

## **Four Steps To Managing Anyone:**

### *Motivation and Communication to Get the Job Done*

by Mimi Donaldson

Managing means getting results through people. We do this in many different settings from workplace to household. If you are alive, you have already been a manager. You've managed delivery people, repair people, pets, children, in-laws, spouses and more.

One myth is that you need to throw money at people to motivate hard work and loyalty. Not entirely true. Management has less to do with charisma than with consistency. Managers depend on effective interpersonal communication skills to get things done.

### **Empower And Motivate**

Many of you are called "boss." To avoid "boss" becoming another four-letter word, follow these four steps:

**Step 1: Tell the person clearly what you expect them to do.** Easier said than done. In management training environments, this is called "delegation." My definition of "delegate" is to empower and motivate a person to accomplish results for which you are ultimately responsible. Delegation includes these guidelines: choose a person capable of doing the job; explain the result you want; give the authority to get it done; monitor the activity; give recognition or praise along the way.

Set the climate. Be sure you're in a place conducive to concentration at a time when the person can concentrate. Listen to your words as you set the tone. Over the years, I've heard many a harried manager unwittingly say, "Now this is a simple, mindless task ... that's why I'm giving it to you." Not very motivating.

- Give the big picture. Describe the overall objectives. People need to see where their part fits into the whole to feel part of the loftier goal.
- Describe steps of the task. This is the meat of the delegation discussion. Sometimes these are already printed in an instruction or procedures manual. You still need to go over these steps, however briefly, with the capable person to assure yourself of the person's understanding. If the steps are not already written out, have the person take notes as you speak. This increases understanding.
- Cite resources available: Point out where there are other references, if any, on the task. Resources include people who have done the task or parts of it before.
- Invite questions. Even if it feels as if you don't have time to do this, it's worth it. Better to spend the time up front than be unhappily surprised later. Invite questions with open-ended

prompting such as, “What questions do you have?” not “You don’t have any questions, do you?”

- Get the person to summarize what they will do to get the job done. This takes some courage on your part; you risk being answered with a defensive “Do you think I’m stupid?” I use this sentence: “Call me compulsive — I need to have you summarize how you will get this done.” When you take responsibility, you reduce defensiveness in the other person.
- Agree on a date for follow-up. How soon will depend on the complexity and value of task. You may need time and practice to develop the fine art of follow-up without hovering.

## **Is It On The Test?**

**Step 2. Give them a reason to do the task. This is the fine art of motivating. Motivating people is impossible ... they have to motivate themselves. There must be something in it for them.**

Remember when you were in third grade, sitting at a little desk in class, listening to the teacher. He or she was droning on and on, boring you to sleep. Suddenly, an obnoxious kid in the back row yelled out, “Hey, teacher, is this gonna be on the test?” You were so embarrassed to hear someone actually ask that question. But you listened very carefully to the answer. If the answer was “no,” your reaction was probably to relax — it’s not on the test. But if the teacher said, “yes,” you straightened up, borrowed a pencil, started taking notes — it’s on the test. Ever since then, we have done only what we perceive is on our test.

To motivate people, you’ve got to find out what’s on their individual test. Then put your priority squarely on their test.

## **Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is**

**Step 3. Give the person the tools and resources they need to do the job.** This requirement can range from a desk and pencils to on-the-job training and enough time to get it done. This is the “put-your-money-where-your-mouth-is” step. Teamwork among individuals of varied backgrounds, experience and human interactive skills does not just magically happen. If managers want people to be productive and happy, they must put time and effort into training themselves and their people in technical skills and communication skills.

**Step 4. Give feedback. All people, when accomplishing a task, want to know how they’re doing. Even your “stars.”**

There are two types of feedback: positive and corrective. Here are four tips for each:

### ***Positive feedback:***

Make it succinct, specific and sincere.

Stick to praise only; don’t use it as an introduction to another discussion.

Tell them why their accomplishment is important to you and others.

Don’t be surprised if the person is embarrassed or suspicious. This may mean they’re not accustomed to praise and need more of it.

### ***Corrective feedback:***

Never attack the person. Attack the problem, whether it's job performance such as inaccuracy, or a work habit such as lateness.

Keep calm. It's a problem-solving mode you are seeking.

Be prepared to tell the consequences if the problem continues — and be prepared to carry them out.

Don't be surprised if the person reacts with hostility. Even if you're being calm and objective, some people tend to take this discussion quite personally.

It takes practice and, quite often, some training and acquiring of new skills to carry out these four steps to managing. But stick with it; managing people and empowering them to accomplish things, makes a difference in their lives ... and yours.