

DON'T LET POOR PERFORMERS BRING DOWN YOUR "A" PLAYERS

One of the best ways to ensure that you will have many issues with employees is to allow poor performers to continue working at the same level of low performance day after day. In the business world today, an "A" player is not measured the same way grades are given out in high school or college. A flunking grade in business is 95%. Think about attendance. Assuming that you have 20 work days per month, an employee who shows up 95% of the time (except approved FMLA leave) is out one day a month. This is far from acceptable in most organizations. If you are working as a manager or supervisor in a typical organization, you are probably spending an inordinate amount of your time dealing with the 3% to 5% of the employees who are not measuring up. Whether the issue is attendance, disruptive behavior or the inability to consistently meet standards, your "A" players have to pick up the slack of the slackers. This will have a negative affect on the morale of your "A" employees.

As a manager or supervisor, it is your job to ensure that the work is done as expeditiously as possible. Coaching and discipline are unpleasant tasks. However, it **must** be a part of a supervisor's everyday job duties. Many avoid this part of the job. A sampling of common mistakes managers and supervisors make in correcting deficiencies is listed below.

1. **Ignore the problem** by counting on peer pressure to correct sub-standard performance. This rarely works. What usually happens is the employees talk behind the supervisor's back about the ineffective way the issue is dealt with.
2. **Have a group meeting.** Instead of dealing directly with the problem employee, a meeting of all employees of the work group is held and standards of performance are repeated with the hope that the slacker will get the hint. This is a waste of time for your "A" players and the slacker rarely gets the hint.

3. **Transfer the slacker.** When the slacker applies for a job in another department, the supervisor gives the employee rave reviews about their work habits. When the transfer is made, one supervisor gives a sigh of relief and the other just sighs.
4. **Delegating discipline** to a subordinate who is not the direct supervisor of the individual. In these cases a supervisor asks a trusted employee to work with the slacker to improve the slacker's performance. This is not fair to the trusted employee nor is it fair to the slacker.
5. **Lay off the problem child.** A supervisor knows there is not enough documentation to terminate the individual for cause and chickens out by informing that employee that their position has been eliminated. A month or two later a new employee is hired. The next thing you may be looking at is a charge of discrimination from the former employee.

Here are a few of things to keep in mind. First, have measurable standards. Then, when an employee is not meeting those standards, it is easy to figure out. An example of a measurable standard is a shipping clerk who has to process 25 shipments per day. If the employee is only processing 20 a day, the standard is not being met. The second is to clearly communicate what you expect from the employee and why the expectations are important. A third item is to keep fairness and consistency in mind. Fairness in that everyone should be given a chance to improve. Consistency in that the *same* type of coaching, counseling or discipline should be delivered for the *same* type of offenses. To do otherwise may show favoritism and possible discrimination.

Make your "B" and "C" players into stars!

Next month – more on how to discipline.



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