

The 7 poison bowls that kill the passion to lead ... and follow! (Cont'd)

Last month we reflected on the three poisonous bowls of Criticism, Contempt and Deferred Hope and how they sapped the energy and will to lead others, as well as ruined the morale and confidence of followers. This month we consider Absent Recognition, and Excessive Stress.

Absent Recognition

Gostick and Elton co-authors of *The Carrot Principle* {ISBN-13:978-1-4165-4417-3} demonstrate through their research and consulting in over 20 countries and involving almost a million people, that the evidence of "the power of recognition to improve not only morale but the business in general" (page 7) is unmistakable. Absent Recognition is like a car all packed up and ready to go, the engine may even be on, but without the accelerator (providing the fuel of acknowledgement, gratitude and appreciation for efforts made and work well done), the vehicle remains sluggish even stationary and certainly achieves nothing of what it is capable.

Could the above be the possible situation of some, or all your employees? In large companies it is simply impractical for the CEO to be applying the grease of appreciation to every moving cog, but he needs to make sure that everyone holding a position of responsibility is applying recognition. Charles M. Schwab was hired by Andrew Carnegie to help in the administration of his far-flung steel empire that Carnegie eventually sold in 1901 to JP Morgan for US\$480million. Schwab was the first man in American history to earn a salary of over a million dollars a year. Schwab attributed his earnings not to his knowledge of the steel business, but to his ability to inspire and motivate people.

The quantifiable improvements in ROE, ROA and operating profit margins for organisations "that recognise and appreciate excellence" in a personal and tangible manner is some 200% higher than organisations which have a history of no or little recognition. Makes you think! Makes you want to value, cherish and recognise those folk on the factory floor and in the back office!

Excessive Stress

Space does not allow us to do justice to the demeaning effects of on-going excessive stress, so we simply highlight its significant producers. High on the list of stress creators are unresolved conflicts; embarrassment and guilt about past mistakes; unspecified or unrealistic expectations of staff; and confusing busyness with productivity. Some suggestions for their resolution might involve:

- Unresolved conflicts create tension, dis-ease and uncertainty. Go and sit down with the other party over coffee or lunch and resolve the problem!
- Past failures have a way of raising their heads to embarrass and undermine our confidence. There is no future in yesterday and one can do little more than apologize and try to rectify what was done incorrectly, and then move into the future with a determination to more than excel.
- Nothing is quite so debilitating as not knowing what others expect of you. Such undefined expectations are like playing football with no boundary lines or goal posts! How will I know when I have finished the task? Don't even try to start the work, until you ask the simple question "how will you define my work as 'being done well'."
- Busyness may create the impression of hard work and much activity, but if the results are not being achieved and the work is not being completed on time and according to specification, disquiet occupies the heart of the nonperformer. Find out from seniors or peers where you are going wrong, where you are missing things so that the energy of effort can result in the tranquility of accomplishment.

Until next month Yebo!

If leadership development is important to your company we have a training and development program that may be of some assistance to you.

