

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST (www.AdviceChief.com)

There were times during my professional career when I had to rely on my handful of go-to players. Some of these times were when backs were against the wall. Other times it was simply a time crunch when a testy executive wanted things unreasonably fast. The go-to players almost always came through for me in the clutch. And when it came time for promotions, I came through for them! Few things elevate a person above his or her peers the way becoming a go-to player does.

Everyone admires go-to players and looks to them when the heat is on--not only their leaders, but also their followers and peers. Go-to players are the ones who always produce regardless of the hurdle, obstacle, situation, or condition. Here are six common occasions when go-to players produce:

1) *Go-to players produce when the pressure is on.* There are many different kinds of people in the workplace, and you can measure them according to what they do for the organization. If they never deliver, they're detrimental. If they sometimes deliver, they're average. If they always deliver when they're in their comfort zone, they're valuable. If they always deliver regardless of the situation, they're invaluable. The invaluable ones are your go-to players--the ones who find a way to make things happen no matter what. They don't have to be in familiar surroundings. They don't have to be in their comfort zones. The circumstances don't have to be fair or favorable. The pressure doesn't hinder them either. In fact, if anything, the more pressure there is, the better they like it. They always produce when the heat is on.

2) *Go-to players produce when resources are few.* They find creative

ways to obtain necessities or they extend the life of the resources they have. When little or no funds are available, they beg, borrow or acquire what they need. They figure it out.

3) *Go-to players produce when momentum is low.* Organizations have only three kinds of people when it comes to momentum. There are momentum breakers--people who sabotage the leader or organization and actually sap momentum as a result. These people have terrible attitudes and represent the bottom 10 percent of the organization. (Some leaders in some corporations actually fire these people at the end of the year.)

The second group is comprised of the momentum takers--people who merely take things as they come. They neither create nor diminish momentum; they simply flow with it. These people represent the middle 80 percent.

The final group is the momentum makers--the people who move things forward and create momentum. These are the leaders in the organization and comprise the top 10 percent. These momentum makers make progress. They overcome obstacles. They help move others along. They actually create energy in the organization when the rest of the team is feeling tired or discouraged.

4) *Go-to players produce when the load is heavy.* Good employees always have the desire to be helpful to their leaders. They have the ability to carry a heavy load anytime their leader needs it. And not only when theirs is light, but when their leader's is heavy. The keys to becoming this kind of player are availability and responsibility. Being a heavy load lifter is really an attitude issue, not a position issue. If you have the willingness and capacity to lift the load of your leaders when they need it,

you will have influence with them.

5) *Go-to players produce when the leader is absent.* The greatest opportunity for a leader in the middle of the organization to distinguish themselves is when a higher leader is absent. It is at those times that a leadership vacuum exists, and leaders can rise up to fill it. Although it is true in most instances that when leaders know they will be absent, they usually designate another leader to stand in for them. But even then, there are still opportunities for people to step up, take responsibility, and shine.

6) *Go-to players produce when time is limited.* There's a sign I once saw at a business location called "The 57 Rules to Deliver the Goods." Beneath the title it read: "Rule 1: Deliver the Goods. Rule 2: The Other 56 Don't Matter." That's the philosophy of go-to players. They deliver no matter how tough the situation is. When there is little time to spare, go-to players know to how prioritize the important and urgent things and how to deflect what is not urgent and not important.

One thing a go-to player is not is a do-everything player! If you're a boss and handing everything, to include your own responsibilities, to a go-to player, you're not a good boss. Good bosses know what the real important and urgent issues are and they know when people's plates are full. And if you are a go-to player being treated like a do-everything player, then don't do everything! Don't fill your plate unnecessarily because you're afraid to say no or can't properly delegate.

Being a go-to player takes effort and courage, not just desire. If you're tired of swimming next to the same fish, carve out a path through the currents that will propel you to the front!

~ The End ~