Making Powerful Requests:
Generating and Sustaining High Action and High Alignment

Results leaders choose to work together in both high action and high alignment[1] out of a shared commitment to create a future that benefits people. In other words, results leaders come together to make their aligned contributions towards a shared population level result. They choose to be in resilient and trusting[2] relationships and do the hard work of staying in high action and high alignment.

When a leader assesses that a partner is not in high action/high alignment, that leader has an obligation to have an authentic conversation[3] to support that partner in getting to or returning to high action/high alignment. Sometimes these conversations will require making a "Powerful Request".

Contents

1. Results partners can fall out of working in high action/high alignment
2. Powerful requests can help generate and sustain High Action/High Alignment
3. Sincere foundation for a powerful request
4. Key elements of a powerful request
5. Responsibilities of

1. Establishing a sincere foundation for the powerful request

Establishing a sincere foundation for the powerful request sets the stage for a successful exchange, and allows the requestor to gather information helpful for understanding the situation. This foundation should include:

Genuinely wanting assistance at the time of asking.	➔	And anticipating that the assistance will be needed until the point of "delivery."
Using data and/or shared criteria to make your assessment.	➔	This grounds your assessment in a shared reality.
Asking others if they share your assessment, based on the available data and/or criteria.	➔	This can help eliminate any blind spots or misinterpretations.
Making hypotheses about the reasons your partner(s) might have for not working in High Action/High Alignment, including issues of potential loss, lack of trust, work avoidance, and/or lack of clarity in role.	➔	This helps shape the kind of request you may make.
Identifying the impact of not working in High Action/High Alignment, including meeting population level results and related performance measures.	➔	This highlights the concern or the "for the sake of what" for which you are making the request.

2. Integrating key elements of a powerful request

The desired outcome of making a powerful request is to have the recipient of the request say "yes," which converts the request made by the requestor into a promise made by the recipient. However, if requests are vague or sloppy, then this exchange can actually set the stage for additional breakdowns in high action/high alignment. To create a precise request and set the stage for renewed work in high action/high alignment, make sure these key elements of a powerful request are in place:

---

[1] See High Action High Alignment App, Pillsbury and Chawla
[2] See Trust App, Chawla
[3] See Ten Conversations App, Chawla

- **Make the request in a direct manner to a specific person.**
  This means it is spoken directly to the person of whom the request is being made and identifies who is actually expected to complete the task. Plus, it is not disguised in other statements. "Raj, please submit the latest version of the report to me," is far more powerful than, "It's been a while since I've seen that report, will someone submit it?"

- **State the reason for the request and connect it to meeting results.**
  The receiver of the request will more likely respond if they see the impact of not working in High Action/High Alignment and how that connects to meeting (or not meeting) population level results. It can be helpful to also link the request to meeting (or not) the partners' individual performance measures and related strategies as a way of galvanizing a response.

- **Specify a timeframe for completing the request.**
  Creating clarity about the timeframe for completion allows the person to know if the request is urgent and trumps existing work, or can be met within the frame of ongoing work. Being clear on the timeframe enables someone to determine whether they can meet your expectation, whether they need to decline or delegate the task to someone else, or negotiate a different timeframe.

- **Make explicit the standards and criteria for successful completion of the request.**
  This is the place of greatest likelihood for a breakdown to occur. Clarity of standards and criteria (sometimes referred to as "Conditions of Satisfaction") allows the person to know what exactly is required for the request to be successfully fulfilled. Having a conversation about standards and criteria can reveal priorities and intent at a person, role, and system level. This conversation provides an opportunity for someone to say "no" to the request if they are not able to meet the desired standards and criteria. And, it also allows for negotiations to co-create mutually agreeable standards and criteria for success.

- **Ensure the request is role appropriate.**
  This means knowing if you are the right person, in role, to be making the request, and if the person receiving the request is the right person, in role, to be fulfilling the request.

- **Create a shared understanding of language and terminology.**
  Pay attention to any jargon used in making the request and check in to make sure that the person fulfilling the request understands what is being asked of him/her.

3. Establishing the responsibilities of both the requestor and receiver of the request

Responsibilities of the Requester:	Responsibilities of person receiving request:
Support the person receiving the request	Be genuine in agreeing to undertake the request
Share any new information that may impact the request and its fulfillment	Be competent to perform the required action
Declare satisfaction when the conditions of satisfaction and timeframes of the request have been met	Analyze and agree on the data and criteria about not being in High Action/High Alignment and upon which the request is based
Declare dissatisfaction if the request has not been met and negotiate next steps	Inform the requester if circumstances interfere with fulfilling the request and renegotiate