



# Dear Chief

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COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I’m a team leader at an assembly plant that produces shoe and gift boxes for retail stores. I take a lot of heat sometimes because my workers don’t act “enthused” whenever corporate leaders or visitor parades tour through their work areas. I’ve also been told that my people aren’t performing to their potential. This is frustrating because they have been thoroughly trained on what to do and how to do it. Any ideas on how I can get them to step it up a little and show some enthusiasm?

LOOKING FOR PRIDE



DEAR LOOKING FOR PRIDE: Knowing what to do and how to do it are important, but always start with “why” when introducing people to performance activities. When people know why they do something, there’s a greater chance they’ll have more pride and be more enthused about it.

And why is what they do really important? For real! Don’t paint some pipe dream phrase or fabrication. They should know the answers to “why” and be capable of telling others about it as well. They must know their mission and vision statements. They must know why their roles as individuals, and within

# Always start with “why”

teams, are vital in accomplishing the mission. They must know and believe their abilities benefit the organization, customers, clients, society, and/or the world. And you, as the leader, need to be telling them “why” all the time. Reiterate how important they are and how important what they do is in the grand scheme of things or the big picture. They need to believe in their hearts they are making a difference for the organization or company and all with whom it serves or for which it provides.

According to Ferdinand F. Fournies, a work performance coach, there are four common reasons people do not perform the way they should:

- 1) They do not know WHAT they are supposed to do.
- 2) They do not know HOW to do it.
- 3) They do not know WHY they should do it.
- 4) There are obstacles beyond their control.

It appears you have the first two covered and now you know why #3 is important. But how are you dealing with #4? Are you helping to eliminate obstacles in their path? Are you talking with, explaining, suggesting, or giving advice to your bosses about ways to eliminate obstacles hindering your people? If not, this lack of support for

your people could be a contributing factor in them not performing to their potential. For instance, are they comfortable at their work stations? If not, why? Maybe you need to budget for necessary comfort items like cushioned shoes to prevent sore backs, ergonomic chairs for better sitting posture, or safety sun glasses to cut down on glaring lights, among other things.

Additionally, be engaged with your people in a periodic feedback system so they know what you expect and whether or not they are meeting your expectations. If they’re not, they need to know how to improve so they can perform to their potential.

Lastly, when they meet or exceed your expectations, reward them with something they value, whether it’s a day off, small bonus, or maybe even a complimentary dinner somewhere with a significant other. By taking care of your people, they in turn, will take care of you and enthusiastically perform to their potential.



*For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to [www.DearChiefAdvice.com](http://www.DearChiefAdvice.com) and submit your comments or email them to [Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com](mailto:Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com).*