

The Consultant's Corner

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INSIGHTS  SUCCESS
"Building On Strengths"

A Quick Problem-Solving Strategy

One simple and effective technique will help you solve most of the difficulties your team runs into. *Follow these steps:*

1. Define the problem.

Do some research and include all the details. If a series of tasks was mishandled, include notes on each job and try to pinpoint where each error occurred.

2. Brainstorm possible causes.

List the factors that contribute to the problem, including those that seem out of your control—such as a customer who changed his mind or any last-minute mechanical problems—and those you know you can influence, including things such as poor performance and faulty methods.



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Effective E-Mail Message Tips

Effective e-mail messages begin at the top. Save time and set a good example for your staff by keeping these tips in mind as you type:

- **Use short, specific, and concise subject lines** to help others identify your e-mail message's purpose and importance. They also motivate recipients to read and reply.
- **Announce routine items without a lot of fluff.** *Example:* Staff meeting on Wednesday, from 8am to 9am.
- **Send Thank You's in person.** The phrase "Thanks for all your help" screams "mass mailing" and makes your message seem completely impersonal. Make it a point to deliver thanks in person. Your staff will appreciate you taking the time and this will go a long way the next time you ask for help.
- **Use Confidential in the subject line.** Protect privacy by including the word Confidential in the subject line. Otherwise, after multiple replies, the confidentiality may be lost or forgotten.



Source: Sorrell Associates ©2001-2005

"After all, the chief business of the American people is business."

— Calvin Coolidge



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Five Tips For Creating An Inspiring Workplace

1. Find out what your boss or your colleagues need for them to be great at their job. Help them get it.
2. Decide what you need to be great at your job. Ask for it!
3. Find ways to bring out the best in others every day.
4. Leverage your talents by understanding what you are really good at and love doing...then do more of it.
5. Change happens when you change. Be a leader.

Web Site Of The Month

America's Job Bank (AJB) is the biggest and busiest job market in cyberspace. Job seekers can post their resume where thousands of employers search every day, search for job openings automatically, and find their dream job fast. Businesses can post job listings in the nation's largest online labor exchange, create customized job orders, and search resumes automatically to find the right people, right now.

Check it out at: www.ajb.org



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3. Analyze the data.

Try to identify any trends or patterns that could point out underlying problems. Describe how the problem is affecting other departments, your customers or team members' job satisfaction. This information will help you decide if the problem is worth trying to solve. If the consequences are insignificant, it may not be worth your team's effort.

4. Generate possible solutions.

Challenge team members to come up with as many solutions as possible. To encourage creative thinking, don't let members judge either the ideas or the team members who present them.



5. Agree on one solution.

After you've generated a list of ideas, use consensus to select the most likely solution.

6. Develop an action plan.

Discuss and agree upon clearly defined action steps. Assign volunteers to those steps, and then agree on a time frame for each.

Source: *Team Management Briefings*, as adapted from *Managing Quality Through Teams*, Lawrence M. Miller and Jennifer Howard, The Miller Consulting Group, (404)255-6523

A Little Humor

Three older men were talking about what their grandchildren would be saying about them fifty years from now.

"I would like my grandchildren to say, 'He was successful in business,'" declared the first man.

"Fifty years from now," said the second, "I want them to say, 'He was a loyal family man.'" Turning to the third man, he asked, "So what do you want them to say about you in fifty years?"

"Me?" the third man replied. "I want them to say, 'You sure look good for your age, grandpa.'"



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