

Remember the Source of Your Power

By Larry Wenger

Ben Zander, orchestra conductor, motivational speaker and family therapist once said that, "I was conducting the orchestra for 15 years before it dawned on me that I was the only one in the room who was not making any music. The jackets on the records we produced would show me in all kinds of conducting gestures, but the fact was the music came from the musicians."



Managers need to remember this story. You will only generate a reputation as an effective manager if the people working for you get the job done. You cannot do the entire job yourself...you can't be there all the time. You need their effort to be successful.

So it's not a matter of personal power or being tough; not a matter of how smart you are or how good you are at threatening people and setting limits for people. The question becomes can you bring out the goodness in them...the strength...the things that they are really good at doing. You need their energy; their enthusiasm; their ideas about how to make things better. Failing to get these qualities, you will get their dark side; their lazy, unmotivated side; that part of them that's just waiting for the next payday, the next promotion. And how far will the dark side of your direct reports get you as a manager? Not very far. You'll look ineffective. You'll look like someone who is disappointed in the people who work for you. You'll complain about the lack of a work ethic in today's employees. You'll always be trying to fire someone or at least "write them up." You'll be busy and you will make lots of noise, but the work your unit needs to accomplish will remain unfulfilled and as soon as your boss recognizes this, it'll be a major strike against you.

So how can you bring out the best in the people who work for you?

1. **Get to know them as individuals.** Learn about the stress points they have in their lives. Find out about their goals and help them achieve those goals. When your staff realize your commitment to them, they will do amazing things for you and for the organization.
2. **Make sure your team is diverse and have people do what they do best.** I'm talking about diversity along every conceivable measure including temperament. Nine pitchers does not make a good baseball team.
3. **Solicit their ideas and actually use them.**
4. **Recognize their good work and offer praise publicly and privately.**
5. **Be willing to be vulnerable in front of them.** You can still be an effective leader even if you are not perfect. Make sure people know what you are doing to become more effective....share your learning plan with them.



6. **Adjust your headset about people who work for you.** Make sure you are seeing them as professionals, as artists, as contributors. Not as people who need to be corrected and disciplined to keep them in line. You will get what you expect.

These are "everyone wins" strategies: clients and consumers get good services; direct reports grow in self-confidence and learn from you - they're now ready to move up the organizational ladder. You win as people take notice of the accomplishments of your work unit. So listen for the downbeat, wave your baton and listen to the beautiful music your people provide.

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