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'Stuff' Clientek Says

PART 2: FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS

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Focus, focus, focus. How do you remain focused on the things that matter most when there are so many other distractions every day? Too often we fail to focus on the activities that are most important or provide the most value. It can be difficult to recognize that every time we choose to work on something, we are selecting it as the highest priority item for ourselves at that point in time.

This lack of focus on the highest priority items is almost always the root of time management concerns. We have found it to be our single biggest challenge in our own organization and we see it with many of our customers time and time again.

So, what does matter and where should you delegate your focus? At Clientek, each of our roles is assigned four questions that they must always be able answer. This is designed to help people understand where they should focus their time and allows them to stay on top of what is expected of them. We regularly review these questions with our teams and update them whenever the situation requires it. For me,

as Clientek's Chief Delivery Officer, the four questions I must be able to answer for any given project are as follows:

1. **Is the customer happy?** - In my role, this is the most important question.
2. **Are the teams performing as per our metrics?** - Ensuring that our teams are performing well for our customers.
3. **Do we have the right resources on the project?** - Making sure the team has what they need to accomplish the project.
4. **Are we working profitably?** - We can make sure all the above happen if we simply forget about expenses, but ultimately, I need to ensure we are making money as well.

These questions help me focus my daily efforts and provides guidance as to which project/team I should spend some extra time with.

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Now let us take a quick peek at the questions for a *Delivery Lead* on one of our teams. They are involved in the day-to-day discussions with our customers and are primarily focused on ensuring we deliver what the customer needs. They are also responsible to ensure those needs are well documented and ultimately that we fulfill them.

1. **What are the objectives and features for the next release and are we on track to deliver them?** - This is the primary question for our delivery leads and ultimately everything below is focused on being successful in our releases.
2. **Did the team make a commitment that we are comfortable with?** - This means not only with our own efforts but also the dependencies the team has on external entities and what is the plan to resolve them.
3. **Did we complete all the stories according to the acceptance criteria and can we demonstrate that?** - In the end, show me, don't just tell me what we did.
4. **What are we doing to improve the team?** - This must always be happening, otherwise the team will become stagnant.

Are these the same questions you should ask? Likely not. Each organization should take some time and see how to focus their own attention on the needs that matter most for you and your business.

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