



Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 123

CREATING THE EXCEPTIONAL WORKPLACE -- BUILDING A "STRENGTH-BASED" ORGANIZATION (PART 16)

The Twelve Questions

Every employee should be consciously aware of how he or she is learning and growing.

Question 6: "There is someone at work who encourages my development."

The innate yearning to learn and grow is natural to human beings. Our jobs allow us to encounter new situations and find new ways to overcome challenges every day. Why, then, do we have a tendency to stall or stagnate?

Conventional management theory has always highlighted the need for employee development. The traditional approach largely involved helping employees to identify their weaknesses, and then creating a plan to correct them. By focusing on their weaknesses, so the reasoning went, employees would become stronger and more productive. While this approach seems to make sense, it has had a significant, unintended consequence: It has emphasized who the employee is not, rather than who the employee is. As a result, the common theme in the management-employee relationship has been a constant determination to change something.

Change can be good and an effective means to improvement, of course, when it encompasses something such as learning a new skill; in the conventional approach, however, management has often tried to change factors that are part of an employee's wiring or talent. An example of this would be an effort to help employees better manage their time. While there are many tools to aid in this effort, the way one manages his or her time is a recurring pattern of thought, feeling, and behavior -- in other words, part of an employee's wiring -- not something every employee can be "trained" to do better. Great managers make a clear, definite distinction between what can be trained in and what is already hard wired.

For the past 40 years, development has also meant "getting promoted." Today, it embodies the degree to which employees are growing within their current roles. Most employees want to be promoted, but not if it means doing a job that does not match their individual talents and skills. We have all witnessed the Peter Principle in action: when an employee who is accomplished at a particular job is promoted to supervisor. While this may work, the new position often requires a **distinctly different** set of talents--talents the promoted employee may not possess. So, in the end, the promotion significantly impacts the

quality of life for both the individuals promoted and the people they supervise.

In today's workplace, managers who want to encourage the lifetime employability of their direct reports help them equip themselves with self-understanding and a clear perspective on what roles they will excel in. To accomplish this goal, such managers pursue straightforward discussions with employees. In these discussions, they seek to understand employees' strengths, talents, and skills, why they accepted a position with their employer in the first place, what keeps them there, what kind of relationships they need to be most productive, desired mode of recognition, and the yearnings and directions the employees wish to follow.

The best managers feel there is nothing very complicated about development. Development involves holding up a mirror to employees and encouraging them to know themselves. As employees come to understand who they are, these managers strive to provide responsibilities that will be a good "fit" for employees' talents. Then, as employees move forward in their self-knowledge, great managers persist in looking for opportunities to make the best use of employees' talents.

Next: Question #7 of 12: "At work, my opinions seem to count."

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 460/00

COMDTNOTE 1650

1. NOMINATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE SEVENTH ANNUAL CAPTAIN JOHN G. WITHERSPOON LEADERSHIP AWARD. THIS AWARD RECOGNIZES A COAST GUARD OFFICER WHO EXEMPLIFIES THE COAST GUARD CORE VALUES OF HONOR, RESPECT, AND DEVOTION TO DUTY.

2. CAPTAIN JOHN G. WITHERSPOON SERVED THE COAST GUARD WITH GREAT DEVOTION. CAPTAIN WITHERSPOON JOINED THE COAST GUARD IN 1963 AFTER SERVING A THREE-YEAR ENLISTMENT WITH THE U.S. ARMY. AFTER ADVANCING TO QM1, HE WAS SELECTED TO ATTEND OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL AND WAS COMMISSIONED AS AN ENSIGN ON JUNE 10, 1971. HIS CAREER SPANNED OVER THREE DECADES AND SAW HIM RISE FROM E-1 TO O-6. CAPTAIN WITHERSPOON IS REMEMBERED AS AN EXEMPLARY LEADER AND PROFESSIONAL. HIS ASSIGNMENTS INCLUDED A NUMBER OF LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES, GUAM, AND HAWAII. HE SERVED AS COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE CGC MALLOW AND CGC DEPENDABLE. A COAST GUARD PIONEER, HE WAS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO COMMAND A COAST GUARD SHORE UNIT WHEN HE ASSUMED COMMAND OF

VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE (VTS)HOUSTON/GALVESTON.

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CAPTAIN JOHN G. WITHERSPOON INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD EXTENDS TO ANY COAST GUARD OFFICER, ACTIVE DUTY, OR RESERVE WHO:

A. DISPLAYS A KEEN SENSE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT AND HAS A HIGH DEGREE OF PERSONAL INTEGRITY.

B. IS HELD IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM BY SENIORS, PEERS, AND JUNIORS.

C. DEMONSTRATES SINCERE INTEREST AND CONCERN FOR JUNIOR PERSONNEL BY HELPING OTHERS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

4. NOMINATIONS MAY BE SUBMITTED BY ANY COAST GUARD SERVICE MEMBER OR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE IN THE FORM OF A LETTER, NOT TO EXCEED TWO PAGES. THE NOMINATION SHOULD IDENTIFY SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION ON HOW THE NOMINEE EXEMPLIFIES THE CRITERIA ESTABLISHED IN PARAGRAPH THREE. NOMINATIONS MUST BE FORWARDED VIA THE CHAIN OF COMMAND (UNIT LEVEL, OR IF CO IS BEING NOMINATED, THE DISTRICT/AREA LEVEL) TO THE OFFICE OF LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY (G-WTL) BY 01 FEB 2001. PLEASE ENSURE SUFFICIENT TIME IS ALLOTTED FOR MAILING SO THAT THE 01 FEB 2001 DEADLINE IS MET. A SELECTION COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW THE APPLICATIONS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ASSISTANT COMMANDANT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES (G-W) FOR APPROVAL.

5. THE AWARD WILL BE PRESENTED IN EARLY APRIL AT AN APPROPRIATE CEREMONY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMANDANT'S STATE OF THE COAST GUARD ADDRESS. COMDT (G-WTL) WILL FUND THE TRAVEL EXPENSES OF THE AWARD RECIPIENT.

6. ANY QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO ENS. K. PALMER (G-WTL-2) AT 202-267-2349 OR LT LYNDA HESTER (G-WTL-2) AT 202-267-2439.

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