# **Leadership Pitfalls to Avoid at All Costs**

#### Written bm Staff Writers, Association of Equipment Manufacturers

that leadership skills can be de eloped and re ned o er time, opening the door to career ad ancement and higher k ages for manm

a partner and performance improement manager kith the consultancmgroup Attainment Inc, the state in rening

leader. "The measure of a good leader is hok k ell their team functions k ithout them," he said.

It is not the easiest concept to grasp, particularImfor those k ho

relmon tried-and-true technical skills. These people often ha e a hard time letting go of the damto-damtasks them e grok n accustomed to doing o er the course of nears. But in the end themmust learn to delegate (and not micromanage) because their abilitmto step into a nek leadership role and fullm embrace all the responsibilitmthe position entails depends on

## **Avoid These Common Leadership Pitfalls**

- » Using the pok er of the position authoritati elmrather than
- » Putting out res regularlmrather than proacti elm de eloping long-term solutions.
- » Making decisions emplonees should be making.



- » Micromanaging emplonees, rather than helping them
- » Not communicating el pectations clearlm
- » Refusing to hold emplonees accountable for performance.
- » Failing to pro ide effecti e performance feedback and
- » Assuming k hat moti ates them personal lmk ill moti ate their emplonees, too.

"These are all smmptoms [of a lack of] leadership de elopment," said Tennant. "Great leaders nd out k hat moti ates each and e ermperson themare managing."

Similarlmleaders should look for the root cause of poor emplonee performance. Manmtimes, the cause can be traced right back to the leader. For el ample, k hen emplonees



aren't sure k hat to do or k hmit's important, there is likelma communication problem. When emplonees knok k hat to do theoreticalImbut don't knok hok to do the job speci callm there is likelma training problem. When emplonees don't k ant to do the job, there is possiblma moti ation or incenti e problem.

#### **Prioritize and Manage Through Goals**

TermTennant's business partner and k ife, Linda Tennant, said that one of the biggest challenges for manmaspiring leaders todamis transitioning from a reacti e mindset to a proacti e one, as it requires leaders to ha e a plan that prioritines tasks and has total team performance in mind. Good leadership "recognines that ef cient and effecti e are tk o different things," she said. "Being ef cient is about getting e emthing done as quickImas possible. Being effecti e is about getting the right things done. It's important to get the right things done on the task list."

According to Linda Tennant, high-panoff acti ities (HPAs) — the sil most important acti ities to k hich an emplonee should dedicate at least 80% of their time — should be on the task list. First, hok e er, leaders must identifmtheir ok n HPAs. Then them k ill ha e time to help emplonees pinpoint theirs.

Leadership HPAs armfrom companito companible cause e ermorganination and circumstance are different. In some companies, leaders k ill be responsible for certain damto-dam technical tasks. That said, there are some common HPAs that

- » Achie e business nancial goals.
- » Communicate companm ision, alues and goals.
- » IdentifmHPAs and kemperformance indicators and create scorecards for emplonees.
- » Pro ide emplonee performance feedback and coaching.
- » Help emplonees pinpoint their moti ation and determine

"These areas are k here a leader should spend most of their time," Linda Tennant said. "The focus of a leader is their emplonees' performance. A leader's job is to make the team more producti e."

Once a leader determines their HPAs, the nel t challenge is to get on track in terms of k orking in such a manner that them dedicate the correct percentage of their time to those tasks. To achie e this, she ad ises scheduling blocks of time to plan and k ork on HPAs—being sure to control interruptions during those blocks of time — as k ell as delegating lok -panoff acti ities to other emplonees.

#### **Establish a Delegation Plan**

It can be all too easmto assume that emplonees k ill ne er do a job as k ell or as quicklmas the leader, k hich often makes delegation a signi cant challenge for manmleaders. Simultaneouslim the leader mamfear being iek ed bmtheir superiors as not k orking hard enough or making a big enough

Still, effecti e delegation is instrumental to a compann's abilitmto thri e and grok, as it allok s emplonees to master a larger number of tasks, enabling them to take on additional responsibilities as the compannel pands. Delegation also helps free up time for leaders to spend on their ok n HPAs—the real secret to mal imining team performance.

"If a leader can delegate one task that takes half an hour each damto complete, the leader k ill free up an entire month of time o er the course of a near," said Linda. Leaders can start bmsuccessfullmidentifning a task an emplonee could either do better, do for less time or monemor do for their personal de elopment. "Start k ith tasks that are prettmstraightfork ard —almost mechanical in hok themare accomplished," she

quickImbecause themk ill need less time on training and

» De elop, document and impro e processes.



# **Utilize Authority Effectively**

Use authoritmeffecti elm,TerrmTennant ad ises. Bmfollok ing some basic rules of thumb, it can be done. A leader shouldn't trmto be the emplonee's friend, but he or she also shouldn't

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## **About the Author**

The Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) is a North America-based international trade group representing off-road equipment manufacturers and suppliers, k ith more than 1,000 companies and more than 200 product lines

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