

# Are You Strong Enough To Face Facts: Poor Employee Performance

## Could Be Your Fault Part 2 of 2

By Carole Nicolaides

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In Part 1 of this series, we reviewed a case study regarding one client of mine whose company was facing some monumental obstacles in the area of employee performance. In this conclusion, I'll offer solutions to some of those challenges and provide steps to overcome and move forward.

When stepping up to the challenge of low employee performance, a plan is most definitely a necessity. In order to create an action plan, you must first answer some tough questions.

You need to find out precisely what you dissatisfied with. Is your business as successful as you think it is? Compare your business with the competition. How much business did you gain in the last year? What are you doing to keep your customers coming back?

Next, ask yourself, "What kind of manager am I"?

In order to develop motivated employees, you first need to create a successful organization and become an empowered and progressive leader. This means continually questioning your own actions and behavior. This is what places us in a better position to understand the way we perform, work and live.

A great starting point is to ask yourself a few more questions. What are you really trying to achieve a year from today? What are the company objectives three years from today? Simply stated, where do you see the company going within a year? Can you picture this as a journey? When will you arrive at your goal? Do you have a map at your disposal?

This end destination is also your beginning point. With your new vision in mind you begin working backwards and communicating the end results you'll work toward to your employees.

Your dissatisfaction about the gap between your people's performance and potential may arise from the fact that you are not creating an environment conducive to that behavior. Your control of owning each problem and love for your work may not help you to think strategically about how to provide

them with the resources to be better employees. Your people need to know how to build and implement systems that will facilitate the process and how to draw and execute a realistic organizational structure.

The only place they have to look toward is you - their manager. If they get no direction, no communication, no feedback... then they naturally become dissatisfied, lazy and uninterested.

Below are the solutions to some challenges that can help you progress in creating an environment that will assist in your own growth, and that of your employees.

**Communicate Your Vision:** This is one of the most challenging tasks for a leader. Too often leaders have visions and they know where they are headed but they believe their people can read their minds. I challenge you to reflect for a moment on how often you communicate explicitly to your staff. When was the last time you spoke to them about your passions? Have you ever mentioned a reason or explanation for your actions?

**Focus On Employee Behavior, Too:** Employees get easily caught in the mania that the company is not nurturing them and that there is no camaraderie amongst the departments. Despite the politics that are prevalent in corporate America most of the problems arise because people are not or will not break out of their comfort zone. In order to change your world, you have to be willing to change. How can you help them see this without causing a defensive reaction? By patiently coaching them to change their mindset and behavior. Once you learn to become the coach, you can help your employees realize that they are the only ones responsible for their actions and choices.

**Encourage Owning Your Own Problems:** When your people come to you with questions and problems, what do you think they really want? Solutions? Yes, but more than that. The truth is that they want you to take ownership of their problem. They want you either to fix it or have someone else do the work that they found cumbersome or challenging. However, when employees aren't required to own their own problems, they become overly dependant on you and other team members. This leads to an expectation that all problems and challenges will be "fixed" by someone else. Rather than solving the problem for them, help them see the alternatives for solving the problem themselves. You can do this by asking great questions that will empower them to find the resources and processes that will get them where they want to go.

People in general want to be great at their work. If they are not it is usually because either their managers or the company does not allow them to shine. Remember Buckingham's word from his famous bestseller "First Break All the Rules". Buckingham stated, "Employees leave not companies but leave their managers".

If you want to improve your employees' performance you need to realize that their actions are directly related to how you behave. You have a great opportunity to shape the way they perform by influencing their expectations. You can influence what people expect and you can influence how people perform. If you want to change the results your employees are bringing you, you will have to change yourself first. Focus on your goals, expectations, contexts and your actions and let your people grow and be the best that they can be!

Carole is President and Executive Coach of Progressive Leadership Inc who thrives on helping individuals and organizations discover and leverage their unique strengths. She also offers training and consulting in Knowledge Management and Leadership Development. Visit <http://www.progressiveleadership.com> for more info & subscribe to her FREE Ezine.

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