

LEADERSHIP MATTERS E-ZINE

Leadership Matters is a publication designed to explore the workplace issues today's managers and supervisors face

ARE YOUR BUSINESS STANDARDS SMART?

A recent research report by a global consulting firm shows that regular communication with employees creates higher engagement with employees. Watson Wyatt's *Effective Communication: A Leading Indicator of Financial Performance* confirms that organizations who communicate clearly defined objectives and business goals, and share business plans and goals with employees, increase employee involvement in the business. It also creates better shareholder value and a higher return on investment. This is reason enough to have SMART standards.

So what is a SMART Standard?

It's one that's Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-framed. Our experience shows that the SMART approach enables work team members to really understand organizational performance requirements and their own role in moving the business forward.

Unfortunately, what's happening today is that there are too many managers and supervisors on the front line that aren't trained to provide that kind of leadership. And, because there's a lack of training in this area, it becomes more difficult to retain these people when they can't handle this kind of responsibility.

Take Ted, who is technically over-the top as a programmer for a major retail and technology services organization. Ted was promoted to supervisor of all the programmers/technicians at his location. He's having trouble making the psychological adjustment from being a brilliant contributor to leading his team. And if he's having trouble, it shows. His team sees it too. They're looking for direction that helps build the team and align their responsibilities and priorities toward team goals, and it just isn't happening. Ted is apt to fail without the right training. He'll suffer, the team will suffer, and so will business.

The Good News; Are You In?

The good news is that many firms are jumping on the bandwagon to bring performance goals and standards leadership back. A recent survey shows that 90 percent of frontline managers are scheduled to receive training in the next year. Novations-Group, a Boston-based consulting firm, asked more than 3,000 U.S. senior HR execs which employees will receive some kind of training. The results indicate a need for management skills such as the collaboration that comes from developing goals and standards to bring team members in agreement with the process and commitment for success.

We've talked a lot about the changing workplace in previous e-zines including demographics and the pending retirement of baby boomers. These issues fuel the need for this type of training. So if you're not in, you should be.

What Should You Do?

Take stock with the SMART challenge. Are your managers and team leaders able to:

- Build team member commitment through collaborative planning of performance goals?

- Align team members with key business goals and priorities through focused goals and standards?
- Assure the clarity and measurability of performance goals/objectives through SMART-based standards?
- Achieve high quality, on-time performance through team members able to judge and self-correct their work?
- Observe, coach, support, and evaluate performance through clear, measurable performance standards?

You can find the answers to these and other questions in RPC's *Developing Performance Goals and Standards*, a 4-hour Leadership training course.

Make your business standards SMART today.

[Check out the complete Leadership Essentials Supervision Series.](http://rpchr.com/online-e-learning.html) Go to: <http://rpchr.com/online-e-learning.html>

Quote for the Month:

The tragedy in life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach." – Benjamin Mays

With appreciation,

Ken Ivey
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Sources: *Developing Performance Goals and Standards* (2006), Vital Learning Corporation.

Laff, M. (September, 2006). Training Targets Frontline Managers, *Training & Development Magazine*.

Meisinger, S. (August, 2006). To Keep Employees, Talk-and Listen-to Them!, *HR Magazine*.

Any room for improvement in your business?