Solutions

Performance Strategies for Managers and Supervisors from the Division of Personnel

Attend Alan Zimmerman's Program: *Taking Charge* In Challenging Times May 28

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Quick Tip:

From the editors of *Solutions*

Avoid presenting constructive criticism to employees on Friday afternoons. Some managers like to deliver "bad news" such as a negative performance review just before an employee leaves for the weekend. The thinking is that the employee will get over the bad news before they get back to work. In reality, many employees dwell on negative feedback even more when off work, and have extra time to brood about it with no chance to respond. Weekend surprises may be easier for the manager who wants to avoid confrontation, but they are more likely to demoralize the staff than to improve performance.

Click here for previous Issues of ***Solutions***

FEATURE ARTICLE

The Power of Motivation

By Dr. Alan Zimmerman

At a recent sales conference, achievement awards were being given to the people who had sold the most. I'll never forget the woman who received the highest award. She had performed superbly, made a great deal of money, but gave all the credit to her sales manager.

As she stood before the crowd of people, clutching her award as the top producer of the year, she talked about the slump she was in two years before. She said her future had looked so bleak that she had decided to quit on several occasions. But each time her manager persuaded her to stay. He kept telling her that she had great potential; indeed, he wouldn't have hired her if he hadn't believed in her.

The award winner continued her acceptance speech along those lines, but her concluding comment was most insightful. She said, "Through all those months when I wanted to quit, when I didn't think I had any future, my manager BELIEVED in me more than I believed in myself. He wanted me to succeed even more than I did."

Just like that top performer, everyone has a deep reservoir of ability, a reservoir that goes untapped until someone believes in him. Quite simply,

> **A PERSON DOES HIS BEST WHEN HE KNOWS SOMEONE BELIEVES IN HIM, AND HE DOES HIS WORST WHEN HE THINKS NO ONE BELIEVES IN HIM.**

This is a basic truth in motivation. The problem is, most managers and leaders have not consciously, systematically used this truth to bring out the best in others. They haven't applied a step-by-step methodology of belief that will produce the results they want. I wonder why.

I think one of the reasons lies in the fact that many people do not understand how motivation works. They mistakenly think "no news is good news." In other words, if the manager doesn't say anything to the employee, the employee can assume that everything is okay. The employee can assume that the manager believes in the employee.

Well managers can think that all they want, but that's not how employees think. Managerial silence or a lack of feedback does not get interpreted by the employees as a sign of positive belief. Employees interpret silence as a negative.

The no-news-is-good-news philosophy simply doesn't work. Even though the employee may know he has talent or has done a good job, he needs to know that the manager believes that too.

The second reason people don't use the power of belief has to do with a misunderstanding of management. Some managers think it's their duty to point out employee mistakes and suggest solutions. They adopt a problem- solving mindset and spend most of their time fighting fires, resolving difficulties, and fixing crises.

As a result, these managers are so busy with the problems that they forget to exhibit their belief in their employees. They spend all their time seeing their employees "as they are" instead of envisioning them "as they could be."

This approach to management or leadership is half-baked at best. Certainly employees need guidelines. They need help with problems and limits on their empowerment. But the *transformational leadership* that brings out the best in others comes from a strong belief in the employee.

Continued on the next page.

The power of motivation

Continued from page 1

IF YOU'RE A LEADER OR MANAGER WHO DOESN'T "EXHIBIT" A STRONG BELIEF IN YOUR EMPLOYEES, YOU'RE PAYING A MIGHTY BIG PRICE FOR YOUR MISTAKE.

At the very least, you're creating non-communicative employees.

When employees think you don't believe in them, they get fearful. And fearful people don't speak up or offer an opinion. They're too afraid to disagree, and they're unwilling to participate in team meetings. Their thoughts and feelings, if they ever do come out, come out behind your back where they do you no good whatsoever.

That's an obvious waste of employee insight and talent. You're losing their contributions to any improvements you might want to make.

You also create demoralized employees when you fail to "exhibit" your belief in them. The Russian military learned that after the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Their official communist policy became that of showing no overt signs of believing in the officers. All status signs were taken away. The officers swabbed their own quarters, ate with the rank and file, stood in line with the orderlies, received no privileges, salutes, or titles. Overnight the military sank to its lowest level in military history. The officers were completely demoralized. They were worthless as soldiers to say nothing of their leadership.

It soon became obvious what had happened, and Russia began to show overt belief in its officers. Medals, trophies, and titles were used generously to give distinction to all segments of the army.

Russia had overlooked one glaring, compelling fact in human behavior. To get the best from people, you must show that you believe in them. People will work harder for someone who believes in them than they will for almost anything else.

Belief costs nothing to apply and works wonders. So start BELIEVING.

Action on Leadership:

Select three people you want to "motivate" to higher levels of achievement. They may be your employees, your coworkers, or even your kids. Think of three ways you can communicate or "exhibit" your belief in each of them. Then do it. They'll get turned on, and they'll turn out better results.

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Perceptiveness

The "secret" to your success

Is there a secret to management effectiveness? Some experts believe there actually is—and it may be easier to achieve than you think.

But be warned, if you prefer the autocratic style of leadership—someone that says, "Hey, it's my way or it's the highway" or "Look, if I want your opinion, I'll give it to you," the secret may not be for you.

Now, as a manager, you obviously have position power that comes with your job title. For example, you can tell people what to do and—most of the time—they do it. But, if you have ever worked on, or lead a volunteer group, you may have noticed something rather unique. You can rarely get the results you need by using the same "command and control" approach.

Instead, you know that in order to have any hope of getting things done, you must instead *ask* people for their help. And that's where the light comes on to reveal the secret to management effectiveness...

TREAT EVERY ONE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES AS IF THEY ARE A VOLUNTEER.

But if you did that, what words or phrases would you use more often? Here are some to consider:

"Thank you."
"Could you do me a favor?"
"Can I count on you?"
"I need your help."

Those approaches suggest that you are treating your team members as if they are a volunteer working with you—and not for you. And once you take that approach, your management effectiveness may go through the roof!

From the editors of *Solutions*

"I learned that a great leader is a man who has the ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do and like it."
Harry Truman

Workforce Management

PER*for*M's second rating period

We are glad to report that the second year using PER*for*M for annual appraisals was less challenging than the first. What a difference one year can make. Perhaps the old saying, "practice makes perfect" is true.

The Division of Personnel still had ample contact with system users and agency personnel – but the number of questions (emails and telephone calls) was significantly less than the first year of operation. Hopefully, this was due in part to the many enhancements that were made to the system during the fall.

At this time, overall performance statistics are still being compiled. However, this data may be available for the summer edition of *Solutions* so that you can see for yourself how state employees are performing.

In the meantime, please continuing referencing the Division of Personnel's PER*for*M website, **www.perform.mo.gov**, for information. And as always, questions concerning PER*for*M can be sent to **perform@oa.mo.gov**.

By: Marian Luebbert, Division of Personnel

Integrity

Support diversity with the right communication tactics

Diversity is healthy for an organization, but it doesn't grow on its own. Here's what you and your organization need to do in order to cultivate a culture where diversity can take root:

Analyze your organization. What kinds of people are you hiring? What kinds of employees leave? Who gets promoted? Look for trends that might suggest you're reinforcing stereotypes, or that show you're committed to a healthy environment where everyone can succeed.

Explain the value of diversity. Show your workforce the tangible benefits of diversity so they don't mistake your initiative for superficial image-building. Talk about issues such as what your customers look like, what kinds of people they want to do business with, and what kinds of employees you want to attract and keep. Discuss how diversity will help your people do their jobs better.

Talk it up. You can't get results by emphasizing diversity in secret. Make sure your senior people talk about it when they meet with employees, suppliers, their peers, and influential community groups. They should take the lead in pointing out what your organization is doing to support diversity so everyone can communicate a consistent message.

Adapted from:
"How Do We Stop the Interview Bias of Hiring Managers?"
by Dana E. Jarvis
The Workforce Management Web Site
Ragan Management Resources
111 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60601
Telephone: 312-960-4100

Mentoring

Help develop that 'can-do' spirit

Best intentions for quality customer service may not be enough when your employees are sluggish, whiny, or obviously couldn't care less. Your customers have their own troubles and the last thing they need is a dose of misery from someone else. Here's how to encourage your workers to put on a happy face:

Nix the drama. Crises happen – but they shouldn't be a way of life. Times of intense effort must be balanced with actions that allow people to regroup their emotions and recharge their creative batteries. Constantly cracking the whip doesn't motivate workers to go the extra mile—it drives them to burn out. And when they're not updating their resumes, they're probably seething with resentment that they don't bother to hide from others.

Set a good example. If "Thank God It's Friday" is the only tune your employees ever hear you hum, it's time to broaden your repertoire. You're human and it's natural to occasionally long for the end of a tough week. But if you make it clear that you're just putting in your time – as another song says, always "Workin' for the Weekend," you're sending a message that will undermine morale. Find a way to take pleasure in your daily tasks and show your staff that work doesn't have to be drudgery.

Create a "No Moan Zone." Your employees and customers don't want to hear the daily tribulations of Wendy Whiner and Pouty Pete. Again, people are human and occasionally have those "I got a flat tire while carpooling five 10-year olds" mornings that have to be shared. But chronic complaining about work or personal problems should not be tolerated, especially within the range of customers.

Rewrite your internal dialogue. Do you continually berate yourself for minor mistakes or repeatedly replay negative incidents in your mind? Your thinking has a tremendous impact on your outward appearance. Remember that mistakes are learning experiences. Make a mental note of the lesson, then move on. As you develop the knack for dwelling on the positive, your facial expressions and body language will begin to reflect your new attitude – and the people around you will begin to mirror your behavior.

Adapted from *"Create A Positive, Upbeat, 'Can-Do' Workforce and Dazzle the Customer with Your Caring!"*
By JoAnna Brandi on WebProNews.com
Lawrence Ragan Communications Inc.
316 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60601
www.managementresources.com

Accountability

Leaders follow through

Leaders don't stop leading after making a fiery speech or laying out an ambitious goal. They maintain focus from cradle to implementation and beyond, for every project.

SprintNextel Senior Vice President Dick LeFave keeps that truism in mind whenever he makes a strategic decision to outsource projects and other duties. He always follows through by asking his group to measure their progress regularly against the desired results. He calls the process "true ups."

The first year with an outsourcing partner is often fraught with struggle over service, he notes. And if they don't hit the mark, LeFave knows it will escalate quickly if left unchecked.

That's why he devotes so much time and energy to follow through, and holding quarterly meetings with the outsource partners. LeFave knows his outsource partners want good press for helping a major corporation like SprintNextel. As a leader, he leverages that desire to his advantage.

Leadership lesson: For LeFave, setting clear goals and tying those to regular meetings keeps everyone on their toes. Yes, it takes more time than just giving an order and sitting back to see what happens, but it is leadership time well spent.

Adapted from *"The Manager's Step-by-Step Guide to Outsourcing"*
By Linda Dominguez
Leadership Strategies
Briefings Publishing Group,
300 N Washington St., Ste. 605
Alexandria, VA 22314

Technical Knowledge

Class Specifications: A Multi-Purpose Tool for Human Resource Practitioners

Regardless of occupation, craft or hobby, at some point only a singularly-designed, specialized "tool" will meet the need at hand. Oftentimes, however, there exists a tool which can be used for several applications, performing competently in each use. In the world of Human Resources (HR), current class specifications are that tool. Class specifications intersect with a variety of personnel issues in the following areas:

Position Classification

Class specifications provide landmark information regarding the functions, duties and responsibilities, the knowledge, skills and abilities, and the required combination of training and/or experience associated with a job class. This information, coupled with position-specific information, form the basis for establishing and maintaining an organization's classification structure, forming the basis for most HR activities.

Recruitment/Selection

Class specifications assist organizations in targeting recruitment efforts, while communicating to potential candidates the essential aspects of the job and its requisite qualifications.

Compensation

Accurate class specification information provides a valuable and objective base for collecting and analyzing salary data and the establishment and maintenance of pay relationships. Such data allows an organization to assess both internal equity and competitive market considerations in conjunction with the organization's pay philosophy and policy. Additionally, pay differentials are frequently established and administered on a class basis.

Worker's Compensation Rating

Each job classification has associated with it a workers' compensation rating code, reflecting the injury risks associated with that line of work. Such codes are utilized by employee benefit and risk management professionals.

FLSA Compliance

Class specifications, coupled with information regarding a position's specific responsibilities, are integral in determining whether a position is covered by the federal statute's overtime provisions, or if it meets a criteria (e.g., Executive, Administrative, Professional, etc.) for claiming exemption.

ADA Compliance

The objective information provided in a class specification, coupled with information regarding the specific assignments of a position, serves to identify a position's essential functions, and forms the basis for efforts to comply with the legal requirements regarding modification/restructuring and reasonable accommodation.

EEO Reporting

Each UCP class is assigned a primary code (Official/Administrative, Professional, Technician, Protective Service Workers, Paraprofessional, Office/Clerical, Skilled Craft Workers, or Service Maintenance) and subspecialty code. Likewise, a job class provides an organized and homogeneous base for purposes of conducting analysis and assessing impact.

Employee/Labor Relations

Assessment of the information provided in a class specification can aid in determining whether or not employees in that classification should be included in, or would be properly excluded (managerial, administrative , or confidential) from, a bargaining unit.

Performance Evaluation

Identification of core duties, and responsibilities, knowledge, skills and abilities in a class specification, coupled with position-specific information from a Position Description Form, provides managers and supervisors with the information necessary to develop objective, job-related standards for evaluating performance.

Training

A review of the class specification can give insight to not only the types of training that may be needed or beneficial in an employee's current capacity, but also preparation for their career development.

Reductions in Force

Within Merit agencies, layoffs are conducted on a class basis, further focused through the selection of positions to be eliminated. Job classes also form the basis for identifying an affected employee's options for transfer or demotion in-lieu-of layoff.

By working together to keep the class specification tool sharp (aka current), we can count on it when that next task comes around. So, as you become aware of organizational, programmatic and/or technological changes affecting a classification, please let the Division of Personnel know. Staff can then work together to incorporate the needed updates or changes.

By: Bruce Prenger, Division of Personnel

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Verbal Communication

Overcome speaking jitters with these tips

We've all seen capable, confident Dr. Jekylls who, when thrust behind a podium, turn into babbling Mr. Hydes. They sweat, shake, stammer, and stumble—turning a simple presentation into an exercise in agony. If this description strikes a little too close to home, try to take some of the terror out of your next presentation by:

Empathizing with the audience. Your fears are egocentric: What if I forget my material? What if I misquote the data? What if I can't answer a question? What if I make a fool of myself? Quell those fears by focusing on the audience instead of yourself. Think about their needs and what you can do to make sure those needs are met.

Organizing your materials. Like any good book, a presentation should have a beginning, middle, and end. Often, speakers start out okay, then ramble because they've failed to create a satisfactory ending to their story.

Looking for weaknesses. After you've collected your data, play devil's advocate. Punch holes in your argument. Look for missing links in your conclusions. Fill in the blanks to ensure you're not hit with a question you can't answer.

Speaking from the heart. Don't let yourself get sucked into making presentations touting projects or theories you don't actually support. When you truly believe in what you're saying, you'll bring passion to the presentation. The audience will feel that energy and mirror it back to you, giving you silent encouragement to keep going. Before you realize it, you'll be fully focused on swaying opinion—rather than avoiding embarrassment.

Adapted from "The naked truth about public speaking," by Judith Lidenberger, Lawrence Ragan Communications, Inc.
316 North Michigan Avenue,
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Telephone: 312-960-4106
www.managementresource.com

Mediating

Facing the team troublemaker

So your team is full of good people, but there is one person who really is causing trouble. He spends more time criticizing others than doing any work. As the supervisor, what can you do?

Before being tempted to focus on personality over performance, do some investigating. Find out why this individual is so unproductive and why she is making it hard for others to do their work.

Often situations like this occur because the person feels slighted or mistreated, and takes his unhappiness out on others. That is not an excuse; it's a reason.

While you're first instinct may be to discipline this person, a coaching moment may still save the day. If you decide to coach, then you must have a conversation about what is going on.

It may help to open your conversation on a positive note; compliment him on something he is doing right.

Let him vent for about a minute.

Remind him that this conversation is not about others, it is about his performance. And unless that performance improves, discipline will likely follow.

Give him a choice about what he wants to do – improve his work performance or deal with the consequences.

If he wants to improve, be very specific about what he must do to improve. Hold him accountable. Timelines are crucial.

Follow-up regularly. If you notice improvement, acknowledge it. And if you can do it in front of others, even better.

If there is no improvement, then you must take disciplinary action—but you will do so confident that you have done things right for your team and your organization.

From the editors of *Solutions*

Team Work

Working with key decision makers

Many people find that when they work with key decision-makers, it's sometimes difficult to establish the right rapport or relationship to ingratiate themselves. If so, there are some things you can do to build the relationship you need.

First, think about what you bring to the table. When you first begin speaking to—or working with a key decision-maker, it is sometimes easy to lose your confidence. You forget that you have something to offer.

If you're at one level in an organization and you want to establish a productive relationship with someone who's at another level, think about what you know or what you have that they might find interesting. Sometimes it may be access to information. Sometimes it may just be that you're a pleasant person to talk to. Sometimes it may be that you have a different slant on things. Take advantage of that. Ask yourself, "What makes me important to my agency?" If you can't answer it, ask someone else. Get their feedback so that you can clarify your thinking.

Then, get to know as much as you can about the decision-maker. How do they operate? Are they a people-person? Are they a data person? Are they an action person? Do they like small talk? Do they make lists? Do they like ideas? How do they like to communicate? If your decision-maker is someone who is very crisp, talking to them about how you "feel" about an idea may not be a good thing to do. If your decision-maker is very analytical, saying to that person, "trust me, I have a hunch about this" is probably not the way to go either.

Learn as much as you can about your decision-maker so you know how to deal with him or her. It doesn't mean that you need to be a phony—it simply means that you need to flex and pull out the behaviors you have that would best suit them.

From the editors of *Solutions*

Influencing

Are You Nurturing a Culture of Silence?

Four Steps for Encouraging Employees to Speak Their Minds

By Joseph Grenny, cofounder VitalSmarts, coauthor *Crucial Conversations*

Have you ever been in a meeting where the boss has just made a ridiculous suggestion, but nobody says a word? The dumb idea lingers like an elephant in the living room—everyone knows it's out there and soon to wreak havoc—but nobody speaks up. Or maybe you've seen someone offer up an idea in a brainstorming session and several people immediately dismiss it. The person says nothing for the rest of the meeting and vows never to share another idea for fear of being rejected.

Silence in the face of potentially crucial conversations—conversations in which the stakes are high, emotions run strong, and there are sharply opposing viewpoints—is typically the path of least resistance in any organization. Unless leaders go to extraordinary lengths to counter the natural pressure that people feel to remain silent, bad things will happen.

How people routinely handle crucial conversations is one of the most reliable predictors of both organizational effectiveness and, conversely, organizational disaster.

Exactly how does silence bring about organizational disaster? Silence stops the free-flow of information, and that flow of precious ideas is the lifeblood of every successful organization.

When silence rules, employees become demotivated, disengaged, and disinterested. They don't share ideas or concerns for fear of reprimand or ridicule.

On the other hand, when employees are equipped with the skills to handle sensitive issues in the face of authority, the best ideas are surfaced without hesitation, teams achieve total buy-in on decisions, working relationships are strengthened, and most importantly, the *best* results are achieved.

Leaders can put an end to silence and increase employee engagement by creating a culture where people feel safe to express their views, no matter how different or controversial. Encourage your employees to speak up with these four crucial conversations skills:

Work on Yourself First—Before you cast blame on others, examine your own behavior. What is your primary method for shutting people down? The look? The half-smile? The long pause? Next time someone comes to you with some feedback or a new idea, ask yourself what you really want. Are you trying to hoard the glory of coming up with the organization's next big idea for yourself? Do you value your relationship with this employee? Do you want to achieve the *best* results?

Invite Dialogue—Encourage and reward employees who voice their opinions by inviting open conversation. Thank them for confidently sharing their views. Remain focused and continue the discussion by respectfully saying things like, "Tell me more," and "How do you see things?"

Create Safety—People need to know they can freely share their thoughts and ideas without repercussions. When employees approach you with an idea, they are exposed and vulnerable to recrimination. So provide a safe harbor to new ideas by giving each one an honest hearing. You can do this by reserving judgment. If you don't agree, tell them you'll think about it and get back to them. Then, actually think about it. Assume they are intelligent, thoughtful, and creative and ask yourself, "Why would they present this idea?" As you think about it, your opinion may change, or at least you will broaden your understanding and open your mind to new issues. Get back to the person and tactfully let him or her know what you think.

Go Public—Discuss the problem of silence openly in your organization. Make the issue a topic of your next all-hands meeting or part of the public discourse. Talk about common scenarios in your organization where people go to silence. Talk about how people aren't speaking up because ideas are being shutdown. Talk about the potential damage and about the need to be open to new thoughts and feedback. By going public with the issue, you give the organization permission to discuss an undiscussable topic and work toward a change in culture.

As you start asking the right questions and holding crucial conversations in your organization, the culture of silence will be replaced by a culture of safety where employees feel motivated, engaged, and empowered to speak up and share their best thinking.

Joseph Grenny *is the coauthor of the* New York Times *bestsellers,* Crucial Conversations, Crucial Confrontations, *and* Influencer. *He is also a sought-after speaker, consultant and cofounder of VitalSmarts, an innovator in corporate training and organizational performance.* www.influencerbook.com

Special Training Note: If you'd like to do more to increase your communication skills, enroll in the Division of Personnel's special seminar from VitalSmarts, *"Skills to Handle Crucial Confrontations and Influence Others"* on August 20, 2009.

"Managers help people to see themselves as they are. Leaders help people to see themselves better than they are."
– Jim Rohn, Motivation Expert