

Team Leader

DARTNELL'S

YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE TO BUILDING SUCCESSFUL TEAMS

I N S I D E

ENFORCE POLICY
ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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Q U I C K T I P S

Bounce back from offensive behavior

By LISA A. BEACH

No one likes to think of himself as a jerk. That's a label you throw on *other* people, right? But if you seem to lose talented people or notice that others feel uncomfortable in your presence, you might want to take a hard look at your behavior.

"A jerk is anyone who doesn't do unto others as they would do unto themselves," explains Beverly Kaye, co-author of *Love 'em or Lose 'em: Getting Good People to Stay*. "A jerk is anyone who brings a 'got-you' attitude

to work, who sees team members merely as task-doers rather than the human beings they are."

Take heart, because we're *all* jerks some of the time, such as when we're having a bad day. But when you regularly jump into "jerk mode" and it negatively affects those you work with, you need to make changes. Kaye offers these tips:

- **Define the jerk-like behaviors you exhibit**, and how often they occur. To assess your "jerk quotient," review some of the offensive behaviors (see sidebar on page 2).

(See **BOUNCE** on page 2)

Lessen the impact of co-worker substance abuse

Fellow team members can suffer negative effects from their co-workers' substance use. If your team members work in "high risk" jobs such as operation of heavy machinery or in a climate that involves drinking after work, they may be less protected from co-workers' substance use than employees who work in groups with fewer occupational risks.

Alcohol and drug use among employees cannot only impact your team's productivity, but can also put your company in a vulnerable position. Minimize the potential impact of substance abusers by learning to identify a potential problem before it becomes damaging.

If you suspect you have a substance abuser under your wing, watch for:

- **Productivity decrease.** This includes lost workdays, absenteeism and filing for worker's compensation claims.

- **Leave policy abuse and overtime compensation.** Drug- or alcohol-dependent workers use more sick, personal and annual leave, take longer lunch hours or leave early, and may have more frequent unexplained disappearances and restroom trips during the work day.

- **Disciplinary action and suspension.** You may have a troubled employee who is often removed from the office for a period of time, which can increase operational costs in the long run.

- **Disability claims.** Some 50 percent of federal disability claims are due to alcohol problems.

- **Accidents.** Studies show that substance abusers are 3.6 times more likely to have a job-related accident. ■

Source: Dale A. Masi and Peverly Jo Reyes, authors of *Productivity Lost* (LRP Publications 1999).

- **Push the universal benefits.** Leaders who articulate the collective vision and value of team efforts to the entire team are viewed favorably. Don't focus on personal and external rewards, whether financial or status-oriented, in front of the team. These can be a turn-off for some team members.

- **Break the ice.** During a project, conference or discussion, start with an interesting quotation or a brief, interesting story about yourself that engages your team in conversation. A comfortable setting will promote open communication and increase mental energy.

- **Stay in charge.** When you lead meetings, a few simple steps will help you feel in control: Take time to gather your thoughts, use an agenda as a guide, ask someone to write down the key points and action items in case you can't, and always ask for help when you need it.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

I have been criticized for motivating my team with a "tough love" approach. I came from a company culture where you follow the rules, you never question authority and you do what you're asked. What's so wrong with that?

(See page 2)

Aim for greatness

"The wicked leader is he who the people despise. The good leader is he who the people revere. The great leader is he who the people say, 'We did it ourselves.'"

—Lao-Tzu

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Inspire teammates' motivation from the inside-out

The challenge of coaching your team is to keep them motivated. The "do what you're asked approach" is effective in the short term, but can be counterproductive when trying to motivate your colleagues.

People who feel they are being coerced or pushed into doing a project will become resistant and unwilling, often indicated by sloppy work, absenteeism, procrastination and a lack of pride in their work.

Another issue results from the fear of reprimand or punishment if team members don't do what they are asked. Initially, they are afraid of the consequences from poor performance. But if their poor performance or lack of motivation is never addressed, the fear of reprimand will eventually become meaningless.

Your challenge is to inspire motivation from within. To help your teammates motivate themselves, you can:

- **Help them see the worth**, value and importance of what they do individually;
- **Encourage them** to reach for the stars. Tell them to take on more, even if they are discouraged by goals that could not be reached;
- **Promote enthusiasm**;
- **Paint a picture** of personal profitability;
- **Serve as a role model** and show your personal commitment to motivation; and
- **Get down in the trenches** and participate in the workflow. ■

Source: *Seeing the Win* by Vince Lombardi (Dartnell Corporation 1998).

BOUNCE (continued from page 1)

If you exhibit one or more jerk-like behaviors *on a regular basis*, you need to change. Start with:

- **Asking for honest feedback.** Sometimes it's hard to see your own faults, so it might help to get input from others. Ask directly by saying, "Is there anything I could do to make your work here more enjoyable?" Or try using "360-degree feedback" to receive anonymous feedback from anyone you interact with in the work environment — your boss, team members, subordinates, customers, etc.

- **Listening for the answer.** When you do get feedback, *really listen*. Don't react defensively by blaming or by saying, "Yes, but ..." to excuse or defend your behavior.

- **Asking yourself, "What's in it for me?"** It might motivate you to see how a positive behavior change would benefit you, such as knowing your team will be more productive if you treat members with more respect.

- **Starting small.** Target two or three behaviors that you want to change. (*Tip:* Choose behaviors that at least three people have said to you, "This drives me crazy.")

- **Getting caught in the act.** Become aware of these bad habits as they occur and say, "Whoops! I'm sorry."

- **Acting the opposite.** For example, if you only criticize others, try instead to only praise them.

- **Evaluating your progress.** Pick three people to work as your "evaluators." After you've made some efforts to change, ask them to tell you how you're doing. To succeed at changing your behavior, Kaye advises, you must really *want* to change. Don't change to appease others — do it for you. ■

Source: Beverly Kaye, co-author of *Love 'em or Lose 'em: Getting Good People to Stay* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc. 1999).

Behavior checklist: do you:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ✓ Humiliate? | ✓ Behave rudely? | ✓ Undermine authority? |
| ✓ Intimidate? | ✓ Belittle people in front of others? | ✓ Betray trust or confidences? |
| ✓ Condescend or demean? | ✓ Micro-manage? | ✓ Act as if others are stupid? |
| ✓ Act arrogant? | ✓ Give only negative feedback? | ✓ Use fear as a motivator? |
| ✓ Withhold praise? | ✓ Yell at people? | |
| ✓ Swear? | | |

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