Seven Habits of Highly Effective Alliance Professionals
Q&A

Q: I am curious about adoption of executive behavior to self-manage information from a system. I have not seen this to be the case. They ask for it when they want an update, if you haven't provided a standard one recently, so the platform matters, but I don't see them using it as a self-service.   Anyone with experience with success here?

Jan and Jeff respond: Train them to rely on the report or information and make it a just a few clicks away and automatically updated. Granted some execs will never self-serve, and some you may not *want* to self-serve. But for some, when it is an option, it becomes part of their thinking process to get the most recent data.

Q: You are already a couple of years into the alliance; how do you build bridges when the company cultures are vastly different and you often find your partner's views not matching yours.

Jan and Jeff respond: That's a big question. The first thing is to make sure there is a North Star for the alliance—the vision stated from the perspective of the value that the customer and the partners receive from the alliance. Hang onto that to drive a common understanding of what goodness is and to prioritize decisions, actions, and resources. You'll also want to make sure you have strong charters and operating principles in place, as well drive behaviors for how teams handle differences of opinion.

Q: What are your thoughts RE Digitizing Workflows and reporting for Sr Execs vs. balancing confidentiality in a "co-opitition" Alliance relationship? Best Practices?

Jan and Jeff respond: It is all in the way you set up the platform and give permissions to access information. For example, allianceboard can set permissions at a very granular level. Keep in mind, however, that firewalls typically end at some level in senior leadership where they have P&L responsibility for a bigger portfolio. There it is up to alliance professionals to educate about avoiding actions that can undermine trust and that will ultimately undermine the business when your partner thinks you have an ulterior motive and second guesses everything.

Q: It seems like #1, Enhance Value & Manage Risk, is the overarching main role of alliance management. If that's true, what is the next most important habit?

Jan and Jeff respond: That is true. The others are all important, too. Managing and engaging with stakeholders and building the right strategy for them comes next. They are your most

direct customer and why most alliance managers spend 60 – 70% of their time working internally.

Q: Out of the Seven habits; Are there any of these that should be more heavily developed, employed than the others?

Jan and Jeff respond: See the answer to the previous question. And don't forget to publish your work!

Q: What are the key metrics and KPIs you are seeing as most beneficial to monitor and manage the health and success of Alliances?

*Jan and Jeff respond***:** It very much depends on the objectives of the alliance. Look for measures of activities, which are often leading indicators, measures of time, which are measures of process, and outcomes, which are lagging indicators. One of the best measures of health is observational: Are people talking past each other? Are they arguing over company positions and not coming up with alliance solutions? If you see that, you know you have a problem.

Q: How do you encourage reluctant execs to use digital tools?

Jan and Jeff respond: Show them what they provide that is useful to that person and make them easy to access and use.

Q: If we are at a company that is not currently investing in a digital platform for publishing our work what is an alternative option to make sure that our work is being recognized?

*Jan and Jeff respond***:** Some companies hold quarterly deep dives into certain alliances with the executive team. Others publish manual reports and dashboards and get representation in senior forums. It is harder if not digital. Just make sure you are providing information about the work of alliance management not just the work of the alliance.

Q: In term of publication, sometimes it's hard to quantify the results. Is there other way to better represent?

Jan and Jeff respond: There are standard metrics to use to quantify the results of publication activities, such as number of A-list journals, number of citations, etc.

Q: Any proven digital platforms which are running excellence? Not time-wasting, but smart for operational excellence and make valuable outcomes crystal-clear?

Jan and Jeff respond: Check out allianceboard. www.allianceboard.com. They are an ASAP technology partner—and we partner with them, too, bringing them into our clients.

Q: In the scenario just described, what action can alliance manager take when baseline shows that people are talking past each other?

Jan and Jeff respond: First thing is to get them to recognize it. They may not be self-aware. Next, coach them in recognizing it and agree that when it happens, they will practice a technique such as structured listening, where they repeat back what each is saying until they have common understanding with shared meaning.

Comment from attendee:
Thanks for the presentation and follow up materials. The "publish your work" struck a chord. Often educating others in the organization about all the work we do and why it's important. Have to drop for another call... Thanks! Jeff

Jan and Jeff: Thanks everyone! Great questions!