

TOP 5 PERSONAL CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITIES

What keeps strategic alliance managers awake at night?

25 August 2014 - DRAFT
http://spibr.org/top_5_challenges.pdf

What are the top five challenges strategic alliance managers and partner managers need to overcome?

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING – “Nobody really ‘gets it!’”

We have a *passion* for our work that others just don’t appreciate. People often ask us such challenging questions as: What *is* a strategic alliance? Why are they so important? Why are they so complex? Beyond incremental sales revenue how do they actually contribute to the business’ *long-term* success? What is the “Return on Relationship;” is it worth the effort?

Few in the organization understand strategic partnerships or the value in collaboration; not seen as part of the core business. The result is a sense of vulnerability, personally and organizationally; there is no long-term commitment in either the staffing or the operation of an alliance. The result is severe personal and career frustration for the practitioner.

ROLE/CAREER CONFUSION – “What is my role? What is my personal value to the organization?”

Few people understand the unique nature of our work; for example, they do not understand why or how to bridge the cultural and strategic chasms between the partners. Our role is often equated with traditional business roles like sales, project management or business development; these staffing decisions often fail, without a clear understanding. No clear career development path.

People ask, “Isn’t this job simply about being a relationship manager, something anyone can do?” Throughout the organization people believe that the partners will naturally collaborate, with or without an alliance manager. They seem to be telling us “You are not really needed.”

LACK OF REAL POWER / STRATEGIC IMPOTENCE – “How do I make things happen when no one understands or values the work I do? I don’t have any real power.”

Executives have the real power and they often don’t care. They don’t appreciate either the amount or the type of resources required; it’s rarely enough. They don’t have the patience required for long-term value-creating partnerships.

Even when the organization does allocate enough resource we struggle to establish and maintain individual buy-in and team alignment. We can feel inept when we realize that all we have to rely on is our ability to persuade; we can end up begging for attention and support.

TOXIC ATMOSPHERE – “The overall climate is counter-productive to collaboration.”

Successful companies are very competitive, hindering collaboration because trust cannot grow in a competitive environment. Creativity is greatest with an abundance mindset. Competitiveness is grounded in scarcity (i.e., “your win is my loss”). How can we lead our alliances toward greater value-creation in such a fear-based and scarcity-oriented climate?

Stakeholders add to this challenge when they lack patience and demand immediate financial returns; this is like pulling on plants to make them bear fruit more quickly. They also destroy creativity by changing the alliance’s objectives; this inconsistency breaks trust.

OBSTRUCTED VISION – “I see the long-term potential; others do not. The path seems difficult.”

Given the strategic significance and overwhelming challenges of our work we need to be practical visionaries. A powerful vision attracts success and compels teams toward greater success.

How can we create a clear and powerful vision that will compel the team to create great value? And what are the best performance metrics that will focus individual and collective attention in order to overcome obstacles and achieve that vision?