INSPIRE On Leadership

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Two Ways to Help Your Employees Be Accountable

Employees want to be productive, meet your expectations and go home at the end of a day feeling positive about their contribution.

As a leader, you play a role in their overall accountability for performance.

Strategy #1: Be crystal clear about your expectations

Most employees juggle multiple priorities.

Without your involvement in helping to clarify the master priorities, many employees are left guessing.

What 20% of their work input will generate 80% of their work output? Do you know? Do your employees know? Are you aligned around the answer?

Ask each of your employees to brainstorm a list of all of the things he or she does in a day, week or month. Next, ask them to identify the three to five things they see as the most important in their role. Where is the greatest value generated?

Do you agree? If you see something differently, this is an opportunity for discussion and to reach alignment.

Strategy #2: Minimize disrupters

Think about your own schedule day in and day out. Do you agree that days can be filled with disrupters?

Many employees accomplish about 40 – 50% of what they're capable of on any given day. The reason? The disrupters.

The list of disrupters is long: unclear expectations, idle time wondering what to do next, unproductive or unnecessary meetings, hallway conversations, putting out fires, shifting priorities, family situations (especially with home-based work on the rise), email (and the incessant checking of it), random requests from senior leadership, request for help from others. This is a sampling.

What can be done to minimize disrupters? Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1. Schedule meetings with yourself to complete project work.
2. Ask for permission to not attend meetings if you are not a key resource and if you can be informed of progress through meeting minutes.
3. Check email three or four times a day, and turn off notifications.
4. Get a handle on the use of cc: in email chains. Asked to be removed if you're being cc'd only as a courtesy. Be mindful of how many people you're disrupting by over cc-ing others.
5. Identify your "must-accomplish" items for the day and for the week. Manage your schedule to ensure completion of those items.

Accountability for results will increase when your employees are clear about their master priorities, when they've identified their disrupters and when they've put strategies in place to minimize the disrupters. As the leader, you can provide this framework, direction and support.

Your employees will thank you.

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