

Not everyone wants a challenging job

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If you're a manager, or specifically a job designer, be cautious about assuming that everyone wants a challenging job. Not everyone does.

In spite what the media, academicians, and social scientists say on human potential and the higher-order needs of individuals, there is no evidence to support that the vast majority of workers want challenging jobs. Some people prefer highly complex and challenging jobs while others prefer simple, routinized work.

As a leader, there's nothing wrong with creating an environment where everyone is encouraged to reach for the stars--to be the best of the best! Just know and accept that not everyone wants to reach for the stars--that some people's very best equates to their level of personal skills, effort, and motivation.

Over many years of leading and

managing, I learned that although it was extremely beneficial to have handfuls of outstanding performers, it was equally valuable to have handfuls of average performers. I was okay with some workers being content with showing up for work, doing their job, and then going home. Sometimes, that's what I wanted: people doing exactly what they were paid to do. These workers didn't want to be challenged. They didn't want to work overtime hours for extra money. They didn't care about additional rewards for going above and beyond my expectations.

Not every employee is looking for a challenging job. In fact, many people meet their higher-order needs off the job. There are 168 hours in each person's week and their work hours normally take up about 30 percent of that time. That leaves considerable opportunity, even for the hardest chargers in life, to find higher-order need satisfaction outside

the workplace.

So don't feel you have a responsibility to create challenging jobs for ALL of your employees. For many people, work is something that will never excite or challenge them nor will they expect to find their growth opportunities at work. Work is merely something they have to do to pay their bills. They find challenges in other areas of life: on the golf course, fishing, camping, at their local pub, with their friends at social clubs, with their family, and the like.

Let's face it, when it comes right down to it, if everyone is outstanding, then no one is outstanding! Right? Don't require or expect everyone to be outstanding but do let people know they can be if they want to be! Soon enough it'll be quite obvious who's stepping it up and who's walking at an even pace. As long as there aren't too many a step behind, you and your team will be just fine.

~ The End ~