

IN PRAISE OF PRAISE

Lee Iacocca once said, "Management is nothing more than motivating other people." Even though this statement is an over-simplification of what effective management entails — motivation is extremely important. So how do we create a work environment that people will find motivating?

Some feel that finding fault and pointing out errors is the key to motivating. But focusing on the negative and downplaying the positive is not the answer. Johann Wolfgang Goethe emphasized the point when he said "correction does much, but encouragement does more."

happens next drives actual performance. Offering timely and specific praise as progress is made towards the goal will improve performance at every stage.

Another benefit of expressing praise and recognition is that every time we show people we care, it's like making a deposit in an emotional bank account. Making these deposits is important when you need to make a withdrawal by giving negative feedback. Gray Ridge, CEO of the WD-40 Company explains it well. "If you don't have enough emotional deposits, when you have that tough conversation, it's going to feel like an attack and it's going

Keys to Effective Praise and Recognition

Effective praising should be sincere, specific, timely, frequent, based on current performance and personalized to the receiver.

Ken Blanchard, Vicki Stanford and David Witt have developed a TRUE Praise model which can help us be more effective in giving praise and recognition:

Timely: Praisings must be immediate and specific. Tell people exactly what they did right as soon as possible. For example, "You submitted your report on time Friday, and it was well-written. I was able to present your data at the meeting." Statements like "Keep up the good work" are less sincere and not specific enough to be effective.

Responsive: Find out how people want to be praised. If someone doesn't like to be praised in front of peers, then the praising should be delivered privately. The point is to be aware of the needs of the people receiving the praise so it is meaningful to them.

Unconditional: Deliver praise without evaluation or strings attached. Praise should not be given with something expected in return. It should be given freely when deserved.

Enthusiastic: Give sincere and well-intentioned praise. Speak from the heart and tell people how you feel about what they did. For example, "I was so proud of you after hearing your financial report presentation. I want you know how good I feel about having you on our team."

The Five-to-One Ratio

Over the past decade, scientists have explored the impact of positive-to-negative interaction ratios in our work and personal life. They have found that this ratio can be used to predict — with remarkable accuracy — everything from workplace performance to divorce. And independent research has landed as the ideal ratio for success and happiness to be five positive comments for every one negative (i.e. 5 to 1 ratio).

"If managers want to create a workplace environment where people thrive, tap into the benefits of praise. It costs nothing and pays big dividends to both giver and receiver."

Ken Blanchard, noted management consultant, speaker and writer.

Why Praise and Recognition Are Important

According to Tom Rath from Gallup, research has shown that "employees who report receiving recognition and praise within the last seven days show increased productivity, get higher scores from customers, and have better safety records. They're just more engaged at work."

Praise and recognition supports a "high-expectation, high-support" philosophy that can maximize long-term results and relationships. This approach starts with setting expectations and goals with employees — but doesn't end there. Setting a goal starts the behavior, but what

to hurt. But if you have enough deposits, the employee will already know that you mean them no harm and instead recognize that you're trying to help them."

Receiving praise and recognition benefits the receiver — but also benefits the giver. Recent research by the University of Pennsylvania on happiness and well-being found that the act of expressing gratitude is a major contributor to overall happiness. Researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky found that people who express gratitude are likely to be happier, more hopeful and energetic, and to feel positive emotions more often. They are also more forgiving, empathetic and helpful while being less depressed, envious and neurotic.

Researchers and consultants Emily Heaphy and Marcia Losada examined the effectiveness of 60 leadership teams. The driver that distinguished the most successful teams from the least successful teams was the ratio of positive comments to negative comments. Top performing teams gave each other more than five positive comments for every criticism, while the lowest performing teams gave each other three negative comments for every positive one.

Psychologists Donald O. Clifton and Tom Rath wrote the book *How Full Is Your Bucket?* Included was their research into what the positive-to-negative ratio should be to maximize productivity and well-being. Guess what they concluded? Five-to-one ratio positive over negative.

Researcher John Gottman has studied relationships for over 40 years, and has also found the magic ratio to be five positive for every negative. In one specific study using the 5:1 ratio, which Gottman dubbed 'the magic ratio,' he and his colleagues predicted whether 700 newlywed couples would stay together or divorce by scoring their positive and negative interactions in one 15-minute conversation between each husband and wife. Ten years later, the follow-up revealed that they had predicted divorce with 94% accuracy!

Why are so many positive comments needed for every negative one? Reason is that people are emotionally conditioned to absorb the negative more deeply than the positive. If you reflect back on your own life experiences, you will know this is true.

Bringing It Home

The starting place to see more frequent praise and recognition in our work place is for us as leaders to set the example. Gandhi was right when he said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

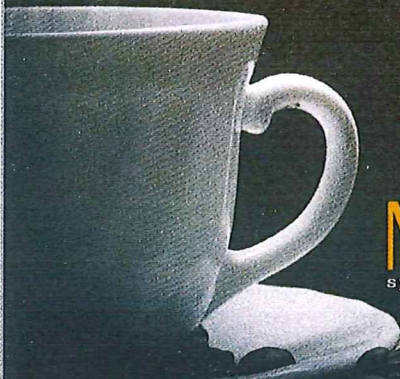
I would like to close with a couple of quotes from two of our country's most successful entrepreneurs and business leaders. Mary Kay Ash said, "There are two things people want more than sex and money... recognition and praise." Sam Walton advised us to "appreciate everything your associates do for the business. Nothing else can substitute for a few well-chosen, well-timed, sincere words of praise. They're absolutely free and worth a fortune." I wish you well as you model and develop a culture of praise within your team! ■



Wes Friesen, MBA, CMDSM, MDC, EMCM, MCOM, CBA, CBF, ICP, CCM, CMA, CM, CFM, APP, PHR is the Manager of Billing, Credit and Payments for Portland General Electric, a utility in Portland, Oregon that serves over 830,000 customers. Wes leads his teams with the able assistance of Supervisors Eric Houger, Jan DeMeire, Heidi Fouts and Matt McHill. Check out his personal web-site for free information (www.wesfriesen.com). He can be contacted at pcfefdebi@comcast.net.

CAN'T GET ENOUGH?

Then sign up for our monthly e-newsletter! Every month, mailing professionals author a variety of columns — long enough to deliver pertinent information, and short enough that reading them will fit in your busy schedule. Best of all, to sign up, you only have to answer a few simple questions, and you'll be on your way!



Mailing
systems technology

www.MailingSystemsTechnology.com



IMHOFF TECHNOLOGIES

Create a customized solution
that meets the needs of your business

**Satori Software
Bulk Mailer**

Monticello

Presort

**Label Design
and Printing**

Merge/Purge

**Address
Correction**

**Database
Management**

File Preparation

**BCC Mail
Manager**

**Call us today
to learn more.**

888-306-1048

"I love working with Imhoff Technologies, Their responsiveness to any questions I have is such a welcome relief. A+++"
Melanie Beauregard - FPMSI

"Simply stellar! Now, we're all back in serious business and stronger than ever!" Stephane Caron - Bath Fitters

YOUR ATTITUDE IS CONTAGIOUS – IS YOURS WORTH CATCHING?

Our attitude as leaders is very important. Why? Our attitude may be the single biggest factor that determines our individual success (or lack thereof). Winston Churchill emphasized the importance of our attitude when he said, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." The attitude we display at work will greatly influence the success level of our teams. Our attitude speaks more than our words as John Maxwell emphasized by saying "People may hear your words, but they feel your attitude." Colin Powell adds, "I think whether you're having setbacks or not, the role of a leader is to always display a winning attitude."

Tracy wisely says, "You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control your attitude toward what happens to you, and in that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you."

2. Be positive, proactive and seize the day. There are two kinds of people in the world — positive people and negative people. Optimistic, positive people spring out of bed in the morning and say "Good morning, Lord!" Pessimistic, negative people pull the covers over their heads and moan "Good Lord, it's morning again!" What kind of person are you?

I agree with Thomas Jefferson when he said, "Nothing can stop the man (or

look smaller. Nido Qubein encourages us to "Cultivate the art of looking at events in their proper relationship to your whole life. Often something appears for the moment to be a tragedy, but it becomes only a minor annoyance when taken in the context of your total life."

5. Have goals and visualize success. Identifying and working towards worthy goals — and taking time to celebrate progress along the way — will help keep our attitude positive. Having goals helps us be successful as Earl Nightingale emphasizes when he said, "People with goals succeed because they know where they're going."

It's important to visualize the successful realization of our goals. The quote from Henry Ford applies where he said, "Whether you say you can or say you can't — you are right either way."

6. Embrace changes. Change is the one thing that we can count on — and in many cases change is needed to make things better. Try to see change as good and work to help changes achieve positive results.

7. Play the hand you are dealt. You can't control who your parents were, or how much money your family had or any physical shortcomings you were born with. But remember that the cards we were dealt are less important than how we play our hand. Booker T. Washington encourages us by saying, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome."

8. Don't be afraid to take risks. To be successful at life we must take some calculated risks and enjoy the successes and learn from the failures. Theodore Roosevelt said "It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed." And hockey

"Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude" Zig Ziglar motivational speaker and writer

Developing and maintaining a positive and optimistic attitude will greatly benefit us — and our teams. How can we develop and keep our attitude positive and inspiring to others? Keep reading for some ideas that can help.

12 Keys to Having a Positive Attitude

Following is a list of 12 key principles that can help us develop and maintain positive attitudes. I suggest reviewing the list, and then selecting a few to intentionally take to heart and put into practice:

1. Understand that attitude is a choice. Chuck Swindoll was right on target when he said, "the remarkable thing is, we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day." Brian

woman) with the right mental attitude from achieving his (her) goal; nothing on earth can help the man (or woman) with the wrong mental attitude."

3. Keep an attitude of gratitude. Being grateful for what we have will help keep us positive. I try to regularly say a prayer of thanks for the relationships, roles and responsibilities that I am privileged to have and for the life experiences that come my way. We all have lots to be thankful for don't we? Marcus Cicero emphasized that "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others."

4. Wait for worry. One study found that only 8% of the things we worry about come true. In the long run, problems

great Wayne Gretzky reminds us that he missed every shot he did not take.

9. Don't let mistakes and failures get you down. Do you make mistakes? Welcome to the human race. Making mistakes and experiencing temporary failures are perhaps the best teachers for us. The key is to analyze and reflect on our mistakes and failures and then apply the lessons learned.

10. View problems as opportunities. When problems arise we can let them get us down, or we can step up and look for ways to resolve them and make life better. Work related problems normally need resolution, and by keeping positive and embracing the challenge to make bet-

ter we often can work problems through. It's also healthy to realize that we can't fix everything in the world around us. I like Saint Francis of Assisi's classic serenity prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

11. Try to find something good in everything. Positive people look for the good in whatever life brings their way. Abraham Lincoln said "We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

12. Remember that health is your wealth. Gandhi said "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold

and silver." Living a healthy lifestyle will increase our energy, stamina and emotional well-being — and help us be more positive and effective in all that we do. A holistic healthy lifestyle includes developing and using our mental capabilities (read a good book lately or taken a class just for the learning?). We are also spiritual beings, and finding faith and serving others can nourish our spiritual health.



Want more principles on cultivating a winning attitude? Scan here or check the homepage of Mailing Systems Technology!



Wes Friesen, MBA, CMDSM, MDC, EMCM, MCOM, CBA, CBF, ICP, CCM, CMA, CM, CFM, APP, PHR is the Manager of Billing, Credit and Payments for Portland General Electric, a utility in Portland, Oregon that serves over 830,000 customers. Wes leads his teams with the able assistance of Supervisors Eric Houger, Jan DeMeire, Heidi Fouts and Matt McHill. Check out his personal web-site for free information (www.wesfriesen.com). He can be contacted at pchfdebi@comcast.net.



IMHOFF TECHNOLOGIES

Create a customized solution
that meets the needs of your business

Satori Software
Bulk Mailer

Monticello

Database
Management

File Preparation

Address
Correction

Merge/Purge

Label Design
and Printing

BCC Mail
Manager

Call us today
to learn more.

888-306-1048

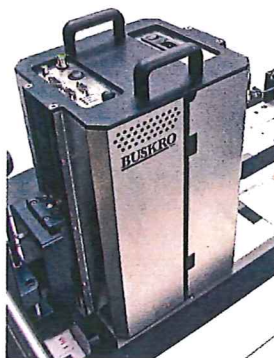
"I love working with Imhoff Technologies, Their responsiveness to any questions I have is such a welcome relief. A+++"
Melanie Beauregard - FPMSI

"Simply stellar! Now, we're all back in serious business and stronger than ever!" Stephane Caron - Bath Fitters



Piezo Performance at TIJ Prices

A simple, yet powerful 2.55" industrial DOD inkjet printer that combines the speed, durability, and ink selection associated with piezo inkjet print technology, with the affordability and ease-of-use associated with TIJ inkjet print technology.



- Fully portable, self-contained print system... just add data
- Solvent or UV ink
- Serial or Ethernet data input
- Replacement of aging print technologies
- Low cost of ownership



| www.buskro.com

BUSKRO
Built for today • Designed for tomorrow

For more information
please contact us:
1-888-8BUSKRO
info@buskro.com
www.buskro.com

VISION — THE KEY TO LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

One of the first and foremost responsibilities of successful leaders and managers is developing a vision of a better future for their team. Theodore Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame University, cuts to the chase by saying, "The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision. It's got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion." Leadership success always starts with a vision. John F. Kennedy famously dreamed

tice was to "set expectations, and define the right outcomes." Let's dig into defining what a vision is, characteristics of a good vision, and some ideas on forming a vision.

What Is a Vision?

What is a vision, and what characterizes a good vision? One definition of a vision comes from Bert Nanus, a well-known expert on the subject. Nanus defines a vision as a realistic, credible, attractive future for an organization. Let's dissect this definition:

in the organization to achieve a level of excellence, and to provide purpose and direction for the work of those employees. A vision which is not credible will accomplish neither of these ends.

- **Attractive:** If a vision is going to inspire and motivate those in the organization, it must be attractive. People must want to be part of this future that's envisioned for the organization.
- **Future:** A vision is not in the present, it is in the future. In this respect, the image of the leader gazing off into the distance to formulate a vision may not be a bad one. A vision is not where you are now; it's where you want to be.

Potential Benefits of a Good Vision?

Nanus goes on to say that the right vision for an organization — one that is a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization — can accomplish a number of things:

- **It attracts commitment and energizes people.** This is one of the primary reasons for having a vision for an organization: its motivational effect. When people can see that the organization is committed to a vision that points to a better future, it generates enthusiasm and increases the commitment of people to work toward achieving that vision.
- **It creates meaning in workers' lives.** A vision allows people to feel like they are part of a greater whole, and hence provides meaning for their work. The right vision will mean something to everyone in the organization if they can see how what they do contributes to that vision. Consider the difference between the mail services technician who can only say, "I am a machine operator" to the one who can also say, "I'm part of a team committed to becoming a world class provider of mailing services that is comparable to any operation of similar size anywhere in the country."

"There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, achievable vision for the future, widely shared."

Bert Nanus, *Visionary Leadership*

of putting a man on the moon. Eleanor Roosevelt envisioned a world of equal opportunity for women and minorities. Henry Ford dreamed of a car families could afford. Steve Job envisioned an easy-to-use computer that would unleash creativity. The vision we have for our teams will not be as world-changing as the examples cited — but can make a world of difference for the teams we are leading.

Extensive research on the Best Practices of High Performing leaders by the University of Michigan found that the best leaders "get everyone on the same page, and focused on the purpose of the organization." The Gallup organization's research on the practices of the country's greatest managers found that one crucial best prac-

- **Realistic:** A vision must be based in reality to be meaningful for an organization/team. We need to consider the parameters we live within — such as constraints of budget resources, IT support and potential of team members. At the same time, a vision is also idealistic in that it paints the picture of a better future and shows what we can be if we all work together for a common aspiration.
- **Credible:** A vision must be believable to be relevant. To whom must a vision be credible? Most importantly, to the employees or members of the organization. If the members of the organization do not find the vision credible, it will not be meaningful or serve a useful purpose. One of the purposes of a vision is to inspire those

The work is the same, but the context and meaning of the work is different.

- **It establishes a standard of excellence.** A vision serves a very important function in establishing a standard of excellence. In fact, a good vision is all about excellence. Tom Peters, the author of *In Search of Excellence*, talks about going into an organization where a number of problems existed. When he attempted to get the organization's leadership to address the problems, he got the defensive response, "But we're no worse than anyone else!" Peters cites this sarcastically as a great vision for an organization: "Acme Widgets: We're No Worse Than Anyone Else!" A vision so characterized by lack of a striving for excellence would not motivate or excite anyone about that organization. The standard of excellence also can serve as a continuing goal and stimulate quality improvement programs, as well as providing a measure of the worth of the organization.
- **It bridges the present and the future.** The right vision takes the organization out of the present, and focuses it on the future. It's easy to get caught up in the crises of the day, and to lose sight of where you were heading. A good vision can orient you on the future, and provide positive direction.

How Do We Develop a Vision?

So how can managers define the right outcomes, set a vision and get everybody on the team on the same page? The 360-degree approach is one wise strategy. Find out where your boss and the senior management want the organization to go, and then determine how your team can help them get there. Coordinate with your peers and find ways to partner. Solicit participation from your team members — their participation leads to their buy-in and better quality decisions.

Great managers are aware of the concept of "stakeholder symmetry." Stakeholder symmetry recognizes that an organization has multiple stakeholders (e.g. investors, custom-

ers, employees, and community). The organization — and your team — should try to add value to each stakeholder, and maintain a reasonable balance between their competing interests.

When developing the Vision don't forget to answer the "Why" question. The Vision will address "Where" the organization is heading — but we also need to explain the benefits of why we are pursuing that future state. I agree with Friedrich Nietzsche when he said "Given a big enough why, people can bear almost any how."

The final outcome for your team should include a Vision or Mission Statement that helps inspire your team to strive for excellence. Following is a sample Vision Statement of the Print & Mail Services team at my company:

Vision:

Our vision is to be a "world class" provider of Printing and Mailing products and services. We desire to be recognized as a premier service provider that is comparable to any operation of similar size anywhere in the country.

Our purpose is to provide timely, high quality products and services at a cost equal to or lower than any other potential provider. We desire to achieve a consistently high level of customer satisfaction, and to maintain a working environment that dignifies and motivates our staff.

Summary

Developing a Vision Statement does not end our leadership responsibility as Warren Bennis emphasizes by saying "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." Here are a few tips to help with the translation of the vision into reality: Supplement the Vision Statement with annual and quarterly goals, and several performance metrics covering all important areas of performance (e.g. cost, timeliness, quality, customer satisfaction, efficiency, safety). Review progress on a monthly basis, discuss results with your team, and celebrate improvements and the reaching of goals. The outcome will be a highly motivated team working together for common purposes. ■



Wes Friesen, MBA, CMDSM, MDC, EMCM, MCOM, CBA, CBF, ICP, CCM, CMA, CM, CFM, APP, PHR manages multiple departments for a utility based in the Northwest. Wes also teaches university classes and is a featured speaker at national Conferences like MAILCOM, National Postal Forum, NACUMS, and other regional and local events. Check out his personal web-site for free information (www.wesfriesen.com). He can be contacted at pchefdebi@comcast.net.

CollinsInkjet

USING BREAK-THROUGH CHEMISTRY FOR AGGRESSIVE INKS



Customized ink solutions
for difficult substrates
including a variety of
solvent-based formulations.

www.collinsinkjet.com

WHY ASK QUESTIONS?

Why should we ask questions? What are the keys to asking effective questions? What are some key questions we should be asking? Good questions indeed. Some of you are already expert at asking questions and reaping the benefits. Some of you are like me — we realize that we have room to improve in asking questions and using that tool to help us be better managers and make our teams more successful.

Let's dig in and explore some answers to the questions raised above.

Why Ask Questions?

Why should we ask questions? Here are some of the reasons why we should ask questions and why questions are so important:

1. We only get answers to the questions we ask. Asking questions is a great tool to find answers — and we never get answers to questions we never ask. Thomas Berger said "The art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge."
2. We ask questions to obtain information. The primary purpose of asking a question is to obtain information. I resonate with Lou Holtz when he said "I never learn anything talking. I only learn things when I ask questions."
3. We ask questions to connect with people and show interest in them. Perhaps the most effective way to connect with others is by asking questions. By asking questions we can find out more about people which can help us build rapport, show empathy and build stronger relationships.
4. We ask questions to cultivate humility. It is wise for us to humble ourselves and seek knowledge and wisdom from others. Even King Solomon, perhaps the wisest man who ever lived, looked at the enormity of his leadership respon-

"The ability to ask the right question is more than half the battle of finding the answer." —Thomas J. Watson, revolutionary CEO of IBM

sibilities and said "I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties." Og Madino adds, "Take the attitude of a student, never too big to ask questions, never know too much to learn something new."

5. We ask questions to ensure understanding or knowledge. Questions can test for understanding and help clarify there is true understanding.
6. We ask questions to encourage further thought. Questions can be used to encourage people to about something more deeply. Socrates was famous for asking questions to stimulate thinking and draw answers out of people that never knew they had.
7. Questions can help us build better ideas. The old adage "two heads are better than one" applies when we are developing ideas. Asking questions can help us flesh out ideas and make them better than originally conveyed.
8. Questions can challenge mind-sets and help us get out of ruts. Questions can be the starting place to stimulate creative thinking, discovery and innovation.

What Are the Keys to Asking Effective Questions?

Following are some keys to asking effective questions that will lead to the benefits described earlier:

- Effective questions are open-ended, instead of yes/no questions. The goal is to draw people and information out and get more complete responses.

- When asking effective questions, it is important to listen and wait for the answer and not provide the answer. Active listening motivates people to share more deeply and can help us better understand their answers.
- Behind effective questioning is also the ability to listen to the answer and suspend judgment. This means being intent on understanding what the person is really trying to say. This follows Stephen's Covey principle of "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."
- Effective questioning includes thought provoking questions that stimulate people to think and understand for themselves. For example, when working with people to solve a problem a good question might be "What do you think the problem is?"

What Are Good Questions to Ask Ourselves as Leaders?

Here are some good questions to ask ourselves as leaders. I have adapted these questions from John Maxwell's book "Good Leaders Ask Great Questions":

1. **Am I Investing in Myself? A Question of Personal Growth.** The most important investments we make are not financial — but the investments we make to develop ourselves so we can better serve others.
2. **Am I Genuinely Interested in Others? A Question of Motivation.** Motives

matter. Are we primarily focused on helping ourselves — or helping others?

3. Am I Grounded as a Leader? A Question of Stability.

One important component of being grounded is to be humble. Nobody likes following an arrogant leader. Rick Warren defines humility well when he said "Humility is not denying your strengths. Humility is being honest about your weaknesses. All of us are a bundle of both great strengths and great weaknesses and humility is being able to be honest about both."

4. Am I Adding Value to My Team? A Question of Teamwork.

John Wooden was quoted as saying there was one question he asked himself every day — "how can I make my team better?"

5. Am I Staying in My Strength Zone? A Question of Effectiveness.

Sometimes we have responsibilities that force us out of our strength areas. But research shows we are far more effective when we spend the majority of our time operating in our

strength zones. Samuel Johnson was right when he said "Almost every man wastes part of his life in attempts to display qualities he does not possess."

6. Am I Taking Care of Today? A Question of Success.

Every day consists of 1,440 minutes that we can waste away... or make them count. I am encouraged by the words of John Wooden when he shared the advice from his father to "Make every day your masterpiece." Making time every day in Stephen Covey's Quadrant Two is important — doing things that are "important but not urgent" such as planning, building relationships, developing our faith, learning, and taking care of our health.

What Are Good Questions to Ask Our Team Members?

Robert Half said, "Asking the right questions takes as much skill as giving the right answers." I want to leave you with some potentially good questions to ask your team members at relevant times:

1. What do you think?
2. How can I serve you?
3. Did we meet or exceed expectations?
4. What can we do to make the team even more successful?
5. What did you learn from this experience?
6. Did we add value to our stakeholders?
7. How could I help make your job better?
8. What do I need to know?
9. What am I missing?
10. If you were the boss, what is the one change you would make?

Here is a final quote from Anthony Robbins: "Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better results." I wish you and your team the best of success as you ask better questions and get better results!

P.S. I will be attending and speaking at the Las Vegas MAILCOM conference September 28-30. If it fits your schedule I would enjoy seeing you there! ■



Wes Friesen, MBA, CMDISM, MDC, EMCM, MCOM, CCE, CBA, CBF, ICP, CCM, CMA, CM, CFM, APP, PHR manages multiple departments for a utility based in the Northwest. Wes also teaches university classes and is a featured speaker at national Conferences like MAILCOM, National Postal Forum, NACUMS, and other regional and local events. Check out his personal website for free information (www.wesfriesen.com). He can be contacted at pchefdebi@comcast.net.

CAN'T GET ENOUGH?

Then sign up for our monthly e-newsletter! Every month, mailing professionals author a variety of columns — long enough to deliver pertinent information, and short enough that reading them will fit in your busy schedule. Best of all, to sign up, you only have to answer a few simple questions, and you'll be on your way!

Mailing
systems technology



www.MailingSystemsTechnology.com

DELEGATION: A WIN-WIN MANAGEMENT TOOL!

Want to maximize your personal productivity and develop your team members at the same time?

Delegation is a key management tool to use. Delegation doesn't come naturally to many of us — we often think it's safer and easier to do things ourselves. Eli Broad observes, "The inability to delegate is one of the biggest problems I see with managers at all levels."

Trying to do too much and not delegating is not a recent problem — it dates back at least 4,000 years to the days of Moses. In Exodus chapter 18 we read the story of Moses leading the nation of Israel and trying to do it all, to the detriment of the people. Moses' father-in-law Jethro came to visit and saw the dysfunction. Jethro recommended that Moses delegate some of the responsibilities and authority to other capable men and reserve the really big issues for himself. Moses wisely listened to the advice of Jethro — and the Israelites were the benefactors.

Let's explore the management tool of delegation by asking and answering some fundamental questions: Why delegate? When to delegate? What to delegate? Who to delegate? And how to delegate?

Why Delegate?

Delegation done well benefits you and the person you delegate to. A big benefit for leaders is it frees us up to do the value-added tasks we are paid to do. It helps us avoid being spread too thin and burning ourselves out. Anthea Turner was on the mark when she said "The first rule of management is delegation. Don't try and do everything yourself because you can't." We also gain the satisfaction of seeing team members grow and develop.

Perhaps the main benefit to the person we delegate is they get the opportunity to grow and develop as they learn and apply

new skills, gain additional experience, and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Successful completion of delegated tasks builds confidence and improves morale and motivation.

When to Delegate?

When should we look to delegate? Here are some questions to consider that may help you decide when to delegate:

1. Is someone else capable to do the job or is it a job that only I can do?
2. Is there someone else that can do the job better than me?
3. Is there someone else who can do the job at a lower cost than me?
4. Is there someone who could benefit from the opportunity to learn and grow by doing this job?
5. Do I have enough time to delegate the job effectively? This would include adequate time for training, questions and answers, and opportunities to check progress.

What to Delegate?

The reality is there are some tasks that we should NOT delegate even if we could. Tasks that are very important to the success of your team should not be delegated (participation by others yes, delegation no). Tasks like strategic planning and selection of team members should be led by the team leader and not delegated.

We should avoid delegating menial or unpleasant work just because we would prefer not to do it. On the other hand, delegating work that is value added, rea-

sonably challenging, and rewarding can provide a person an opportunity to feel trusted and to learn and grow.

Who to Delegate?

Delegation to the "right" person can be inspiring and provide an opportunity to help their development and prove themselves worthy of greater future responsibilities — and a task gets completed competently. Delegation to the "wrong" person can result in poorly completed tasks and frustration by you and them. To help find that "right" person consider some of these factors:

- Does a person have the experience, knowledge and skills to competently perform the task?
- What are the person's goals and aspirations? Would this delegation be helpful to them in meeting their goals and aspirations?
- What is the current work load of the person? Do they have time to meet the expectations of the task?

How to Delegate?

There are key components to delegation that will help ensure success. Following are some of the most important steps to successful delegation:

- Understand the job to be delegated. We need to be clear in our mind what needs to be done, the process to follow and who we want to do the work.

"Delegation is the most powerful tool leaders have" —Dr. John Maxwell, top selling author and noted expert on leadership.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

REAL LIFE MANAGEMENT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

- Clearly explain the assignment and explain the "why." We should meet with the employee and explain why this is an important assignment, then talk through expectations on the desired end result. Don't forget to review the process — this includes levels of delegated authority (e.g. what decisions can be made by the employee versus decisions requiring manager approval), progress updates, your availability for support, etc.
- Confirm understanding and commitment. We should make sure the assignment and all expectations are understood — and the employee is committed to see the assignment through to successful completion.
- Monitor progress and provide on-going feedback. We want to ensure that

the assignment gets completed in accordance with expectations. We also want the employee to learn and have a positive and confidence building experience. Providing on-going coaching will help this be the "win-win" we are looking for. We also want to avoid what I call "dirty delegation" — which is micro-management and not letting go enough of the task. The other extreme to avoid is "reverse delegation" which occurs when the employee entices the manager to do the task that was intended to be delegated.

- Evaluate performance and identify lessons learned. Once the assignment is completed it is valuable to collaboratively discuss performance of the

employee and discuss lessons learned. The time to reflect, evaluate and discuss outcomes and lessons learned is where much of the value of delegation derives from.

- Don't forget to say "thanks!" Last but not least — don't forget to say "thank you" to the employee! People crave appreciation and recognition, and providing that will be motivating and inspiring to the recipient.

Here is a final inspiring quote from John Maxwell "If you want to do a few small things right, do them yourself. If you want to do great things and make a big impact, learn to delegate." I wish you the best for you and your team as you delegate well! ■



Wes Friesen, MBA, CMDSM, MDC, EMCM, MCOM, CCE, CBA, CBF, ICP, CCM, CMA, CM, CFM, APP, PHR manages multiple departments for a utility based in the Northwest. Wes also teaches university classes and is a featured speaker at national Conferences like MAILCOM, National Postal Forum, NACUMS, and other regional and local events. Check out his personal website for free information (www.wesfriesen.com). He can be contacted at pchefdebi@comcast.net.

THE TRENCHES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

expensive to produce and mail. We could easily do with just one of each when they come out. The extras are worthless.

Problematic Business Model

Print and mail service providers don't really want to eliminate mail pieces from jobs they run. I get it. I worked in that business for over 20 years. We got paid for creating the documents and mailing them. Any adjustments lowering the piece count would have had an immediate negative effect on revenue. We were not encouraged to suggest mail-reduction tactics to customers.

Propping up volume by including worthless mail, though, is short-sighted. Today customers compare the expense of every prospective mailing campaign to lower-cost digital communication alternatives. Mail has to be worth the investment or projects won't

be approved. Worthless mail pieces nibble away at response rates and conversion statistics. With companies cutting back on the size of their mailing lists already, the impact of non-performing mail pieces is proportionally greater than in the past. The ROI erodes and future print campaigns are jeopardized.

If the response ratio for a print campaign is too low, organizations may decide not to do the next one at all. Ultimately, a strategy to improve the effectiveness of mail is a smarter way to protect volume and retain customers.

A Longer Term Approach

A print and mail service provider, be they in-house or outsourced, can score points with customers by developing strategies for reducing worthless mail. They will gain respect by finding ways to reduce mailing expenses. As a bonus, development

and implementation of such strategies will often require engagement with previously unreachable customer departments. Working directly with Marketing, Data Analytics, Legal and Regulatory, or Information Technology deepens the customer relationship and may uncover new business opportunities.

Customers view service providers blindly processing data as vendors. At the end of every contract period vendors become vulnerable to competitors that can do the same work at lower cost. Working closely with customers where the objective is helping them reach their goals, rather than mailing the maximum number of pieces, is what partners do. Their worth is greater and their tenure is always more secure. When reducing worthless mail is considered as a long-term business strategy, a small decrease in mailing fees may be worth it. ■



Mike Porter is President of Print/Mail Consultants, a firm that helps companies lower costs, develop future strategies, and improve quality in their document operations. You can read more at Mike's blog. Or visit www.printmailconsultants.com and sign up for Practical Stuff, a free newsletter for document print and mail professionals.

APPRECIATING APPRECIATION

It is a known fact that appreciation is one of the top motivators for people to work harder and be more committed to their organizations. Studies show that appreciation is linked to happiness in the workplace — and job satisfaction and engagement.

However, while 51% of managers feel they do good job of recognizing a job well done by their staff, only 17% of the employees in the same groups believe their managers recognize them for doing a good job. Sadly, a Gallup survey found 65% of respondents said they received NO appreciation from their boss the prior 12 months! Let's dig into why appreciation is important and look at principles to practice appreciation well.

Why Is Appreciation Important?

A study by career site Glassdoor revealed that more than 80% of employees are motivated to work harder when their boss shows appreciation for their work. The number one reason why employees enjoyed their work was "I feel genuinely appreciated by the company." On the other hand, 64% of employees who leave their jobs say they do so because they don't feel appreciated. According to a study conducted by Towers Watson, the single highest driver of engagement is whether or not workers feel "their managers are genuinely interested in their wellbeing."

Ten Principles of Appreciation

Following are 10 helpful principles of appreciation that are adapted from Barbara Glanz's book *The Simple Truths of Appreciation*.

1. Everyone wants and needs appreciation. Steven Covey emphasized the need for appreciation when he said, "Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is to be under-

stood, to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated."

2. It doesn't have to be something big. Sometimes a simple compliment can be very encouraging. Mark Twain was quoted as saying "I can go two months on one compliment." Samuel Taylor Coleridge inspires when he said, "The happiness of life is made up of minute fractions — the little soon forgotten charities of a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment, and the countless infinitesimals of pleasurable and genial feeling."
3. Make it personal. The best approach is to speak a person's appreciation language. See the section about the Five Appreciation languages.
4. Be creative. Have fun at showing appreciation! You can organize fun outings, bring in food, give out certificates of appreciation — the list goes on.
5. Surprise people if you can. One of the highlights of my career involved a surprise act of appreciation for a company purchasing specialist (Frieda) who had been helping us with implementing RFPs in my Print & Mail Services department. The department supervisor, Eric, and I invited Frieda to a meeting with us, where we proceeded to give her a dozen long-stemmed roses! She will never forget that — and neither will I.
6. Be sincere. Sincere appreciation is well accepted, but insincere appreciation can actually be worse than no appreciation at all. Sam Walton encouraged us to "appreciate everything your associates do for the business. Nothing else can quite substitute for a few well-chosen, well-timed, sincere words of praise. They're absolutely free and worth a fortune."
7. Have a plan. One of the keys to doing appreciation well is to be consistent, and consistency requires intentionally planning ahead.
8. Share yourself — from the heart. Allow your emotions to show when expressing appreciation. When we show our hearts to our employees they are drawn to us and feel closer.
9. Make it memorable. Look for opportunities to make a lasting memory. Thirteen years ago, my billing departments were working hard to try and implement a new Customer Information System. One afternoon to show my appreciation I took the teams out to see a movie and sent them home early. I still hear positive feedback about that years later!
10. You will receive more than you give. Pat Boone was right on when he said "The most attractive people in the world are those who are interested in others — turned outward in cheerful-

"The deepest principle of human nature is a craving to be appreciated."

—William James, esteemed psychologist

ness, kindness, appreciation, instead of turned inward to be constantly centered in themselves." Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive — and we know from experience that is true.

The Five Languages of Appreciation

Psychologists Gary Chapman and Paul White identified five ways to show appreciation at work in their book *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*. They found that each person has a primary and secondary language of appreciation. Our primary language communicates more deeply to us than the others. Although we will accept appreciation in all five languages, we will not feel truly encouraged unless the message is communicated through our primary language.

1. **Words of affirmation.** Includes using words to communicate a positive message to another person. Can include praise for accomplishments ("thank you for completing the report completely and ahead of schedule") or affirmation of character ("I appreciate the way you patiently help out your co-workers") or personality traits ("one of the things I admire about you is your optimism in the face of change").
2. **Quality time.** Means giving a person your focused attention and spending more time, discussing the topics that are relevant and important to them.
3. **Acts of Service.** This language involves reaching out to helping others — to provide practical help and going out of our way to lend a hand.
4. **Tangible gifts.** Giving the right gift to a person who appreciates tangible rewards can send a powerful message of thanks, appreciation and encouragement. The important thing is to give something that is meaningful and relevant to them.

5. **Appropriate physical touch.** Caution is in order, but some team members respond well to appropriate physical touch — like high-fives, fist bumps and pats on the back. We frequently see this in sports world, but it also can translate to the work environment.

How can you discover what your co-workers' appreciation language is? You could buy copies of the Appreciation book, which includes access to an online assessment survey. Alternatively, you could explain the five languages and ask employees what they think their primary and secondary appreciation languages are. You can also observe a person's behavior, observe what they request of others and listen to their complaints to get clues to their preferred language.

Here is a closing thought. Appreciation is a gift that you can give to anyone you encounter — it's completely your choice. And each time you choose to thank someone for a job well done, you are making the world a better place. Voltaire stated it well when he said, "Appreciation is a wonderful thing; it makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well." Thank you for "appreciating appreciation" and putting it into practice! ■



Wes Friesen, MBA, CMDSM, MDC, EMCM, MCOM, CCE, CBA, CBF, ICP, CCM, CMA, CM, CFM, APP, PHR manages multiple departments for a utility based in the Northwest. Wes also teaches university classes and is a featured speaker at national Conferences like MAILCOM, National Postal Forum, NACUMS, and other regional and local events. Check out his personal web-site for free information (www.wesfriesen.com). He can be contacted at pchefdebi@comcast.net.



BREAK-THROUGH CHEMISTRY CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Customized ink
solutions for
difficult substrates
including a variety
of solvent-based
formulations.

CollinsInkjet

www.collinsinkjet.com

Call us: 513 · 948 · 9000