

Creative

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The Leadership Lottery

Jeremy Foster

Have you ever tried to lift something that was really heavy? You realize after you pick it up that you are probably going to pull something, but rather than do the smart thing and set it down until you have help you just go ahead and continue doing mortal damage to your body so that you won't have to ask for help.

We do this all the time. The other day I am bringing in the grocer-

ies for my wife and she has completely filled the back seat full of groceries and me, being the brilliant genius that I am, decide that I can get them all in one trip. As I get to the door, with the plastic bags leaving two-inch indentions in my arm, I begin to think of how stupid I am. At the moment of my epiphany one of the bags slips and a can of beans lands directly on my little toe, which already has a complex. I yelp in pain and dive over the threshold of the door desperately trying to get inside so that I can win some

small victory by saying I carried all the groceries with just one trip.

As leaders we often do the same thing. We try to do everything ourselves without asking anyone for help, because after all, no one can do it as good as us so why try. By keeping this method of leadership up you will soon begin to see a reduction in productivity from your team and a decrease in your personal well-being. In order to be a successful leader, manager, or CEO you have got to learn the value of building a team. I didn't say forming a team, I said



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building a team. Big difference! Often times we are experts at forming a team but we quickly steer the team into a mud hole with our poor decisions and inability to recognize individual skill sets and put them into action.

7 great ways to kill your team

1. Don't meet regularly.
2. Allow only the boisterous argumentative members to have input.
3. Discourage debate and discussion.
4. Expect but never inspect.
5. Push the team to do more than you are willing to do.
6. Say no to as much as possible.
7. Be inflexible to new ideas.

It's time for you to take a break and evaluate your efficiency. I heard about a father who was playing cops and robbers with his 3 active sons in the back yard after dinner. One of the boys "shot" his dad and yelled, "Bang! You're dead!" The dad fell dramatically to the ground. But then, he just lay there without moving. A watching neighbor ran over to see if he had been hurt in the fall. When the neighbor bent over him, the over-worked father opened one eye and said, "Shhh. Don't give me away. This is the only chance I've had to rest all day."

Sometimes it does us good to take a break and appraise our leadership skills and identify areas for improvement. Your team will only be as effective as you are. You can't attract what you are not. If you are disorganized and erratic in your approach to your particular business, the chances are much greater that your employees will be the same way. This collision of disorganization and inefficient leadership will result in poor results and a management domino effect.

Wake up and realize that you can't do it all by yourself, you must BUILD your team.

Allow your team to have input on the major decisions and be positive about their input. One thing that will kill team mentality and the unity of the workplace is negativity. I can't stand someone who is always saying, "No, it can't be done" or, "Why are we doing it that way, we've never done that before". I want someone who is going to be positive, especially in the face of adversity. I understand that every idea will not work but we can use the bad ideas and develop them into a spring-board to help us expand and test our limits.

Too many leaders have a lottery mentality when it comes to their team. They think, "One of these days I am going to have an awesome team and then we are going to get some incredible things done." Keep living in dreamland if that makes you happy but there is no such thing as the leadership lottery. Great leaders are made not born. Start work on your team right now and the benefit will be better quality, increased production, and employee satisfaction. Stop doing the things you've always done and get creative!

*Only one man
in a thousand is
a leader of
men, the other
999 follow
women.
Groucho Marx*

Ross Perot

Leadership Secrets:

"Never ask anyone to do what you haven't done before and wouldn't do again. That's a pretty fundamental rule in leadership...treat them like you treat yourself. Things you don't like, they don't like. You don't like to be jerked around, they don't either. You don't like to be talked down to, and they don't either. You would rather work with somebody than for somebody. So would they. You hate people who pound on your head after you gave everything you had and failed... It's that simple."

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