



Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 118

CREATING THE EXCEPTIONAL WORKPLACE -- BUILDING A "**STRENGTH-BASED**" ORGANIZATION (PART 12)

People are NOT your greatest asset!
The "right" people are your greatest asset!

The title should get your attention, because it is true. The line, "*people are our greatest asset*" is only partially correct. **The truly engaged and talented people** you have coming to work every day **are the real asset** of your organization.

Every organization today says it wants to become an "employer of choice," but very few get specific enough about what this really means. How can they make this happen? What are the potential obstacles? Many organizations are only talking about the issue of attracting and retaining great talent, but are finding it difficult to do in reality. So how do you turn those words into actions -- how do you become an employer of choice?

Two dimensions drive becoming an employer of choice. The first involves creating strong degrees of loyalty and performance among current staff; the second involves attracting great talent to the organization. This addresses the first dimension.

According to Gallup's research, there is no such thing as a "best practices" company. The only way to clearly see world-class performance is at a workgroup level. Within every organization there are highly productive workgroups as well as average or mediocre ones. The key to understanding world-class performance lies in identifying what goes on in those most productive workgroups that does not go on in the rest. Gallup studied more than 1 million employees across hundreds of organizations, and identified the characteristics that exist in the most productive organizations. These became the 12 questions introduced earlier. For repeat, they are:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the past seven days, have I received recognition or praise for good work?

5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel like my work is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the past six months, have I talked with someone about my progress?
12. At work, have I had opportunities to learn and grow?

These questions help us be specific about the factors we must manage to if we want to retain great people.

So, what is the right answer for being able to build strong loyalty among the most productive and talented people? It starts and stops with the manager. **Again, Gallup research shows that people join companies, but they leave managers and supervisors.** The best managers are persistent in creating environments where these 12 conditions occur consistently.

Great managers set clear expectations by defining the desired outcomes -- they don't break every job down into steps. They maximize output by making sure that their people have the right tools, equipment, and information they need. They strive to place the person with the right talent in the right job. They give immediate, positive, and clear praise and recognition for good work. They genuinely care about their people. And, they do not define development as "climbing the career ladder," but as helping the individual find the right "fit" and then growing to maximum potential within it.

Every company has world-class managers who create this kind of environment every day. Their well-managed workgroups are more profitable (44% higher), more productive (50% higher), and have higher degrees of customer loyalty (50% higher). Do we know who our great managers (supervisors) are? And are we finding more like them? If not, our commitment to becoming an employer of choice and reality will be two different things.

Next: One by one, what each question really means, beginning with question 1: "I know what is expected of me at work."

Regards, FL Ames

Excerpted from: "*First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently.*" For more information about the research and book, please refer to web site <http://www.gallup.com/poll/managing/grtwrkplc.asp>.

ALCOAST

SUBJ: COAST GUARD MUTUAL ASSISTANCE EDUCATION GRANTS AND LOANS

1. WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE RELEASE OF THE NEW COAST GUARD MUTUAL ASSISTANCE (CGMA) EDUCATION GRANT AND LOAN PROGRAMS BROCHURE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2001-2002. COPIES ARE AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL CGMA REPRESENTATIVES AND EDUCATION SERVICE OFFICERS (ESO), OR BY CALLING CGMA HQ AT 1-800-881-2462. EDUCATION GRANT AND LOAN INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORMS CAN ALSO BE VIEWED AND DOWNLOADED FROM THE CGMA WEB SITE: <HTTP://WWW.CGMAHQ.ORG>.

2. THE BROCHURE DETAILS THE FIVE EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OFFERED BY CGMA THAT ARE DESIGNED TO HELP COAST GUARD FAMILIES ACHIEVE THEIR POST-SECONDARY ACADEMIC GOALS. OVER 4000 CG MEMBERS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THESE PROGRAMS DURING THE 2000-2001 ACADEMIC YEAR.

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR MOST PROGRAMS EXTENDS WIDELY TO ACTIVE DUTY, RETIRED, AND SELECTED RESERVE MILITARY PERSONNEL; CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES; USPHS OFFICERS SERVING WITH THE COAST GUARD; AND COAST GUARD AUXILIARY MEMBERS. MEMBERS MAY ALSO REQUEST ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF THEIR SPOUSE AND ELIGIBLE CHILDREN.

4. THE CGMA EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM IS THE ONLY ONE THAT HAS AN ANNUAL DEADLINE. EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2001-2002 MUST ARRIVE AT CGMA HQ ON OR BEFORE 5 MARCH 2001. THE OTHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS EACH HAVE SEPARATE ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS. PLEASE SEE THE BROCHURE OR CGMA WEB SITE FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

5. ESO'S REQUIRING ADDITIONAL BROCHURES SHOULD CONTACT THEIR CGMA REPRESENTATIVE. CGMA REPRESENTATIVES REQUIRING ADDITIONAL BROCHURES SHOULD CALL CGMA HQ AT 202-267-2557.

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