

Fueling the Fire of Your Star Performers

By Carole Nicolaides

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Carole Nicolaides
carole@progressiveleadership.com

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Mary was a successful senior executive working for a large insurance company. She was the person that you wanted to have when things did not go well. Everybody loved her for her enthusiasm, never-ending motivation and her vision of taking the organization to the next level. About one year after this bright star was brought in and produced so well she started getting bored. She was quite the character, so with her humor and high spirits she was able to mask her unhappiness.

When she accepted an offer at another firm nobody could believe it. Her boss did not understand her reasons, her team was disappointed, and her peers simply didn't get it.

So, what could have prevented this situation? What could the company have done to prevent this star performer's departure?

Don't Take Them For Granted

Don't sit too comfortably just because the employment market is tight. High performers find their way to new organizations even in a recession. If they are bored, unchallenged, or simply not passionate about where their work, they will find a solution.

Face Reality - Your High Performers Are Different

High performers are usually people who need a different form of motivation in order to stay passionate about their jobs. For them, self-motivation is an innate thing. It is the fuel for their success. They do not need you in that department. They do need you to feed the fire.

Understand Their Motivational and Values Profile

What exactly feeds the fire? That could be different for each over-achiever you employ. It is not just money or power or leaving a legacy that excites them. Finding out the primary motivators and the values that they need to have in their workplace is an incredibly cheap investment in comparison to losing invaluable employees.

There are several assessment tools in the market. All of them, in one way or another, promise the

same things. The key is for you to be able to interpret their results so you can manage your high performers accordingly.

DISC is a popular assessment tool that does an incredible job in explaining, in plain English, what might motivate your high performers. Assessments are not the answer for deciphering the primary motivators of your high performers but they are definitely a great way to help you feed the fire.

Coach Them On What's Next

Stars thrive on executing results. Seldom do they sit down and reflect on the things that “just happen.” Their visionary thinking is important for your company, but their reflection is equally important. Be patient, encourage self-reflection, show them that you care for them and you want to know how they feel. Encourage genuine dialogues, connect with them on a personal level, and let them rely on you for your partnership.

Encourage Input and Participation

Star performers are not likely to sit quietly and do as they're told. They want to be in the limelight. They want to make decisions. They want to shine. Be sure to create an environment where they can do just that.

Ask for opinions, investigate options they offer, and involve them in as many areas as you can. Then... take the time to recognize them. After all, what good does it do for a star to shine all by itself? Stars love to shine where all can see!

There is no doubt... maintaining the passion of your high performers is a very active game. There is no one solution that will help you do this. It bears a lot of responsibility, a lot of active gestures and a lot of passion on your own. You must believe in them, you must be proud that they are working for you, you must give them due recognition, and you must let them know that you are sure you've made the right decision in bringing them on board.

Carole is President and Executive Coach of Progressive Leadership, offering business coaching and leadership training to business owners & leaders around the world. Improve your business relationships, communication, team performance and bottom line starting now. Visit <http://www.progressiveleadership.com> for more info & subscribe to Carole's FREE Ezine.

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