

MSU-ES Dawg Tracks



May, 2009 *The Seven Traits of Effective Leaders*



Although we all aren't managers, coordinators or superintendents, we all are leaders in a sense. This newsletter isn't directly about safety, but it deals with examples and leadership, two traits that everyone needs and should practice. With them good safety habits are a plus. There is an anecdote that says that we should all take particular concern on how we live each day and conduct our everyday lives. You may think that you probably don't influence someone's life, but everyone is influenced by someone else and in most cases it is a person that we are familiar with and aren't conscience of these influences.

According to the management experts, no one really knows if leaders are born with the natural traits of leadership or are they developed. Can one learn the superior leadership skills? No one really knows for sure, but the experts say that they have noticed particular actions that have been exhibited by highly effective leaders, regardless of the type of organization or mode of leadership.

These seven actions are:

- **Make others feel important** – If your goals and decisions are self-centered, employees will lose their enthusiasm quickly. Emphasize their strengths and contributions, not your own.
- **Criticize others only in private** – Public praise for an exemplary act encourages others to excel and carries over to all employees. Criticizing an employee in public (in front of other employees) embarrasses and usually alienates them against the manager. Best management skills are to get the individual in private to correct the problem. It will help you to maintain their self-esteem and will enhance yours with the individual.
- **Make a game of competition** – Use competitive goals as a tool for accomplishing your missions. Reward the individuals or groups for achieving the project goals. Critique inefficiencies and celebrate accomplishments.

You are the leader and building them up will make you a stronger manager, as they will feel that they are part of the team and will work to help you accomplish the company or project's goals.

“There is no I in teamwork.”

- **Promote a Vision** – Employees must know what you expect and have a clear vision of these goals. You have to give them the vision to know what is expected of them and keep them informed of the progress toward these goals. It's our job as a leader to keep them duly informed.
- **Follow the Golden Rule** – Treat your employees just like you want to be treated. An abusive and non-diplomatic leader attracts very few employees. Lee Iacocca, former CEO of Daimler-Chrysler, stated that the mark of a good manager or executive is one that can tell you to go to hell and you will look forward to the trip.
- **Admit Mistakes** – You can't hide your errors. Employees will sense this and either they lose respect or start to attempt to cover their own errors. Obviously, both of these are bad. When management makes a mistake and gets it corrected the employees usually maintain their respect or gain a new found respect for them.
- **Stay close to the action** – A good leader or manager will be visible in the work area. Maintain a visible presence where the work is happening. The employees will know that you are on top of the action and your presence enhances their respect and keeps you in the know. There is very little respect gained from time spent in the office or away from the action.

**SAFETY COMES IN MANY
DIFFERENT PACKAGES!
OPEN THEM WITH SAFETY IN MIND
& A BETTER DAY WILL FOLLOW!**