



## Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 113

### CREATING THE EXCEPTIONAL WORKPLACE -- BUILDING A "**STRENGTH-BASED**" ORGANIZATION (PART 7)

#### **The Four Keys**

##### **How do great managers break all the rules of conventional wisdom?**

So, how do they do it? How do great managers release the potential energy of their people? How do they select a person, set expectations, motivate and develop each and every one of their employees?

There is a scene in Raiders of the Lost Ark where a frustrated Indiana Jones is trying to discover where to start digging for the Ark of the Covenant. His adversaries, the Nazis, have already begun their excavations and he is desperate to beat them to the prize. The location of the Ark is inscribed on an archaic ornamental headpiece and a gnarled Egyptian fakir is turning it over in his hands, translating the Sanskrit symbols, slowly, exactly. Suddenly, Indy stops his pacing. Hearing the translation, he realizes that the Nazis have misunderstood the ancient text. Their calculations are flawed. Their measuring stick is too short. He turns to his partner and grins. "They're digging in the wrong place."

When it comes to a manager's four core activities, Conventional Wisdom is "digging in the wrong place." Its advice is close, very close. But when you look through the eyes of great managers you realize that each element ever so slightly, but so significantly, misses the mark. Conventional Wisdom encourages you to:

- a. Select a person...based on his experience, intelligence and determination
- b. Set expectations...by defining the right steps
- c. Motivate the person...by helping him identify and overcome his weaknesses
- d. Develop the person...by helping him learn and get promoted

On the surface there seems to be nothing wrong with this advice. In fact, many managers and many companies follow it devoutly. However, you cannot build a great team simply by selecting people simply based on their experience, intelligence and determination. Defining the right steps and fixing

people's weaknesses may help, but they are not the most effective ways to generate sustained performance. And preparing someone for the next rung on the ladder also misses the essence of "development."

In gaining insight to the core activities of the great manager, this is what you'll see:

- When selecting someone, they Select for Talent...not only experience, intelligence, or determination.
- When setting expectations, they Define the Right Outcomes...not the right steps.
- When motivating someone, they Focus on Strengths...not on weaknesses.
- When developing someone, they help him Find the Right Fit...not simply the next rung on the ladder.

The authors labeled this revolutionary approach, The Four Keys of great managers. Taken together, The Four Keys reveal how these managers unlock the potential of each and every employee.

Next: How each of these Four Keys works and how you can apply them to your own people.

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 'First Break All the Rules' please refer to web site <http://www.gallup.com/poll/managing/grtwrkplc.asp>

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