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Welcome to JTS Associates' tenth email newsletter.
OUR GOAL: To Assist clients, prospects, and associates with words of wisdom and helpful tested information from our consulting and coaching activities.
OUR FOCUS: Providing personalized leadership versatility, influencing, and selling skills to Business Owners, Executives, Entrepreneurs, Management Teams, Professionals, and Mavericks, since 1985.

We hope you find our newsletter to be informative and helpful in growing your business. If you have suggestions or ideas for future issues, please let us know.

John Shoup

Handling Tough "People" Problems - Phase 2

A Six Step Action Process to Guide You Through Multiple "People" Situations

The following six steps outline a process for meeting with your employees for the purpose of communicating with them about their performance, their value, their concerns, hopes and needs, and the areas where they can improve and grow. This process is also very effective for handling various degrees of corrective action and for just giving feedback. These meetings can be very informal, quick, at the job -or- planned, more detailed, in- depth, and conducted in an office or meeting room.

STEP 1. START ON A POSITIVE NOTE

- The meeting should be timely, tied to an event, need or accomplishment, or interest of the employee.
- It should be planned in advance.
- The setting should be comfortable, quiet, and private.
- Begin with positive information.

STEP 2. FOCUS THE DISCUSSION

- Describe the purpose of the meeting. People appreciate an up-front, genuine approach.
- Describe the situation you wish to discuss.
- Describe the impact that the situation is having on other people, or on the goals, expectations, and priorities that you, or the person, are trying to reach. Be sure to describe "actual" versus "expected" behavior.

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STEP 3. INVOLVE THE PERSON - GET THEIR INPUT

- Have you ever experienced a one-way conversation without an opportunity to communicate? This step seems to be the hardest for many managers.
- When a manager conducts a meeting for which he/she has prepared and practiced, it is easy to get into a totally one-way dialogue.
- A critical skill in this setting is to be able to stop talking and ask for the other person’s input – and listen to and respond to it. You may just have to make yourself do it!

STEP 4. WORK TOGETHER ON A PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE FUTURE

- After a good two-way conversation, there may be a need to put together a plan for future actions, on the part of both or either of you. This is definitely a requirement for corrective action meetings.
- Good two-way discussions encourage two-way commitment.

STEP 5. END ON A POSITIVE NOTE

- All too often, an emotion-filled discussion can break down and end painfully. Sometimes, managers “kick a person while he’s down." Not good!
- End with a meeting summary. Some managers even ask for a joint evaluation of the meeting. For difficult situations, particularly regarding corrective action, it is helpful to ask the other person to summarize the conversation. This allows the manager to check for employee understanding and “fill in the blanks."
- Even the most difficult corrective action discussion can, and should, end on a positive note. A manager can identify the good aspects of a person’s performance. They can offer encouragement and support. They can offer to give a reference. They can express the hope that this meeting can help them to be a better employee in the future. They can help guide the employee to opportunities for which they are better-suited.

STEP 6. DOCUMENT AND FOLLOW UP

- It’s not over until the paperwork is done! Regardless of how positive or difficult the subject of your discussion may be, make a dated record of it. Often, it is wise to give a written summary to the other person. It’s not unusual to ask the employee to sign and return a copy, indicating receipt and understanding.
- This recorded information serves as the basis for valuable performance reviews that reflect performance over time versus only what you can remember as you attempt one at the last minute. Many a manager has been embarrassed in a hearing or lawsuit by the lack of good employee records! Take my word for it.

The Principles of Increasing Your Versatility

Principle #9 - Move out of your Comfort Zone

Increasing Your Versatility means making small concessions and slight excursions from your own comfort zone in order to make your business relationships more positive and productive. It does not mean giving up your own personality or style.

It means making small temporary changes in your assertiveness and responsiveness to others versus major shifts in your behavior, words you use, actions you take, and your style of interacting, in order to link to the other person's unique personality characteristics, preferences, and needs.

With the desire and ability to adapt to a variety of personalities and situations, you will eliminate the possibility of "becoming your own worst enemy."

SALES MANAGER or SALES LEADER Part 2: The Curbstone Conference

by Eric Doner

We continue with Part 2 of the guest article submitted by our associate, Eric Doner.

In the last issue, we discussed the role of the business owner as sales manager and the dilemma faced between managing and motivating on a joint sales call. The manager's role is to create an environment that encourages motivation by using great coaching skills. In this installment, you will learn how to maximize your opportunities to coach your sales reps to improve and sustain their sales performance – and grow your business.

Coaching is helping a sales rep learn or improve their performance of a task or skill. There are two basic types of coaching: Directive and Non-Directive.[1] **Directive coaching** is telling and showing; something we've all experienced: "Watch me, then you try it", "Let me show you how" or "Here's the way I handle it." Directive coaching is easy to rely on because it's straight-forward and quick. However, it's not the best method to help sales reps learn and sustain their motivation.

Nondirective coaching involves asking questions (see below) to help sales reps discover solutions and become self-sufficient. It takes more time, but has a more powerful and lasting effect than directive coaching. And, it is the most effective way to debrief with a sales rep following a joint sales call. Nondirective coaching is '**seeking** and **giving**'. You first seek the sales rep's views on how the call went, and then give direct feedback on what you heard and observed on the call.

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When seeking, listen attentively, use more open than close-ended questions and focus on the rep's feelings; ask:

1. How do you think it went?
2. Did you achieve your call objective? Then ask: Why or Why not?
3. What do you suppose the customer is thinking right now?
4. Did the answers to your questions give you the information you needed?
5. Which skills did you use well?
6. How well did you handle the customers concerns and questions?
7. What could you have done differently?
8. What is your next step with this account?

When giving feedback,[2] share your observations about the call; "What I heard."

- Describe what went well; emphasize strengths – cite specifics
- Acknowledge problems the rep identified, but don't criticize
- Ask the rep to suggest ways to improve performance
- Reinforce the rep's ideas and offer your suggestions
- Set 2-3 goals to use new practices or skills to improve call results
- Establish a timetable for follow-up
- Tell your sales rep what you will do to support his/her development

Finally, remember to set the stage for successful coaching experiences; share your expectations, describe the process and sell the benefits of an extra pair of eyes and ears on sales calls. Go on a variety of joint calls; new prospects, service calls and closing calls to observe and provide coaching in different selling situations.

Contact us for a free sample call evaluation, coaching and development plan form.

[1]*Effective Coaching by Dr. Terry R. Bacon*
[2]*Help me, Don't tell me – Guidebook to monitoring sales performance, Sales Staff Surveys*

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To learn about your Entrepreneurial IQ, visit www.theentrepreneurnextdoor.com for information about a new book, The Entrepreneur Next Door, which includes tests.

We invite you to visit our newly designed website and participate in our Personality Tendencies Questionnaire. Prior issues of our newsletter are archived on our website.