

# AWARENESS IS POWER®

## Insights for Business

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BAYLEY & BENDER, INC  
SUCCESS THROUGH INSIGHT!

### *Helping Your Best Employees Grow*

In our previous issue, we discussed how providing a positive experience for your employees is the best way in which to increase retention within your team, your department, or your company. In this article, we're going to address a specific way you can provide that experience, and it involves giving your best employees the proper amount of attention.

This is important for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, it's human nature to not pay enough attention to your best employees and top performers. Why is that? Because they're usually self-motivated go-getters who need no prompting or anyone looking over their shoulder. As a result, managers don't feel the need to interact with them as much, or to "check up on them," if you will. This gives the manager more flexibility and more freedom to tackle other issues. After all, there never seems to be enough time to get things done.

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*Are You Helping Your Best Employees Become Successful?*

### *Job Benchmarking and Candidate Assessments – What's the Deal?*

The use of job benchmarking and job candidate assessments has grown in recent years. What are they, and why should you care?

Job benchmarking is the process of characterizing what behavioral style, motivators, and talents a job calls for. Job benchmarking allows us to "let the job talk", and identify what the ideal candidate looks like. Candidate assessment is the flip side of the job benchmark. The candidate assessment

looks at the behavioral style, motivators, and talents of an individual. There is a third component that links the other two – the gap analysis – that makes clear those areas where the candidate is not a good fit for a job. Viewed another way, the gap analysis shows where the job is not a good fit for a candidate.

Why use assessments? Studies show that a good fit between a candidate and a job is a key factor in job satisfaction, productivity, and retention. Nobody likes getting turned down for a job, but ultimately making sure a person is a good fit for a job is a win-win proposition.

From an employer's perspective the cost of employee turnover is calculated at between three and five times the person's annual salary. It is a hidden cost of doing business, and one that is easily avoided.

From an employee's perspective, if you are in the right job, you will be happier, less stressed and more productive.

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If you have a select number of employees who are high achievers, people who need a minimum of supervision, it only makes sense to leave them be and let them do their jobs, right? To a certain degree, that's correct, but if that philosophy is taken too far, it can prove disastrous in terms of retention.

### **The 20-60-20 rule**

For superstar employees, a positive experience with the company includes the opportunity for professional growth.

If they don't believe that they're growing in their current position and that they're working toward something bigger and better, then they're going to think about leaving. Even if they like everything else about their job – including their boss – feeling as though there's nowhere to grow will prompt them to begin contemplating whether or not the grass is really greener on the other side.



With that in mind, here's a practical strategy for solving two problems at once. Let's say that your team or department adheres to the standard 20-80-20 rule, meaning that 20% of your employees are superstars, 60% are competent but not spectacular, and another 20% are bringing up the rear. Instead of spending precious time and energy attempting to motivate the bottom 20%, cut them loose and upgrade their positions by replacing them with star candidates.

By doing that, you've already increased the overall quality of your team. In addition, you've created extra time for yourself, since you don't have to devote it to your underachievers. You can now take that time and put it to better use. For example, you can focus on your top 20% and discover what their professional needs and career goals are.

### **Involve yourself now**

*Continued on next column –*

This may sound a bit simplistic, but the best way in which to do this is by asking them. Not in casual conversation, of course, but behind closed doors during a formal meeting.

It shouldn't be an intensive, pressure-packed meeting, though. It should be one that fully engages employees and makes them feel comfortable enough to broach topics they might not bring up themselves.

Below is a loose blueprint for how you should conduct this meeting.



- Ask what their expectations are for their employment with the company. This type of open-ended question may prompt a response you didn't expect, but that's information you need to know.
- Ask what their career goals and objectives are.
- Ask what the company can do in order to help them achieve their goals.
- Begin to formulate a concrete plan based upon their responses to the above questions.
- Plan to meet on a consistent basis in the future in order to gauge progress and set additional goals.

Star employees think about their career ambitions all the time. It's in their nature. So if that's the case, then it makes sense to be part of their thought process and to be involved in their plans for the future. If you don't make sure that your company is involved now, you increase the chances that it won't be involved down the road.

For more information contact Bayley & Bender at 301-439-8317.

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*The secret of joy in work is contained in one word - excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.*

– Pearl S. Buck

*If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right.*

– Henry Ford

Continued from page one – *Benchmarking*

If you are in the wrong job, your performance won't be as good, and you will end up leaving the job, or being asked to leave.

The engine behind this whole process is the assessment tool. Most assessment tools have an origin in human development theory, but the good ones have been validated in the real world and have an amazing degree of accuracy and utility.

#### An assessment is:

- ✓ A great source of insight into a person's behavioral style, motivators, and talents
- ✓ An excellent way to "let the job talk"
- ✓ A useful tool to coach an individual, or to assist an individual in guiding and directing their own personal development
- ✓ An integral part of candidate screening and a complement to a resume, work references, and job interview

#### An assessment is NOT:

- ✓ An IQ test
- ✓ A test of job-related skills and knowledge
- ✓ The only criteria used in determining the fit between a candidate and a job
- ✓ A substitute for a resume, work references, and job interview

Assessments are great tools. However, like all tools, they are only as effective as the people using them. In looking at assessment tools as either an employer or employee, work with someone who knows how to use and interpret the assessment in an effective way. If your reaction to an assessment is "NO way!" and not "Aha!" seek a second opinion. Ask your spouse, co-worker, peers, etc... read your assessment and get their opinion. You may be surprised!

*Our perceptions of our self are often different than how others perceive us.*

Adapted with permission from David E. Smith, Performance Dynamics Systems.

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### PILLARS OF SUCCESS

It's no secret that success is something everyone wants. The process can be a mystery and *Pillars Of Success* is a book all about revealing success secrets of several of the most prosperous people in business today.

Contributing author Pat Bender has an **Awareness Is Power®** process. "The more aware you are," she says, "the more aware you'll become."

You will learn what Pat says are three important things leaders and successful people have in common.



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# ONE MINUTE IDEAS

### Contribute In Meetings

Do some of your employees contribute more at staff meetings, while quieter members hold back?

To achieve more balance, inform staffers in advance that you'll be directing specific questions to them.

Once you've given quieter employees fair warning, call on them.



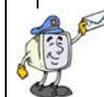
### Games People Play

You can crack down on computer game playing in your office and still maintain morale.

Set up "games-only" computers in the lounge or lunchroom for staff members to use on their own time, during breaks and at lunch time.

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## Employment Laws You Should Know

**Adverse Employment Action** is any action taken by an employer that negatively affects an employee's job, for example, demotion, firing, discipline or failure to promote. In most employment discrimination cases, the employee will have to prove that the employer took some sort of adverse employment action in order to win.

**Affirmative Action** includes efforts by employers to remedy past discrimination in the workplace or an industry by making a special effort to hire women or members of certain minority groups. Most private employers are not required to conduct affirmative action, and in fact, may violate the law by doing so. Government employers and contractors, in contrast, are often required by law to institute affirmative action programs.

**Bona Fide Occupational Qualification ("BFOQ")** is a job requirement, such as a specified age or sex, or the ability to lift a certain weight, that is potentially illegal because it excludes a protected class of people, but which is proven to be in good faith and legal under the circumstances. The successful use of a BFOQ defense is rare.

Contact your legal representative for more information and/or clarification.

*I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen.*

— Frank Lloyd Wright



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## How To Run An Excuse-Free Office

Is excuse-making a problem in your office? Excuses are really just defense mechanisms because employees fear blame, embarrassment, reprimands, and firings. As a manager, it is your job to turn mistake-making into a learning experience for your employees. Here are some suggestions to help you reduce the amount of excuse-making that goes on under your command:

- **Make sure your employees know your expectations.** Clarify tasks and assignments that will be each employee's responsibility. Explain how what the employee is doing fits into the bigger picture. This is often an oversight in many businesses and detaches the worker from feeling like he is performing meaningful work.
- **Help the employee anticipate possible problems and how she will handle them.**
- **Make sure the employee knows where to go for help.**
- **After the task has been completed, discuss it.** Was it a success or a failure? Did the employee meet expectations?
- **Discuss with the employee what he or she learned from the work.**
- **Discuss with the employee what he or she could have done differently** or more effectively during the course of the work.
- **Praise the employee when applicable.**



Adapted with permission from *Nations' Business* and *First Draft*

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