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MAY -
JUNE 2008

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THE TYPE A MYTH- How 80 Hour a Week Control Freaks Can Challenge Your Workplace

By Monica Wofford



Kathy had deadlines to meet, projects to finish, work to delegate and an entire team, in her opinion, that just didn't share her sense of urgency. "Just do it" was her motto and "Are you done yet?" was her favorite question. The people

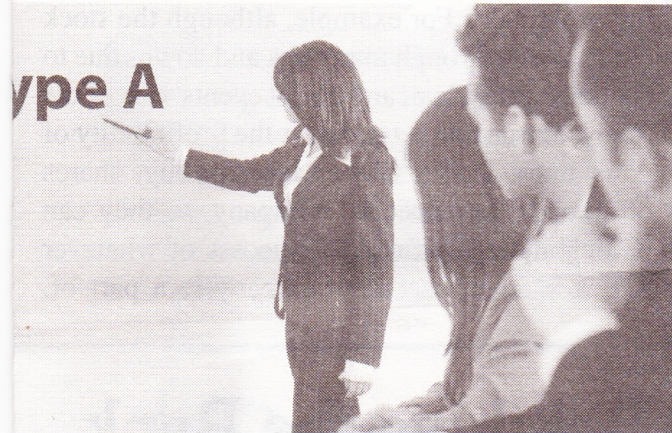
that worked with her made jokes about needing massages to handle the stress, needing to go to drink more to relax, and not having any time to have a life or breathe (sound familiar?), but they respected her and suffered through her dictator days. She was a Type A to a tee, but at what price?

If you have ever worked with a stereotypical Type A person, chances are you got things done in record time or felt the palpable stress of someone caught up in America's "Addiction to Achievement™". Yet the Type A leaders and their teams get things done. What gets left out is the people part. Under high stress, the Type A's priority is the task, getting it done, and not recognizing those who are doing it, not developing those who could do it better and not checking in with the mood of the team. This creates morale issues, attitude problems and high attrition, yet it is what we tend to recognize, value, and promote to leadership. Prevent the problems that come along with putting 80 hour a week control freaks in charge of everything by keeping one eye on the results and one eye on the people creating them. These tips will help you see both with more clarity.

Don't confuse Type A with the Only Way! Leadership is about guiding, directing and developing people, not checking items off of a list. Those who are naturally wired to nurture the skills of individuals usually do not fit the mold of a Type A leader. Watch what people that you work with do under stress. Are they cool, calm and collected or dictatorial? Do they ask for help when they need it or insist on doing it all

themselves and fail to trust that anyone could do it better? The ones that will help you succeed in the long run are the ones who share the workload, bring people with them and consider the skill level and stress level of people they lead. They are leading people instead of just doing stuff.

Appreciate those who get it right and get along. Type A's are motivated by "getting it done" and often the subtitle is "at any cost". Those who also seek to get it right, might take lon-



ger, but give you quality. Those who seek to get along with others might earn respect in the process. Would you rather have a team who is frustrated and disgruntled, all of which you will have to deal with later and longer, but got it done, or a team who gets along, is proud of the quality of their work and doesn't create a need for follow-up damage control? Learn to choose those leaders who will fit the need of the project.

REMEMBER RECOGNITION NEEDS ARE DIFFERENT

Type A leaders will often tell you they need no recognition. If you are a Type A leader you will usually assume that if you don't need recognition, neither does anyone else and nothing could be farther from the truth. Non-Type A leaders or employees will wilt without recognition, yet if you give them what they need, you will have the joy of watching them bloom. Some need public praise and a plaque. Others need a simple handshake and kind words. Give generously of recognition that others need to help them be at their best.

MAINTAIN SPLIT LEVEL MEETINGS

The boss who is not in touch with those in the levels below his or her title is a boss asking for problems. A split level meeting is one in which a Vice President might meet directly with those on the front line without middle management present. It is not the opportunity to uncover dirt, but rather a chance to learn more about the leadership at this level. A Type A will tell you all is well with his or her team when the team may feel otherwise. Learning how things really are and if there are problems may help you make simple course corrections before the ship sinks.

No one is telling you to fire all the Type A's you work with or to create mutiny of the office. However, if you fill your office with only this type of leader, you will find that firing people is the least of your troubles. They will leave due to burn out or feeling less than valued before you're able to counsel their performance. Type A's do get it done, they also often make the people around them pay a price. Perhaps the ultimate solution is to balance the leadership team with those motivated not only by getting it done, but getting along, getting it right, and getting appreciated. At least in this environment, when they leave the office at 8 o'clock, they'll come back to enjoy it again tomorrow.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monica Wofford, President of Monica Wofford International, Inc. brings more than 19 years of leadership experience to the companies she designs and delivers training for. Her specialties include Leadership, Customer Service, and Confidence training that impacts her client's bottom line and provides long lasting results. She is the author of the soon to be released "The Type A Myth", "Contagious Leadership", "Contagious Confidence," and "Contagious Customer Service" and can be reached at www.monicawofford.com or 1-(866) 382-0121