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The Most Powerful Name in Corporate News

Management Consulting and Organizational Effectiveness Solutions that Maximize Employee Performance and Business Outcomes

***Jeffrey Saltzman** - CEO*

"From employee surveys to 360 assessments to multi-analytic data platforms, we work together with our clients to determine how to make your organization thrive."- Jeffrey Saltzman

OrgVitality, LLC

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CEOCFO: ***Mr. Saltzman, what is the concept behind OrgVitality?***
Mr. Saltzman: OrgVitality, LLC is a management consulting company specializing in organizational effectiveness, offering services that address critical business challenges. We are experts in designing metrics/organizational change projects that are linked to strategy, generate useful insight, and drive positive action. Our ability to deliver projects with an ideal balance of expertise and flexibility, sophistication and creativity, and premier consultation with small-business customization is what makes OrgVitality stand out from the rest. OrgVitality's work centers on people, and how organizations can maximize the performance of their people and by extension the organization. A group of Industrial/Organizational Psychologists and Technologists formed OrgVitality. We view ourselves, each in our respective area of expertise as craftspeople, expertly and carefully creating programs, solutions, and experiences for our clients that meet their specific needs. As a group, we average more than 20 years of experience and are all interested in doing our work without forcing our clients into pre-configured boxes. Upon the formation of the company, we took a step back and examined the state-of-the-art in organizational effectiveness, and it was only after we had settled on the best science that we built our product catalog of services offered. What we craft for our clients is a blend of this science, delivered with the most current technology available, wrapped in the pragmatism of decades of experience regarding what works and what doesn't.

CEOCFO: ***How does that translate day-to-day?***
Mr. Saltzman: OrgVitality designs and implements innovative technology and cutting-edge products that are tailored to the needs of our clients as well as the current business climate. From employee surveys to 360 assessments to multi-analytic data platforms, we work together with our clients to determine how to make your organization thrive. Our services include Strategic Employee Surveys, custom surveys based on your strategic needs, designed to help your organization thrive and support transformation. 360 Assessments and Coaching which provide general organizational capabilities calibration, inform selection processes, or used as a baseline for coaching plans, while supporting the creation of a coaching culture. Organizational Metrics & Strategy, which involves creating metrics, conducting research, and then strategically evaluating how to improve organizational effectiveness. And, Decision Support Portals which are smart dashboard systems designed to empower you and your employees to make smarter decisions based on the intelligent prioritization of multiple data streams.

CEOCFO: ***When first working with an organization, what is the key to understanding their goals?***
Mr. Saltzman: We often start by conducting executive interviews, often followed up with employee focus groups. This then leads to data collection at scale, commonly through employee surveys or other assessments. Sometimes there is a disconnect between what is stated as the organization's objectives, the way management wants organization to actually operate and from an employee's perspective, the way they actually operate. This procedures clarifies that potential disconnect. One exercise is to examine from the employee's perspective what behaviors are actually getting rewarded not what the organizations states they are rewarding. For example, in one organization, the marketing group pulled together the materials used by sales and the head of sales would regularly go to the marketing folks screaming, demanding changes using all sorts of foul language in a very confrontational and disrespectful manner. I asked the CEO what happens when that occurs. He said that everyone stops what they are doing and addresses the sales person's concerns until they were resolved. Hence, they were rewarding that very behavior that the CEO stated he did not want. This also made other executives believe that they had to scream and carry on in order to get results. From a perspective of how they wanted to operate, they were not achieving the kind of climate that they really aiming for and not creating a climate where employees wanted to go above-and-beyond. Therefore, they needed to do a full stop and no longer reward those kinds of behaviors.
CEOCFO: ***Are you surprised that the leadership in these organizations has such a lack of understanding in this area?***
Mr. Saltzman: I am also adjunct faculty at a school of management, where I teach in their Executive MBA program and one of the things that I do with my students all of the time is look at how humans fall into decision-making traps. Our brains are wired to operate in a certain way, whether it be using rules-of-thumb that can lead to all sorts of judgment errors, difficulties in accurate perception of a problem or even to what is called "magical thinking". Thinking that if you keep doing the same things that they will eventually get a different outcome or an outcome that is based on "wishful thinking" and not evidence or science. It is not that organizations do not know what they are doing, but for humans in general, it is very easy to fall back into our tried and true patterns of decision-making. One thing we at OrgVitality try to do is bring a more

disciplined approach to organizational decision-making that can lead to higher performance and better judgements.

CEOCFO: ***What types of companies tend to use your service?***
Mr. Saltzman: My partners and I, as I mentioned earlier, are Industrial and Organizational Psychologists as well as technologists. Our work is tailored to really fit the client's needs. Over the last 30 years, my partner and I have worked with numerous Fortune 100 companies, Best Places to Work winners, small startups, government agencies and not-for-profits. We really run the whole spectrum, and are not tied to any specific industry or geography. We are also certified by the General Services Administration as a supplier to the US Federal Government.

CEOCFO: ***Did the Best Places to Work winners happen before or after they brought in OrgVitality?***
Mr. Saltzman: I would say, during. The reason for that is that people who want to do our kind of work tend to be better organizations in the first place. If you do an employee survey and you are giving someone really critical data, who is more likely to use that data? It is the better managers. The managers who really need help with using the data are the ones who probably could use some management development and tend to be not as interested in the data because they may not see the importance in the data. They tend to be managers who are less successful over the long-term, as they do not fully recognize the importance of their people. It is a virtuous cycle. A virtuous cycle is when an organization is doing good things and so increasing its performance, enabling them to do more good things. Best Places to Work winners tend to do this kind of work.

CEOCFO: ***Would you walk us through a project?***
Mr. Saltzman: Here is one example. We are working with a large multi-national company that has asked us to tie employee their culture to business outcomes. In other words, to demonstrate which aspects of culture most affect their business success. Business outcomes could be various things such as customer satisfaction, customer repurchase intentions, employee turnover, theft in a retail environment, overall financial performance etc. What we are doing is linking which aspects of the organization's strategy and culture are working from the employee's perspective and what aspects of strategy are falling short. Going beyond that, as employee's rate certain aspects of performance either higher or lower, we statistically demonstrate is that certain aspects of performance are leading to better business outcomes. As the organizations are more successful, they are able to create better environments for the people working in that organization. Therefore, it is a win-win. We begin with the senior executives, in one-on-one interviews, assessing the challenges of the organization over the next 12 to 18 months. We talk about what is keeping them up at night, such as concerns over quality, production, and customer service or employee turnover. We also look to find out I they have articulated a current strategy and what they need to achieve, in order for the organization to achieve that strategy. Then we also talk to the employees and ask them two very simple questions. 1) What are the things that the organization is doing well that it should not change, and 2) What are the things that need to be done better, that would make the organization more effective and enable you to do your job better. We then take these findings and translate them into an employee survey with data most often collected in a census fashion. We get a read across the entire organization, which may involve hundreds or hundreds of

thousands of people. Last year our surveys were translated in to well over 40 languages and administered in 60 to 70 countries. Once we have that data back in-house, we are able to slice it to the individual manager who is responsible for various pieces of the organization. Therefore, the top of the house gets a read on how they are performing as an organization overall. Individual managers, get a report back, so they get to see how they are performing locally in addition to how their local performance fits into the overall performance of the organization. We train them on how to use that data and how to make organization improvement changes based on that data. When you get all of the managers in an organization together, and each one of them takes one or two things and does it better, you can get a great deal of positive change and momentum.

CEOCFO: ***How do you structure a question in a way that will get a response that is most meaningful?***
Mr. Saltzman: There is a whole science around that and a whole methodology to writing a good survey question. You want to make sure that a survey item is about a single topic and not double or triple barreled. You also want to make sure that it is not leading the witness, so the stem is neutral. For example, "I have the necessary training to get my job done". Which would be on a "Strongly agree to strongly disagree" scale.

CEOCFO: ***Are clients coming to you because they understand the depth, experience and individualization of what do or are they surprised to find out what you bring to the table?***
Mr. Saltzman: It is a little bit of both. The vast majority of our clients are repeat clients. However, we also have been able to grow about 50% in each of the last 5 years. Therefore, our business is a mixture of many repeat clients, hopefully, because they are pleased, as well as growth due to our reputation as a company dedicated towards tailoring to specific client needs.

CEOCFO: ***What is your geographic reach?***
Mr. Saltzman: We work globally and currently, we have consulting and project management staff based in New York, San Francisco, Atlanta, Spokane and Raleigh Durham. We also have a technology development group that split between the US and Israel.

CEOCFO: ***Do you see international as a growth area?***
Mr. Saltzman: Absolutely. The vast majority of our clients are international in scope and we have a number of clients, who are non-US headquartered.

CEOCFO: ***Given your experience, do you often have a sense of what you will find at the end of the process?***
Mr. Saltzman: Yes and no. What I mean by that is that many companies, when they first come to us will make statements such as, "You do not understand; we are different". However, they are not always that different, because organizations are full of people, and people tend to think very similarly around the world. They also tend to behave very similarly around the world. There are certainly cultural and generational differences, but if you ask, "What do people want out of work and how does work get done?" People around the world are much more similar than they are different. Fundamental things like respectful treatment, fairness and a sense of future for myself, leading to good outcomes for

my family and children are universal. For instance, I was doing focus groups in Egypt for a pharmaceutical company and what the woman in that group stated was that the real problem for them was a glass ceiling and that women could not get past, which is something that is a also common topic in the US. If we want to search for differences we can find them, but the truth is that we have a lot more in common with those from around the world than those things that differentiate us.

CEOCFO: ***What surprised you as OrgVitality has grown and developed over the past five years?***
Mr. Saltzman: We are purposefully counter market. What I mean by that is that we are tailoring our work to fit individual clients and most of the other consulting companies in our space are no longer doing that, as they take a path to higher margins through genericizing their work. Therefore, it was risky to go with this approach, but our success indicates that it was the right decision for us.

CEOCFO: ***Are you finding that corporations are recognizing that they need to address this area or is it still under the radar?***
Mr. Saltzman: If you looked at the Fortune 500 companies, I would think that 400 out of the 500 are already working in this space to some extent or other. Therefore, it is a big market and many companies pay attention to it. There are companies that I know that have CEOs that just do not believe in this kind of work, but I think that they are far and few between. There is an understanding that employees have a great deal of valuable information and insights that can help the organization achieve higher levels of performance.

CEOCFO: ***Put it all together for our readers. Why choose OrgVitality?***
Mr. Saltzman: They should choose OrgVitality because we can help your organization reach its full potential. We can help your organization thrive and we can help the employees in your organization perform at higher levels.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

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