

SPRING 2015  
ISSUE

# Solutions

PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES TO  
DEVELOP THE BEST IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS

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### The Starting Point

By Allan Forbis  
Director, Center for Management and Professional Development

**Getting  
Employees  
Ready To  
SUCCEED**

How many times have you used the phrase, "Are you ready?" to motivate someone to get moving on a task or project; and similarly, how often have those same words been directed toward you? Author Simon Sinek states that,

**"A LEADER'S JOB IS NOT TO DO THE WORK FOR OTHERS, IT IS TO HELP OTHERS FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO IT THEMSELVES, TO GET THINGS DONE, AND TO SUCCEED BEYOND WHAT THEY THOUGHT POSSIBLE."**

That job description makes a lot of sense, but truth be told, it's a little scary too. Why? Because if any part of this is missing from our own action plan to lead, the chances are pretty good that our work team won't be ready *when we need them to be at their best*. Since most of us would agree that we need employees to be –and do – their best every day, the question becomes, how can we help employees get ready to succeed individually, and together as a team?

Just a little over a year ago, the Corporate Executive Board (CEB), an international business advisory group, analyzed some 20,000 employees representing more than 40 organizations to pinpoint the challenges that are facing work teams today. The CEB found that high performers are scarce in the current workforce and that many employees lack skills to achieve their employers' desired outcomes. CEB's research resulted in the identification of 10 critical development areas that employees and organizations should concentrate on to build bench strength.

This article continues on the next page.

# Getting employees ready to succeed

Continued from Page 1

According to the CEB, to get employees ready to become high-achieving workplace contributors, organizations need to help their employees:

1. Prioritize effectively
2. Work well in team environments
3. Understand how the organization works and what it does
4. Problem solve
5. Be self-aware
6. Think proactively
7. Influence others
8. Make sound decisions
9. Learn quickly
10. Be technically savvy

This is a good list, especially when you consider the speed with which organizations need to respond to challenges, and the dwindling number of employees many organizations have today.

But when you're the leader, and it's your job to help employees grow, it's not easy to make all the pieces fit. While training is essential, all the eggs can't be placed in just one basket.

## So, what can you as the leader do on a regular basis to get your team ready to become more self-sufficient, grow in their job, and increase their value to the organization?

If you're stuck for a good answer, here are some things to consider that will cover each of the CEB's Top 10...and more.

**Go fish!** I think all of us have overheard this universal phrase spoken by an employee at least once: *"I'm not sure what to do. Let me get my manager."* Now, sometimes, that's the right thing to do – but if you're the one always solving the problems, you aren't really helping your employees *learn how to fish* on their own.

Instead, encourage employees to identify potential solutions to problems before they bring them to you. And if it's not the right solution, don't discount their attempt. Ask them to explain their solution and the processes (thinking) they used to arrive at it. If they missed something important in their thinking, constructively point it out. The more they get accustomed to thinking through problems and issues, the better they will become at making decisions and problem solving on their own in the future.

**Build collaboration.** Find ways to get employees out of their work spaces to interact with others, share ideas and occasionally *compromise* on key work issues. We all need to become adept at working with others to accomplish things.

Just like when we were kids...if we don't learn how to play with others and share our toys, we're never going to navigate the complexities of being part of something more than ourselves. And if we can't do that, it will impede our efforts in nearly everything else we try to do.

**Embrace change.** *Agility* and *adaptability* are two words that need to be part of every employee's vocabulary. Because change is all around us, employees need to understand – and use technological advances and business best practices to their advantage.

Make sure you are a conduit for this type of information, and not a stopping point. Send employees to training to keep their skill set up-to-date, and use other informational channels to help them stay ahead of the curve. Model these behaviors yourself by talking about them in team meetings, in one-on-one conversations; and by engaging others in discussions about new and better ways to do "old" things.

**Make employees "stock holders."** We want employees to take ownership of their work, and help move things forward after we're gone, but to do that, they need to be armed with information that will bring the big picture into focus.

For instance, do employees know how their work contributes to the bottom line? Could they give someone the "1-minute elevator speech" on why their work is so important to the organization? Do they know what factors control the department budget? Do they even know you have a budget? Do you ask for their input on how money could be used more efficiently? Do they understand the "political" reasons that often determine why things happen the way they do? Keep these things in mind when you're talking to your team about their work – and their future. Their answers might surprise you.

**Speak-up!** What are you doing with your poor communicators? Do you find yourself keeping them away from customers by giving them things to do that don't require much communication?

To help employees become better at influencing others and "selling" the merits of the organization, they need to communicate effectively – and with conviction – in their daily interactions with others.

Help to develop this skill by including them (slowly at first) in business meetings and events, and providing training to help bolster their confidence. And, if you're able, consider partnering them up with a mentor or "coach" who can work with them one-on-one to point out specific ways to strengthen their communication muscle.

## Find the needle in the haystack.

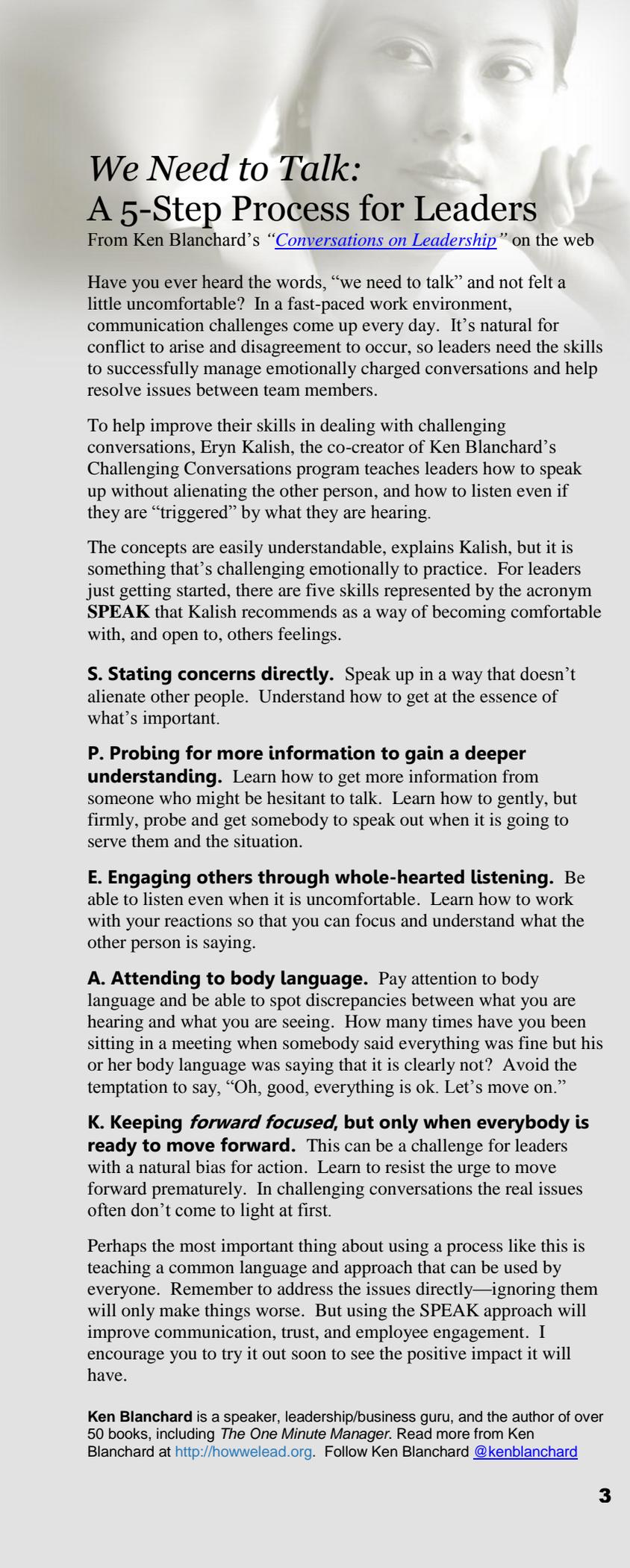
Remember the old story about the plumber who charged \$1000 to detect and fix a leak in a long length of pipe. When asked to justify his bill, he sent back a simple reply: \$1 to fix the leak; and \$999 for knowing where to look. That's called knowledge my friends.

Don't be afraid to let your team in on some of the "secrets" that affect how things work. Give them access to data and other information that doesn't need to be confidential. Let them help you analyze reports, and find problems with work processes. Get them involved!

**Imagine that!** Finally, as a leader, perhaps one of the most important things you can do is to give employees the chance to embrace their curiosity and imagination. Have you ever heard the saying, "Keep doing what you've always done and you'll always get what you've always got?" Encourage employees to "shake things up," experiment (within reason) and make stretch goals for themselves that may occasionally take them out of their comfort zone.

There's some work here, to be sure. The good news is that all of these things cross-pollinate. You can't do one without developing and strengthening the others.

So get ready. Get set...and go!



## We Need to Talk: A 5-Step Process for Leaders

From Ken Blanchard's "[Conversations on Leadership](#)" on the web

Have you ever heard the words, "we need to talk" and not felt a little uncomfortable? In a fast-paced work environment, communication challenges come up every day. It's natural for conflict to arise and disagreement to occur, so leaders need the skills to successfully manage emotionally charged conversations and help resolve issues between team members.

To help improve their skills in dealing with challenging conversations, Eryn Kalish, the co-creator of Ken Blanchard's Challenging Conversations program teaches leaders how to speak up without alienating the other person, and how to listen even if they are "triggered" by what they are hearing.

The concepts are easily understandable, explains Kalish, but it is something that's challenging emotionally to practice. For leaders just getting started, there are five skills represented by the acronym **SPEAK** that Kalish recommends as a way of becoming comfortable with, and open to, others feelings.

**S. Stating concerns directly.** Speak up in a way that doesn't alienate other people. Understand how to get at the essence of what's important.

**P. Probing for more information to gain a deeper understanding.** Learn how to get more information from someone who might be hesitant to talk. Learn how to gently, but firmly, probe and get somebody to speak out when it is going to serve them and the situation.

**E. Engaging others through whole-hearted listening.** Be able to listen even when it is uncomfortable. Learn how to work with your reactions so that you can focus and understand what the other person is saying.

**A. Attending to body language.** Pay attention to body language and be able to spot discrepancies between what you are hearing and what you are seeing. How many times have you been sitting in a meeting when somebody said everything was fine but his or her body language was saying that it is clearly not? Avoid the temptation to say, "Oh, good, everything is ok. Let's move on."

**K. Keeping forward focused, but only when everybody is ready to move forward.** This can be a challenge for leaders with a natural bias for action. Learn to resist the urge to move forward prematurely. In challenging conversations the real issues often don't come to light at first.

Perhaps the most important thing about using a process like this is teaching a common language and approach that can be used by everyone. Remember to address the issues directly—ignoring them will only make things worse. But using the SPEAK approach will improve communication, trust, and employee engagement. I encourage you to try it out soon to see the positive impact it will have.

**Ken Blanchard** is a speaker, leadership/business guru, and the author of over 50 books, including *The One Minute Manager*. Read more from Ken Blanchard at <http://howwelead.org>. Follow Ken Blanchard [@kenblanchard](#)

## Guard against making over-detailed assignments

"Now Clem," you begin your instructions, "you'll be responsible for monitoring the balance sheets to make sure our group stays within budget. So when you see this column over this amount, or this column over this amount, or when the two of these added together are more than this one over here..." And two hours later, you've finished explaining to Clem every single column on the balance sheet, what it measures, what he needs to look for (or what he can ignore), who uses the information, and what formulas drive certain figures, and on and on—when all Clem really needs to do is match a few columns against a few others and let you know if things aren't matching up.

**So, was this a mistake?** It might seem odd to think so, especially when so many people are telling you to spend time with employees to make sure they understand everything they need to know about an assignment. The point here is that information overload, if not managed, can cause problems too.

1. Too much detail will obscure the real point of the assignment. When you leave Clem's desk, will he really know what he is suppose to do?
2. Too much detail is overwhelming, and it's possible that Clem won't have absorbed much of the information you've tried to give him. As a result, he'll have an incomplete understanding of the relatively small piece of the puzzle he's responsible for.

**What can you do to avoid this?** The answer is to break the assignment down into "bite-sized" pieces that can be digested individually before you offer the next piece. You can do that by answering four basic questions for the employee:

1. *What's the goal of this assignment...what's the final outcome you're looking for?* In this case, you want Clem to let you know when your work group may be spending too much money and running over budget.
2. *What information do I need to meet this goal?* This is the basic information Clem needs to complete the task – the information on the monthly accounting reports. And it's not all the information on those reports – only key figures.
3. *What do I need to know to process or evaluate that information?* He doesn't need to know all the details of the accounting process—at least initially. He only needs to know about the specific columns his information comes from, what they mean, and perhaps what's included in the computation.
4. *Why does this assignment need to be done?* Again, Clem doesn't necessarily need to know who will see what he gives you, only that you will use his review to make spending decisions.

If problems come up, or as Clem becomes more comfortable with the assignment, you can fill in the gaps as needed. Eventually, Clem may become the expert with knowledge that surpasses yours...and that's a good thing!



# Just a thought...

## Be an optimist...we know you can do it!

Numerous studies have shown that our thinking and mental habits can be changed with just a little effort on our part. If you want to develop a more optimistic approach to your life and work, try the following solutions suggested by authors Hendrie Weisinger and J. P. Pawliw-Fry in their book, *Performing Under Pressure: The Science of Doing Your Best when it Matters Most* (Crown Business, 2015).

As you read each of these tips, believe that they will work.

### Develop your optimistic vocabulary

One reason optimists accomplish so much and distinguish themselves from others is that they do not engage in statements about themselves that limit or rein in their expectations, or discourage them from believing that better is achievable. Pessimists often use statements such as, “I can’t,” “I should have,” “It will never happen,” “It will never change,” all fueled by their belief that permanence is the name of the game.

These statements hold you back because they are inherently limiting. However, when you apply positive psychology – or

optimism – your opportunities for growth increase. For instance:

- Edit out phrases such as “I can’t,” “I should have,” “there’s nothing I can do about it.”
- Introduce optimistic language into your vocabulary: “I can,” “I will,” “I could,” “When (not if)…” These phrases focus your attention on your options and increase your optimistic outlook about being able to be more – and do more – than you may think is true today.

### Adopt the belief that the world is fair

I know what some of you may be thinking. But here’s the thing...optimistic people tend to believe that the world is (for the most part) fair, and that as a result, hard work will pay off.

When you believe that life is a series of exciting and interesting challenges to master, rather than a shaky environment where we are constantly in peril, your perceptions and approach to what’s ahead of you, rather than what’s in the past can help to reduce some of the stress you may have, and allow you to focus on doing your best. To develop this habit:

- Make a list of the truly bad breaks you have experienced. Now make a list of good things that have come your way. This should remind you that, all in all, life is pretty fair and balanced.
- Every time something bad happens to you, immediately think of something good that has recently happened to you.

Remember, there are very few optimists that are constant whiners, but among pessimists, there are complainers galore. Start explaining your life as an optimist would, and reap the benefits!

**“An obstacle is something you see when you take your eyes off the goal.”** Anonymous



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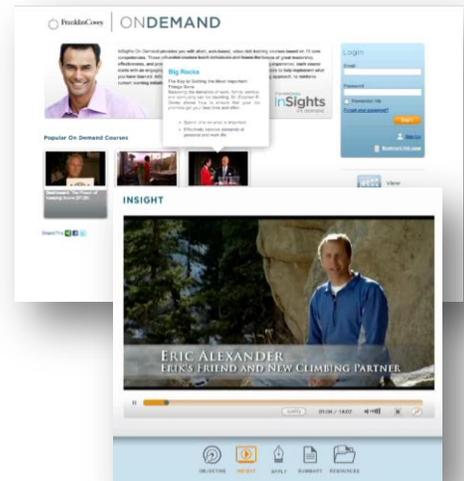


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"If you think you're leading and look behind you and no one is following, you're just out for a walk." Dr. Alan Zimmerman

## Don't buy-in to old leadership communication myths

In her new book, *"The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversations into Breakthroughs"* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2014), author Marcia Reynolds makes the point that some leaders believe – incorrectly – that if employees are left alone, more often than not, they will find a way to persevere and succeed solely on their own without any help or direction from the leader. In reality, and for many reasons, this couldn't be further from the truth. Don't miss the chance to help the employees you lead be productive and get things done. Check to see if you believe in any of the myths that Reynolds includes in her book.

### **MYTH 1: Employees don't want you to ask questions. They just want you to give them answers so they can get back to work.**

This is a myth of convenience. If you prefer not to spend time on development conversations, and fear challenging people to think differently, you might buy into this. But the truth is that people enjoy learning and improving more than they like being dependent on their supervisor. According to research, two major motivators of high performance are autonomy and mastery. If you want continuous great results, you need to continuously expand people's minds.

### **MYTH 2: If employees need something from you, or don't understand something, they will ask.**

No matter what your title is, people might not feel comfortable letting you know they can't figure something out. They might have a history of other bosses, parents or teachers belittling them for not knowing everything. People appreciate you asking, "What would be the best thing I could do to support you right now?" If they can't think of anything specifically, offer the gift of your time. A private conversation could reveal an opportunity to expand their thinking.

### **MYTH 3: No one is complaining so everything is fine.**

You may be a good leader but you aren't perfect. Leaders who don't spend time asking employees questions about how things are going may find themselves out of touch with challenges their people face. When you keep your fingers on the pulse of the team by asking about their challenges, opinions and concerns, you will know when they need to maintain motivation.

### **MYTH 4: If a good person does something bad, it won't happen again. They will self-correct.**

This is the most common rationalization for avoiding what could be a difficult conversation. Whether you worry that people won't like you or they will react poorly and that you won't know what to do, you need to let people know when their actions have an undesirable outcome. The sooner you share this information the better. Then if you sense resistance, you can transition the conversation to embrace a coaching approach.

### **MYTH 5: The best employees want to be left alone to do their work.**

High achievers want positive feedback. They want a steady stream of interesting projects with indicators of success. And they want you to challenge their thinking so they can continuously grow. When you trust in people's capabilities for learning and growth, why wouldn't you want to help them rise above their current proficiency? This should be your highest priority as a leader.

Find more information about leading others on Twitter [@MOCMPD](#)

It's **NOT** the Study Hall you remember from school, but these "study-on-your-own" lessons can make a big difference in your success as a leader.

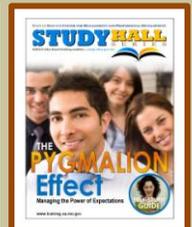
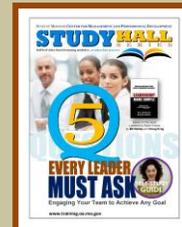
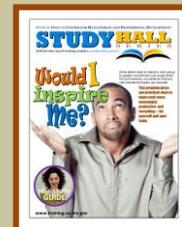
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# Profile



Talking with **Nancy Johnston**, Director of the State Division of Personnel about getting things done

We all have examples of working with others to get things done. Sometimes it's just to complete an everyday task; and at other times, our efforts can lead to something extraordinary. Whatever we're doing on our own, or with others to get things done, your efforts are important...**and it ALL matters.**

For this profile, **Allan Forbis**, Center for Management and Professional Development, spoke to Division of Personnel Director, **Nancy Johnston** about getting things done.

**AF:** Nancy, thank you for being part of Solutions e-magazine. Having worked with you for several years now, I know that you have some great insights to share about *getting things done*.

**NJ:** Thanks Allan. No matter where you work, and certainly in state government, there are likely many things that need to be done on a daily basis to meet the needs of your customers. During my career, I've seen time and again that without the support of the people you work with, attention to detail and solid organizational skills, getting things done can be challenging at best!

**AF:** You know Nancy, while we could easily focus on the Division of Personnel, I'm curious to learn if outside your work here, there is one project that stands out for you as a particularly proud *getting things done* moment during the span of your state service?

**NJ:** Actually, there is. When Joplin was devastated by the tornado in May of 2011, many people lost everything. Along with losing their homes, they lost their identification, which was needed in order for them to receive Federal relief funds to begin to rebuild. They needed things like birth certificates, driver's licenses and other forms of identification.

**AF:** That was a horrible time for folks in Southwest Missouri.

**NJ:** Horrible indeed. Which is why I so wanted to be able to help them. At the time I was with the Office of Administration and it just so happens, the Governor handed me the very significant task of setting up a temporary, mini state government in Joplin so that we could help the tornado victims – and of course, it obviously had to be done quickly to provide the most help possible. So, I got to work with securing a building in the downtown area where we could house all of the necessary agencies under one roof.

I didn't do this alone of course, and couldn't have. I worked in tandem with Kip Stetzler, currently the Director at Missouri Housing and Development Commission, and we were joined by many state employees from other agencies who gave their all to help the tornado victims. Every day we were there, I grew more and more proud of this great team of people. I was astonished by the proactive solutions some of them brought to me to streamline processes and more efficiently assist the people of Joplin who needed so many different things to get back on their feet.

**AF:** It sounds like a well-oiled machine. What were some of the things that made you most proud during this time?

**NJ:** Well, I've always been proud to represent the State of Missouri as an employee. However, several great shining moments happened the entire time we were there. For instance, there was a young lady that came in and unfortunately had lost one of her children in the tornado but she had other children and needed to care for them as well as find them a home. So folks within the office went to work to assist her with temporary disaster assistance – ranging from food, housing, clothing/furniture, you name it, she needed it and everyone pitched in to help.

Another instance was a woman who was born in China who lost all of her identifying paperwork as well as her husband's, including her naturalization paperwork. She spoke limited English, so we worked closely with her and a friend who helped to translate. We received an extension on her California driver's license (which had expired) and eventually received certified copies of her paperwork from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Once we had that, we were able to get her a Missouri license as well as FEMA housing.

Again we worked with many others to get this accomplished including Senator McCaskill's staff, US Citizenship and Immigration Service, FEMA and also DSS to find a nursing facility for her husband since he could not remain in the hospital for the extensive time needed to recover from injuries, and she was not able to provide the level of care needed at home.

There were so many heartbreaking stories that we heard on a regular basis. Many people would have tears in their eyes when they received their driver's license—simply because they were an identifiable person again.

**AF:** What do you think the examples you shared with us about your experiences in Joplin tell us about *getting things done* in other challenges we face today?

**NJ:** Regardless of our challenge, if we work together we can more easily accomplish our goals. We need to be open to challenges that are presented to us, and we should always know that we might be the person who makes a difference for that one person who needs our help. As John F Kennedy stated, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." I think that every state employee has an opportunity to make a positive impact on a customer, a co-worker, and their organization!!

***"Regardless of our challenge, if we work together we can more easily accomplish our goals."***

# TECHNICAL JOURNAL

## Office 2007 Tips

From the Center for Management and Professional Development's  
[Computer and Technical Skills Training Team](#)

### Keeping Column or Row Headings Visible in Excel

When a worksheet becomes wider or longer than a screen view, you can't see the column or row headings. You may need the column headings or row heading to properly enter data. The feature you need is called **Freeze Panes**.

The **Window** grouping on the **View** ribbon has the feature Freeze Panes. There are three options for you to choose from:

**Freeze Top Row:** this keeps the top row visible while you scroll down through the rows in a document.

**Freeze First Column:** this keeps the first column visible while you scroll to the right through the columns in a document.

**Freeze Panes:** this keeps both rows and columns visible as you scroll through the document.

To freeze both rows and columns, you must first click below the needed row and one column to the right. Example: Selecting cell D2 would freeze row 1 and columns A through C.

NUM	FIRST	LAST	EMP#	DIVISION	DEPT	DATE of HIRE	BEN NUM
88	Paul	Mtsbaein	GC20	Maine	Development	19-Apr-1979	DRH 88
8	Barry	Baly	GC04	Maine	Development	15-Jun-1983	D 8
5	Frank	Culbert	GBC07	Connecticut	Development	12-Jun-1983	DRH 5
28	Robert	Cuffaro	GBC08	Connecticut	Development	18-Sep-1983	DRH 28
11	Shing	Chen	GBC05	Connecticut	Development	8-Aug-1984	R 11
75	Holy	Taylor	GC07	Maine	Development	17-Aug-1984	D 75
47	Anne	Davidson	CC23	New Hampshire	Development	6-Apr-1986	RH 47
60	Edward	Traly	AC27	Vermont	Development	17-Jun-1986	DR 60
54	Dominick	Mazza	GBC09	Connecticut	Development	10-Oct-1986	54
16	James	Rich	GBC11	Connecticut	Development	11-Oct-1986	DH 16
19	Dean	Kramer	AC49	Vermont	Development	23-Jun-1987	RH 19
37	Mary	Altman	GC12	Maine	Development	9-Sep-1987	H 37
52	Henry	Paterson	GC20	Maine	Development	28-Oct-1987	RH 52
40	Greg	Connors	GBC49	Connecticut	Development	4-Nov-1987	40
91	Greg	Thomas	AC53	Vermont	Development	24-Dec-1987	DR 91

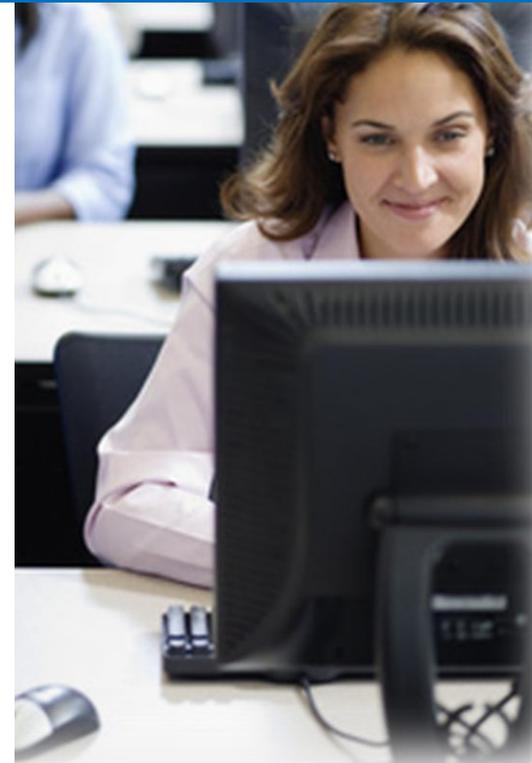
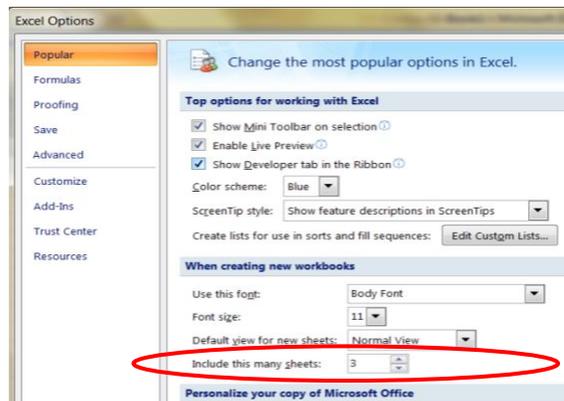
### Change the number of default sheets on default workbook

Whenever you open a new workbook, Excel shows 3 worksheets by default.

If you prefer more or less worksheets you can change this default setting.

Here's how:

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## DR. ZIMMERMAN'S COMMENT

### There comes a time when you need to move from deliberation to decision and from consideration to commitment.

*Used with permission.*

In today's world, you need EVERY employee to be excellent ... if you're going to compete ... serve your customers well ... grow your business ... and be profitable. Any employee who is not excellent will be an impediment to those goals. Let's explore how you can encourage your employees to be excellent by focusing on the following points.

#### Get a commitment to excellence.

That's what Mike Krzyzewski, the basketball coach at Duke University did when they went into overtime in the NCAA Regional Championship game against Kentucky. Kentucky was leading with 2.1 seconds left. During the final time out, coach K told Grant Hill that he wanted him to throw the inbound pass to Christian Laettner who would be at the top of the key...75 feet away. He said, "Grant, we need a three-quarter-court pass. Grant, can you make the pass?" "YEAH, coach. I can DO it." The coach got commitment.

Coach K then said, "Christian, you're going to flash from the left corner to the top of the key. Christian, can you catch it?" Christian *nodded* that he could. But that wasn't a strong enough commitment for Coach K, so coach pushed Christian a bit harder. He got his commitment. Christian *said*, "If Grant can throw it, I CAN catch it and I can HIT the shot." Grant threw the pass. Christian hit the shot. Duke won 104 to Kentucky's 103.

When you're after excellence, get a commitment from the other person that he/she CAN do it and WILL do it. GET THE OTHER PERSON TO MAKE A DECISION.

It all begins with making a decision and saying, "This is what I'm going to do: I'm going to make it happen, no matter what!" Civil rights activist, Joseph Lowery, had a clever way of saying it. He said, "If you can take care of the internal, you can easily take care of the external. Then you can avoid the infernal and catch on to the eternal."

Once you've got commitment, then...

**Use praise and reward.** When people strive for excellence, they typically do it for a reason. Maybe the work makes them feel good, helps them master a skill, or move ahead in their career. But there's always a reason. As movie star Ava Gardner said, "I do everything for a reason. Most of the time the reason is money." Well one of the main reasons people pursue excellence is because they want to receive praise. So give it to them. Praise excellent performance. You might be amazed at the difference it can make in someone's life or career.

Just don't make the mistake of praising everything a person does ... or praising ordinary performance. You'll kill off the other person's desire to do more, or do better. Praise extraordinary work – like the one man did when he walked out of church. He told the preacher, "That was a d--- good sermon." The preacher replied, "Watch your language." To which the man said, "Okay, it was a really d--- good sermon." Again the preacher rebuked, "Watch your language." So the man said, "In fact, it was so good I put a \$100 bill in the collection plate." The preacher said, "The h--- you did."

Of course, as you push people towards excellence, they will make some mistakes. No problem. All you have to do is...

**Correct their performance when it is less than excellent.** Goethe, the classic German author said, "Correction does much, but encouragement does more." He's right. But there comes a time when course correction is needed.

Just don't make the mistake of talking to someone about their "weaknesses." Weaknesses sound like permanent character flaws. And a focus on weaknesses will turn a person into a pessimist because he'll think, "That's just the way I am. There's nothing I can do about it." That's why one pessimist carries a card in his wallet that says, "In case of accident, I'm not surprised."

Instead, when you're correcting less-than-excellent performance, talk about the other person's "improvement opportunities." That way you're describing a process she can pursue. And she's back on the road to excellence. And finally...

**Analyze the excellence and the resulting success.** It's not enough to acknowledge the other person's success or excellence. The best way to keep it going is help him understand the reason it came about in the first place. WHY did things turn out right, and HOW can he replicate that?

For example, if an individual had an unusually good month in production, recognize it and ask him WHY. Did he use a different approach to complete his work? Did he change a work habit? Did he create a new system to help him get things done? By asking such questions, you help the other person make the most of his success.

In summary, excellence does not randomly strike like lightning. It's the result of certain actions you take ... in concert with other people. And if you take the actions I described, you can make excellence a habit in your organization.

### ACTION:

Think of three questions you can ask an individual the next time you observe a success he is having. Ask questions that will help him understand what brought about his success.

## Tic-tock...how are you using your time?

Do you ever feel overwhelmed by your work or that you aren't getting everything done? Do you ever feel as if the people you work with and for are throwing too much work at you? "Don't feel alone. These days, nearly all of us have too much to do, and we often face conflicting expectations, making it difficult to identify what's important. In light of this, how many of you ever think, "There just aren't enough hours in the day!"

When you are particularly swamped with work, wouldn't it be nice if you could squeeze in another hour or two? While that's not going to happen, you can create more time to get things done by reducing or eliminating time-wasting activities that do nothing to move you toward your goals.

### Just how efficient are you?

To find out, use the number from the scale below that best describes your use of time at work.

- 1 = doesn't describe my use of time at all
- 2 = describes my use of time to a small extent
- 3 = describes my use of time to a moderate extent
- 4 = describes my use of time very well.

- I seldom spend unnecessary time using technology, e.g., browsing the web, checking my email, socializing with friends online, reading blogs and Twitter feeds, and so on.
- I rarely have to rush to get things done on time.
- When something I'm working on is finished, I go on to other things.
- I do not typically multi-task.
- As a rule, I do not let distractions and interruptions interfere with my ability to get things done.
- I rarely do work that has become unnecessary because something has changed.
- Nearly all the meetings I attend are necessary and useful.

### TOTAL

See how your efficiency level measures up by using the interpretations below:

- 23–28: You use your time efficiently.
- 18–22: You generally use your time efficiently but could improve.
- 12–17: You could make better use of your time.
- 7–11: Your time wasters might be making it hard for you to achieve your goals.

Once you understand the challenges to making the best use of your time, you can use a number of strategies to use your time more efficiently. Keep reading for some points to consider.

**Stop procrastinating.** Think about why you procrastinate. Maybe you are not sure you know how to do the job, that you will not do it well enough, or feel too overwhelmed – or maybe you have simply developed a habit of doing things at the last minute. Whatever the reason, knowing what it is will help you get started. Breaking large projects into smaller chunks will help you get them done.

**Focus on one activity at a time.** Learn to notice when you are multi-tasking. Then stop yourself and focus on only one activity. At first, it might feel as if you are not getting enough done, but once you learn to do one thing at a time, you'll find that you are accomplishing more, not less.

**Do things only once.** When you read an email or a document, decide whether it needs a response or other action. If it does and you are able, respond immediately; if you're busy, schedule a time to do it.

**Reduce distractions.** Become aware of what interrupts and distracts you. If possible, turn off your email and IM alerts and let your phone go to voicemail when you need to concentrate. Ask colleagues not to interrupt you during certain times of the day unless something is urgent, and find private places where can work when you need quiet time.

**Stop when you have reached "good enough."** If you find yourself re-doing something you have already finished, ask yourself why? Think about what the finished product needs to be to achieve your goal and how important it is in terms of your priorities. You might be trying to make it perfect when it's just fine as it is.

**Use technology efficiently.** How much of your time do you spend browsing the web, or sending and reading email? Chances are that you'll have more time if you schedule those activities instead of doing them constantly throughout the day.

**Reduce the number of meetings you attend.** You might not be able to stop going to meetings you consider unnecessary, but you can ask for a detailed agenda. If it's not necessary for you to be there, perhaps you can bow out. An agenda means that the person has done at least a minimum of planning, which should make the meeting more productive. If you're the one who calls the meeting, make sure it's necessary and plan it carefully.



# GB@GB

GETTING BETTER @ GETTING BETTER

### APPLYING PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT!

The ability to accomplish something yourself is quite different from the ability to get others to *want* to do it. The best supervisors and managers hire the best-fit people, then manage performance effectively through a steady routine of measurement and coaching.

Too often, the term "performance management," is associated with only doing annual appraisals, when in reality, it involves so much more.

**This one-day program will explore what performance management is truly about – the essential ingredients of providing objective behavioral descriptions and measures for the work that needs to be done, periodic ongoing feedback, alignment with personal motivation, and a climate of appreciation.**

By applying the techniques presented in this program, supervisors can make their lives easier while improving commitment, dedication, and results within their work team and organization.

#### Learners will be able to:

- Identify the disadvantages of ineffective performance management, and the hard costs of disengaged employees.
- Describe ideal employee behaviors, and how coaching and feedback can help those behaviors become reality.
- Practice strategies to set performance expectations, provide constructive feedback, and give recognition to cultivate and reinforce desired behaviors.
- Assess team trust, and explain the consequences of low trust.
- Select appropriate data to accurately measure performance and results.
- Use the *Nine-Block Talent Assessment* tool to objectively assess team members, promote talent development and build bench strength.

# COURAGE

From Margie Warrell

Your failures don't define you.  
Your response does.



In December 1903 a New York Times editorial questioned the intelligence of the Wright Brothers who were trying to invent a machine, heavier than air that would fly. "It simply defies the laws of physics," they wrote. One week later, at Kitty Hawk, the Wright Brothers took their famous flight.

If you study history, you will find that all stories of great success are also stories of great triumph over adversity. But often we overlook the setbacks and only see the end success. We think the person got lucky: "He/she must have been at the right place at the right time." Or maybe they were just really smart...or talented...or well connected.

But that's all bunk. While it may have been a little bit of each, what ultimately led to their success was their refusal to allow their setbacks and failures to define them.

*If you think you are beaten, you are.  
If you think you dare not, you don't!  
If you like to win, but think you can't,  
It's almost a cinch you won't.*

*Life's battles don't always go,  
To the stronger and faster man,  
But sooner or later the man who wins,  
Is the man who thinks he can.*

Early publications of this poem cite Walter D. Wintle as being the author

Einstein did not speak until he was four and did not read until he was seven, causing his teachers and parents to think he was mentally handicapped, slow and anti-social. Eventually, he was expelled from school and was refused admittance to the Zurich Polytechnic School. You could say he had a slower start than many of his childhood peers. But I'm sure you'd agree that he eventually caught up pretty well. Today the name Albert Einstein is synonymous with genius.

As a young cartoonist, Walt Disney faced countless rejections from newspaper editors. He "lacked natural talent" they said. One day a minister from a local church took pity on the young cartoonist and hired him to do some cartoons in a small mouse infested shed behind the church. After seeing a small mouse, he became inspired to draw it. And so Mickey Mouse was born.

One day a partially deaf four year old kid came home with a note in his pocket from his teacher, "Your Tommy is too stupid to learn. We cannot have him at our school." His mother decided to teach him herself. Partially deaf and with only three months of formal schooling Tommy grew up to be Thomas...Thomas Edison...who, as the story goes, went on to fail approximately 10,000 times before he succeeded in inventing the light bulb.

And even Oprah Winfrey, my very own hero, had her fair share of struggles, sorrows and setbacks. Oprah did not become one of the most influential women in the world by allowing others to define her, giving in to her self-doubts, or throwing in the towel when the going got tough. After enduring a rough and often abusive childhood in rural Mississippi, Oprah was fired from one of her first jobs as a television reporter, being told she was "unfit for TV." She now has her O.W.N. network!

Of course you may feel like you have little in common with Oprah or Disney, Edison or Einstein. But that isn't true. You do. They were not born with some super human like resilience that shielded them from disappointment, self doubt or misgivings. They each had to wage their own inner battles with fear of failure as they worked hard to overcome the external obstacles that lined their path to success.

What distinguishes these people is that they did not become a victim to their failures. When they fell down, they got back up. And when people told them it couldn't be done, they refused to buy into their lack of belief.

There are things that you and only you can do – things that will never be done if you do not do them. But any worthwhile accomplishment is going to call on you to trust in yourself more fully, to risk making mistakes and forgive yourself when you do, to press on when the going gets tough, and to refuse to allow your setbacks to define you (not the cynics in your life).

How you choose to interpret your failures will either move you forward in life or hold you back. Every failure can be turned into a stepping stone to success. Every mistake is a lesson in what not to do. Every setback is an opportunity to dig deeper in to yourself, to access resources you didn't know you have and to acquire wisdom you could gain no other way.

**Every story of success is also a story of triumph over adversity. What story are you writing?**

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An intrepid Australian, **Margie Warrell** draws on her background in business, psychology, and executive coaching to help people live and lead with greater courage. The bestselling author of *Stop Playing Safe* (Wiley 2013), and *Find Your Courage* (McGraw-Hill 2009), Margie is also a keynote speaker and the mother of four noisy children.

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