

TeamFirst!™

Inspiring Team Accountability for the Greater Good

If you're somewhat baffled by a pervasive dwindling of momentum from your best and your brightest, you're not alone! Over half the businesses in America struggle with reduced revenues from a lack of employee initiative.

What's more surprising to learn is that this employee perceived problem is actually generated *in response* to an organizational weakness, rather than an individual's behavioral style.

At a closer glance, you can see the cause of the problem stems from, (*and is perpetuated by*), an organization's incessant need to micromanage people and events.

Employer's would be well served by recognizing that their employees '*incentive barometer*' can be greatly influenced by the level of confidence they exude. In other words, employer's have the power to encourage *or* discourage accountability, by the manner in which they express their faith in the people who work for them.

Ideally, the spotlight needs to be focused on the *heartbeat* of *human connection*, rather than the stopwatch in *task perfection*. This "*no cost*" investment in *human capital* can be the most powerful mechanism for influencing ordinary workers to seek extraordinary opportunities for advancing themselves - *and the organization!*

What is called for here is a shift in people management. The goal is to increase the employee's confidence, while intuitively *connecting* them to a higher purpose. While it's a known fact that employees excel in performance *and* instinctively increase their desire to achieve more

when they feel valued and appreciated; a simple "*pat on the back*" (instead of negative criticism), is not the '*end all, be all*' ticket for devoted accountability.

If an organization truly wants to unleash the power of their team; they must first communicate their mission, vision and goals, with the hope of aligning their purpose to something equally valuable to their employees.

Next, the employer must provide each employee a clear understanding of what the organization is looking for in terms of the *end-result*. Once there's an understanding of what the company is striving for and what is expected from the employee, training must be addressed to help employees reach those goals. While performance training and feedback is essential here, it's the leader's confidence in the employee that strengthens commitment and follow-through.

If you are in search of obtaining a higher degree of accountability, begin to restructure your organization by:

(1) Assess individual job descriptions to ensure they specifically define the level of expectation. Setting specific expectations will ensure that you and your team function within their level of accountability.

(2) Select only those individuals who are best suited for the job at hand. If training is needed, provide it! Be sure the trainee's ego is "in check" to avoid any issues with a co-worker *or* consultant training them. Likewise, only assign competent trainers who are in the best interest of the practice. Be sure to schedule

specific training sessions *and* request periodic progress reports. This ensures advancement will not occur until certain criteria has been met.

(3) Ask each team member to report outcomes of their work, related to the expectations of their job. This information is *not* to be submitted in a subjective manner during an annual review. This is the type of process that involves a preset schedule, where facts, figures and quantifiable results are measured in direct relation to the employee's contribution.

As Einstein so eloquently communicated: *While not everything that can be counted, counts; everything that counts, should be counted!* Hence, ac[ount]ability is indeed about counting what which counts!

This vital information can be easily accessed through practice management reports provided by practice management software programs. The top seven reports should include: (1)Unscheduled Treatment Plans; (2)Broken Appointments; (3) Accounts Receivable (4)Missed Recall; (5) Pending Insurance (6) Production By Code / By Producer, and (7) Patient Value Report.

Statistical reports are the best way to provide a quick snapshot of the health of the practice. Team members who are willing to measure their own outcomes and their team's collaborative efforts, will not only control the destiny of the practice, they'll also ensure the highest compensation for their efforts by proving their worth.

The key here is to encourage individuals to proactively monitor their own performance, so they can

quantify exactly how their performance increases productivity or enhances profitability.

Information is power – and this is the type of information that can be extremely powerful during an individual's performance review.

It's time to stop putting off those dreaded reviews! Far more harm is caused through procrastination, as extended periods of time only dilute the core purpose of inspiring accountability.

Even when your team is at the level of greatness you had always hoped for, there is a sustainability factor that needs to be nurtured here.

Simply put: *individuals need to feel that their personal contribution is as important, (if not more important), than the tasks they perform.*

When an individual's role is acknowledged, they gain a sense of pride and become more passionate about the work they perform.

Confucius had this concept scripted decades ago, when he brilliantly quoted: *"Love what you do and you'll never have to work another day in your life!"*

If you want to instill passionate employment; schedule growth conferences as often as feasible, to encourage individuals to track their contributions *and* be accountable for their own outcomes.

Historically, employers put off reviews for fear of getting "hit up" for a raise. It's important to remember that everyone loses when there isn't a system in place or quantitative evaluation or self-assessment. Nine times out of ten, the employee will walk away feeling they didn't get what they deserved, when in fact the employer feels their over compensating.

Substantiating worth must be objectively tracked, not subjectively gained through popular opinion.

If your employees are truly taking ownership in the organization and they can specifically quantify how they increase profitability, they'll become more accountable for just that. Hence, employers who avoid performance reviews, could very well be holding their practice back from reaching its full potential.

The most effective performance reviews are designed to highlight the positive. Having said that, pointing the finger at deficiencies (*without acknowledging attributes*),

will only fuel anger and resentment and discourage accountability.

The goal here is to inspire individuals to greatness and encourage them to raise their *own* bar. Anything else is counter-productive.

By using this philosophy, employees are inspired to do more *without* all the prodding; particularly when they realize that there's something in it for them, (*be it a raise, or simply continued employment*).

It's time to start putting your **TeamFirst™** - *not instead* of the patient (or practice), but rather *in honor of* your patients and the practice.

When employers clarify job expectations, track individualized training, encourage quantifiable self-assessment *and* provide supportive feedback, (*without micromanaging*), they will intuitively ignite an extremely powerful payback by leveraging employee accountability.

No doubt, this inspirational tactic is one of the most effective strategies for growing a business through the *power of its people* ■



Risa Simon is a certified management consultant, national speaker and published author of *All The Right Moves* and *TeamFirst™*. As a member of the National Speakers Association, OSAP and the Institute of Management Consultants USA, Risa has earned the mark of CMC, which represents evidence of meeting the highest standards within the consulting profession. For over two decades, Risa has been coaching dental professionals on how to enhance team harmony, improve operational efficiency & safety; and increase practice profitability. For more information on Risa's powerful new book *"TeamFirst™: It's All About Connection, Not Perfection!"* and other transformational training resources, visit her website: www.simonsaysseminars.com or call 800 FON TEAM.

