

# The Potential of People

Margaret Mead is credited with the statement, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

This is a very powerful message. And when this thought is applied to a company's mission, it will strengthen the workforce many times over. Every organization wants to provide the best product or the greatest customer service in their industry. Reaching for the stars is the vision of just about every business owner. Sharing that vision with employees is a much more difficult task. Here are a few ways to ensure employees share the company vision.

**Stress Behaviors Over Technical Skills.** What are the behavioral traits of people you want employed in specific positions in your organization? For example in management jobs, do you value innovation over delegation? If so, hire someone with more creativity. Is your workforce more customer service focused than oriented toward internal tasks? Identify the behaviors of the successful people in your organization. Of course, employees must have the basic technical skills to perform the job. However, technical skills can be taught much easier than behaviors.

**Set Stretch Goals and Monitor Progress.** Anyone can achieve simple tasks. It takes a high performer to accomplish the more challenging goals and objectives. The key to the successful completion of stretch goals is frequent follow up to keep the employee on track. Make adjustments as business needs change. If it is later found that the targets are too taxing, reevaluate them and agree to new terms.

**Ruin the Routine.** As people perform the same job and the same task, it can easily become routine and boring. Keep the energy up by giving employees new assignments that are outside their normal duties and responsibilities. You may be pleasantly surprised at the results. Be cautious not to penalize these people if they don't perform well. Be prepared to work with the individual to bring them back to their area of comfort.

**Provide Appropriate Rewards.** Rewarding good performance reinforces the desired behavior. It could be tickets to the symphony, local sporting events or simply a gift certificate to their favorite store. If the accomplishment is significant enough, the reward could be a cash bonus. But whatever it is, make it appropriate to the accomplishments.

Never underestimate the potential of people. NASA recently had two successful missions to Mars, which were accomplished through the hard and detailed work of a number of people. The people at NASA actually are reaching for the stars. They've already reached another planet.

What can your people accomplish?