.

Expressed vs. Experienced: Organizations have an “expressed ideal” of their culture and how their employees should be valued. To what degree do the employees’ experiences match that expressed ideal? The broader the gap between the expressed and the experiences, the deeper the employees’ dissatisfaction.

Leadership Lesson: The Actualizing Leader is dedicated to reducing the barriers preventing associates from making their maximum contribution. Toward that end, the words of England’s Network Rail could not be more apropos: Mind The Gap.

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