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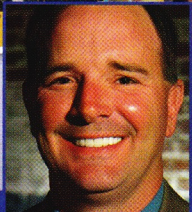
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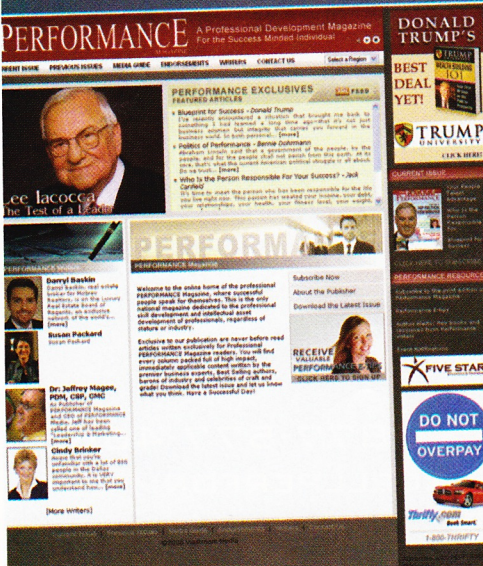
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# I Don't Have Time to Be a Leader... But I Want Better Employees!

by Monica Wofford



Cole was up all night finishing a huge project. He had a team that could have helped him, but experience had shown they lacked his sense of passion and drive. In fact, they didn't put forth near the effort he thought they should and hadn't in a while. The problem was Cole didn't have time to lead and do his own work, but he wanted his employees to perform better. Sometimes, he flat out felt too busy to care, to act interested, and to develop other people, but the frustration about their lack of effort was taking its toll and slowing him down.

How do you lead others when you're busy, ambitious and doing all you can with the time available? The simple answer is, you make time. Most people don't lead themselves well. Those who do are usually at the top of their own company. Leadership takes skill and time. However, a lack of leadership creates more problems that take far more time. Put the following simple suggestions into action and watch the people you lead become employees who stay longer, produce more and complain less. All that AND you can still get your own work done.

## Recognize Who These Employees Actually Work For

We've all heard it. The question is usually "who do you work for?" and even if it's not phrased that way, the answer is "I work for so and so." Yet the reality is we all work for ourselves. That means you ever-so-subtly rob employees of respect by calling them "my team", "my employees", or "the people who work for me". They don't work for you and they're not yours. They are instead "the people you have the privilege of working with" and "part of the team you lead". It's more words, but also more respect. How much time does it take to use a few more words?

## Make Your Expectations Known

First, this means you must have expectations. If those are missing, create those first. When do you expect employees to arrive? What do you expect them to do? How would you like to see those things done? This isn't micromanaging, it's about helping employees to perform at their best and exceed your expectations. In order to do that, they have to know what those performance guidelines and expectations are. Share them at your next meeting or one on one.

## Pay Attention to Human Nature

In almost all situations, if there are no rewards (tangible, intrinsic, or social) for doing something well and no consequences for doing something poorly, people will do whatever is easiest. This fact of human nature flies in the face of any policy you may have. Focus on how people work and then work with them. Create bigger rewards than you do punishment and reward that behavior you wish to have repeated. Big rewards, like buying your salesperson a car when she exceeds quota, have a much more powerful impact than promising to fire her if she misses the mark.

The people you work with are people. They are not drones or mere human capital on a budget line item. They deserve respect, need expectations, and operate out of human nature. Your leadership efforts can help mold them into not only better employees, but better people. It's your role as a leader to develop, rather than just demand. If you actually lead those people you with whom you work, and help them develop, there will be less work for you to do all by yourself. Plus, you might find that all they were waiting for was some time with you. It's an investment without which your company can't do well.

Whether you struggle with leading others or leading yourself, Monica Wofford, CSP can help you become better at both. As a speaker, trainer, author, coach, Wofford shares her more than 19 years of leadership experience with each client, tailoring her skills to meet your needs. Monica is the CEO of Contagious Companies, the author of Contagious Leadership, and may be reached at [www.contagiouscompanies.com](http://www.contagiouscompanies.com) or (866) 382-0121

