

# BALANCING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

## KEEPING YOUR EMPLOYEES HAPPY AND MOTIVATED

BY JAY PERRY

**T**wo of the 12 essential behavioural characteristics of leadership we teach are “leaders are good at giving encouragement — and they are never satisfied.” These are among the toughest components of leadership and they require tremendous skills to keep in balance with the need for improvement, even when things are well in keeping spirits high on a daily basis.

What this balance entails sounds simple: tell people they have done a good job and get them excited about doing even more. Of course, you can see that if one side of the formula is not balanced properly, things will go offside quickly. What makes the process critical is the fact that from the employee's perspective, the need for acknowledgment and recognition has always been the most desired element of satisfaction — even more than money!

One of the things that a lot of leaders fear is if they praise their people, they will become complacent and think: “OK, we are great. Let's coast.” If encouragement is done inappropriately, that could be the result. The opposite can also happen: employees feel so dejected because there is no recognition of their efforts or, as one of our client's workers told us: “It doesn't seem to matter how much

we do because [the boss] always wants more.”

In other words, the leaders were good at being never satisfied, but not good at giving encouragement.

With some coaching from us, the leadership group was able to develop the right approach and improve morale and perfor-

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mance. This is where the skill set comes into play. It must be learned and practised properly in a very balanced fashion to achieve the desired results.

Think of this process like an athletic coach who speaks to the athlete about what he or she did correctly and where improvements can be made. The coach will then offer suggestions and, more important, ask questions that spark thoughts about how rise above the current performance level.

The chief characteristic of effective lead-

ership is balancing the celebration of success with motivation to improve. You can see how this could be simple or complex. A simple “thank you” can be appropriate, a big blowout barbecue might be better or a company event may be the best way to celebrate so employees feel appreciated and you create a desire for more of that type of recognition.

On the other side of the equation is how to motivate people to *want* to do better. This is where the real leadership skills are tested because you certainly do not want your message to be disheartening; rather, you want it to be optimistic and uplifting.

As a recent article by Gallup stated: “Managers play a huge role in your employees' daily experience and engagement level. Give your people the kind of leader who will lift them up. Give them a coach, not a boss.”

This is the attitude that will keep you the one who's driving. **CRM**

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