



## **TIPs for Leading and Succeeding in a Matrix Organization –**

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Many of us in Continuing Engineering Education (CEE) have chosen to set up our organizations as a Matrix. The most typical one is having the business done on one axis and joint services such as HR, Finances, IT, Sales and Marketing and Product/Business/Process/Organization Development on the other axis. Working in a Matrix is always a demanding task, but can be handled with normal good leadership. Here are some tips that can make your life easier:

- If your Matrix is based on business functions on one axis and support or development functions on the other axis, make sure there are clear responsibilities for each unit and no confusion about where the ownership of the business responsibility lies. This can be sometimes challenging in GO/ NO-GO decision-making situations with, for example, joint sales or product development (support functions).
- In the Matrix, make sure that each person knows his or her role and responsibility. Double check that no duplicate work is done first in service or joint function and at the same time in the business function.
- When people work across units, for example in a project "owned" by another unit, agree at the start on the priority order of your organization's projects or specific tasks.
- Set up clear rules on the process to deal with any conflicts related to the use of resources. (Naturally this is necessary for other conflicts as well.)
- Educate your people in each other's processes. When the business functions understand how the support is delivered and vice versa, working together towards common targets becomes easier.
- In follow-up and steering, remember to use all the information related to the task, in order to get the holistic picture, especially when appraising people. If you are the nearest administrative supervisor and your employee is working also in projects under other supervisors' guidance, remember to get their feedback before you have any results or development discussions.

Our success in CEE is not only about good strategies, enough resources, well-defined processes or demanding customers. To be able to utilize these – especially in a Matrix organization – the top issues are clear roles and responsibilities, as well as good information flow through communication.