

Improvement Initiatives

"Change – for the better!"

One-minute Management

"Wipe your feet, Shut the Door, Turn that light off ... How was your day?" – My Father

FREE NEWSLETTER

February 2011

10 Simple People Skills *by Martin Haworth*

Getting the best from your people is vital if you are to make the best progress in your business or organization. Much comes from the way you interact personally and here are just ten key actions to take to build great, fulfilling and productive relationships...

This might be a bit of a no-brainer for you.

If you have any role at all in managing people, you need to ensure that you develop great people skills.

By building rapport, you will develop ongoing, productive relationships with all of your people, which will give you an enormous return on the efforts you put in.

Here are ten things you can do, all of them easy, which will remarkably change the response you get from your people, the key asset you have in your business or organization:-

1. **Just Have Conversations** About anything! Talking to and more importantly, listening to your people regularly and informally is a great asset. It doesn't matter what it's about, your understanding of them and their trust in you will magnify if you devote priority time to this each and every day.

2. **Listen & Show you are Listening** Take the time to really listen to each of your people, rather than just tell. If you truly hear, they will respond. Hearing is more - it is about what you do with the stuff you've listened to. And by using your face, your body language, eye contact and what you say (see 3 below), you will go a long way to showing that you are listening closely.
3. **Ask Another Question** Such a simple tactic. Ask secondary questions about what you've been told. Nothing, but nothing builds rapport and relationships like this. It shows that what they have been telling you is valuable, is interesting and builds their confidence. And you have been there to make that happen.
4. **Support** Your people need you to help them along the way. With your support, they will flower and grow. Support is what they hear from you - it works both ways.

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BOSTON — These 3 Management Tips offers quick, practical ideas from Harvard Business Review and HBR.org (<http://www.hbr.org>).

"There are countless distractions, threats, and roadblocks to getting work done. Good bosses take pride in shielding their people from these annoyances. Here are three ways you can help your employees focus on what matters:

1. **Show up on time.** One of the biggest detractors from work is wasted time. This might be time your people spend waiting for you to show up to meetings or to give needed direction. Being important doesn't give you permission to impede [productivity](#).
2. **Stop the intrusions.** Set aside time when your employees can think and work, and not be expected to respond right away to voicemail and email.
3. **Let them have good fights.** Don't avoid conflict. Make your people feel [safe](#) enough to speak their minds, even to you, so they have productive and creative disagreements."

- Adapted from "The Boss as Human Shield" by Robert I. Sutton.

5. **Coach** Don't get bogged down with technicalities. Coaching is about helping them see where they want to get to from where they are now. It's about exploring the possibilities - their possibilities, not yours and calling to action. Simple as that.
6. **Clear Expectations** By ensuring that all your people know exactly what you expect of them, they will tune in to delivering it. Confusion over performance is demoralizing and saps energy. Take the time to be clear.
7. **Pay attention** In any conversation with your people, take the time to give your full attention. Do your utmost to avoid being interrupted or distracted and truly value them for what they are saying to you - or the message you are giving them.
8. **Show an Interest in Them** These are real people and if you delve a little, it will show up. Having a real interest in who they are, their hopes and fears, their passions and what's important to them makes a big, big difference to how they perceive you. Get to know the name of their dog, if their dog is their most prized possession!
9. **Follow Through** During conversations you may offer actions that will be of value to them. Responses to what they have said to you. Make sure that you deliver these. Follow up and report back. Take actions you say you will. If you can't, tell them why.
10. **Remember Conversations** When you have subsequent conversations, recall something that was said previously and bring it up. This is hugely rewarding for them and lets them know that they said something of value.

Great managers really understand their people and work out ways to get the best out of every one of them.

Maximizing value from the most valuable asset you have in your business. Your people!

Learn more at: <http://www.leadersdirect.com/>

Take a MINUTE for SAFETY !

Your workplace can beat the odds with some simple safety planning and know-how. Brush up now with some basic and important free workplace safety tips.

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www.mountainstate.edu

[Work Safety Posters](#) - Enable a Proactive Work Environment With Cost-Effective HR Solutions.
www.business.com

Each year, safety issues or emergencies in the workplace cause physical injuries, illnesses, extra financial expenses, and even fatalities to businesses. The statistics from [The Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) show that in 2005 there were 1,234,680 cases of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses in major industries. That's a huge amount; especially when you note that these results only tabulate certain industries, and no fatalities are included in these statistics.



The 4 D's of Time Management ...

To truly manage your time effectively you have to look at the tasks that need doing and decide how to handle them.

This is where the 4 Ds of time management come in. They are:

* **Do it** - Get it done, the sooner the better.

* **Delegate it** - It needs to be done, but someone else can take care of it.

* **Dump it** - Anything that is unimportant now and in the future.

* **Defer it** - This needs doing but not now, so it can wait.

Most, if not all, of the tasks and activities day can be put into these categories.

Top Management Involvement: Perception and Reality by [George Phelps](#)

There is a standard gospel in almost all literature concerning change projects of all sorts that says "get top management support" as the magic bullet that will ensure project success.

The reality on the ground is that top management gets involved in projects like lean for a number of reasons. If they come from an organization where lean is a way of life or if a lean project has been a successful game changer for them in the past, then they may very well get out in front and stay there. (Though they may be a bit more hands-on than the lean leader may feel comfortable with.) But often their motive is - because they read about it in a book or heard a persuasive presentation.

Unfortunately, top management are often drawn to lean projects as a way to "get something for almost nothing"—no need for pricy software, just eliminate and simplify, get rid of waste. The emphasis is on what can be gotten rid of or not invested in—just move a few machines around into a cell and hold a few kaizen events, and do a little shop cleanup and call it 5S. The enormous mind set change and the high level of discipline required to make lean succeed is ignored.

If a lean initiative is successful, there will be no problem getting top management to show up on the podium. If it fails, you will stand there alone. That is human nature, but it is also comes from the nature of top management (at the "C" level). At any point in time, they are working on many fronts—operational, financial, public relations. As important as your lean project is, it is almost never the center of their universe as it is for you. Also, your team is centered internally—within your four walls; top management is focused both internally and externally. In a place where perception can be as important as reality.



There's more to Lean than meets the eye!

You can legitimately expect top management to do the following—provide people and financial resources, and make it clear to the organization that the lean project is important not just to the organization, but to him or her personally so you can get active support from middle management and foot soldiers.

People are very adept at distinguishing between corporate campaigns that top management really cares about and those that are for show. For important campaigns, people understand there will be real consequences for either success or failure. If they believe the project is important to top management, then they make another calculation—is this project likely to succeed. If they think a project is seen as important and likely to succeed, savvy managers will crowd the room to get involved. If they read the project as important to top management, but likely to fail, they will get as far away from it as possible in order not to be hit by debris when it falls.

Your task as project manager is to convince top management that the project is a winner that will improve the things he cares about—profit, cost reduction, etc.,--whatever his 'bosses' ultimately judge and reward him for. Your other task is to convince the foot soldiers that the project is important to top management and a winner.

The man or woman in the corner office is not going to do that for you.

FIGHTING THE WAR ON WASTE EVERYDAY

Here's a free Lean Radio Show!



The Lean Nation is on every TUESDAY!

Karl Wadenstein, president of Rhode Island's VibeCo. Industries

hosts ...

“The Lean Nation”

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/K-Dubs-Lean-Nation-Radio-Show/205913446176>

Read more: [The World's First Lean Radio Show? — Lean Blog](#)

<http://www.leanblog.org/2009/11/worlds-first-lean-radio-show/#ixzz130rNJRv9>

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Off the Page...

What America Doesn't Make Anymore

Posted Nov 04, 2010 08:00am EDT by Anika Anand and Gus Lubin in [Investing](#), [Products and Trends](#), [Recession](#) Provided by [the Business Insider](#) November 1, 2010:

Another American icon has bit the dust: Pontiac.

GM is canceling the 84-year-old brand after winding down production over the past few years. Like other American automakers, it is restructuring and rebranding to compete with foreign companies.

Pontiac joins a long list of iconic products that aren't made anywhere in America.

Meanwhile, plenty of beer is still made here, but many of America's most-iconic beer brands, including Miller, Coors, and Budweiser, are owned by foreign companies. In 2008, Anheuser-Busch, the St. Louis-based company that has a nearly 50 percent market share in the U.S., was sold to InBev, a Belgium-based conglomerate run by Brazilian executives.

Here are 19 Iconic Products That America Doesn't Make Anymore:

Rawlings baseballs

Last production date: 1969

Rawlings is the official supplier of baseballs to Major League Baseball. The St. Louis shop was founded in 1887 by George and Alfred Rawlings. In 1969 the brothers moved the baseball-manufacturing plant from Puerto Rico to Haiti and then later to Costa Rica.

Gerber baby food

Last production date: 1994

Gerber was founded in Michigan in 1927 by the owner of the Fremont Canning Company. The brand grew in popularity and in 1994 merged with Novartis, a Swiss pharmaceutical company. Then in 2007, Gerber was bought by Switzerland's Nestle, the world's largest food company. Today the brand has more than 80% of the American baby food market and the largest supplier of baby products in the world.

Ever since the merger with Novartis, all Gerber products have been manufactured overseas.

Etch a Sketch

Last production date: 2000

Etch A Sketch, an iconic American toy since the 1960s, used to be produced in Bryan, Ohio, a small town of 8,000. Then in Dec. 2000, toymaker Ohio Art decided to move production to Shenzhen, China.

Converse shoes

Last production date: 2001

Marquis M. Converse opened Converse Rubber Shoe Company in Massachusetts in 1908. Chuck Taylors– named after All American high school basketball player Chuck Taylor– began selling in 1918 as the shoe eventually produced an industry record of over 550 million pairs by 1997. But in 2001 sales were on the decline and the U.S. factory closed. Now Chuck Taylors are made in Indonesia.

Stainless steel rebar

Last production date: circa 2001

Many forms of this basic steel product are not available domestically. Multiple waivers to the Buy America Act have allowed purchase of rebar internationally.

Note: The Buy America Act requires government mass transportation spending to use American products.

*Dress shirts**

Last production date: Oct. 2002

The last major shirt factory in America closed in October 2002, according to NYT. C.F. Hathaway's Maine factory had been producing shirts since 1837.

**We know there are other shirt manufacturers in America. They do not produce in large quantities or supply major brands.*

Mattel toys

Last production date: 2002

The largest toy company in the world closed their last American factory in 2002. Mattel, headquartered in California, produces 65 percent of their products in China as of August 2007.

Minivans

Last production date: circa 2003

A waiver to the Buy America Act permitted an American producer of wheel-chair accessible minivans to purchase Canadian chassis for use in government contracts, because no chassis were available from the United States. The waiver specified: "General Motors and Chrysler minivan chassis, including those used on the Chevrolet Uplander, Pontiac Montana, Buick Terraza, Saturn Relay, Chrysler Town & Country, and Dodge Grand Caravan, are no longer manufactured in the United States."

Note: The Buy America Act requires government mass transportation spending to use American products.

Vending machines

Last production date: circa 2003

You know that thing you put bills into on a vending machine? It isn't made in America, according to a waiver to the Buy America Act. Neither is the coin dispenser, according to this federal waiver.

Note: The Buy America Act requires government mass transportation spending to use American products.

Levi jeans

Last production date: Dec. 2003

Levi Strauss & Co. shut down all its American operations and outsourced production to Latin America and Asia in Dec. 2003. The company's denim products have been an iconic American product for 150 years.

Radio Flyer's Red Wagon

Last production date: March 2004

The little red wagon has been an iconic image of America for years. But once Radio Flyer decided its Chicago plant was too expensive, it began producing most products, including the red wagon, in China.

Televisions

Last production date: Oct. 2004

Five Rivers Electronic Innovations was the last American owned TV color maker in the US. The Tennessee company used LCoS (liquid crystal on silicon) technology to produce televisions for Philips Electronics. But after Philips decided to stop selling TVs with LCoS, Five Rivers eventually filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in Oct. 2004. As part of its reorganization plan, the company stopped manufacturing TVs. Now there are ZERO televisions made in America, according to Business Week.

Cell phones

Last production date: circa 2007

Of the 1.2 billion cell phones sold worldwide in 2008, NOT ONE was made in America, according to Manufacturing & Technology publisher Richard McCormick.

After studying the websites of cell phone companies, we could not identify a single phone that was not manufactured primarily overseas.

Railroads (parts including manganese turnout castings, U69 guard bars, LV braces and weld kits)

Last production date: circa 2008

Here's another standout from dozens of waivers to the Buy America Act: railroad turnouts and weld kits.

Manganese turnout castings are used to widen railroad tracks, and they were used to build our once-great railroad system. U69 guard bars, LV braces and Weld Kits, along with 22 mm Industrial steel chain are basic items that were certifiably not available in the US.

Note: The Buy America Act requires government mass transportation spending to use American products.

Dell computers

Last production date: Jan. 2010

In January 2010, Dell closed its North Carolina PC factory, its last large U.S. plant. Analysts said Dell would be outsourcing work to Asian manufacturers in an attempt to catch up with the rest of the industry, said analyst Ashok Kumar.

Canned sardines

Last production date: April 2010

Stinson Seafood plant, the last sardine cannery in Maine and the U.S., shut down in April. The first U.S. sardine cannery opened in Maine in 1875, but since the demand for the small, oily fish declined, more canneries closed shop.

Pontiac cars

Last production date: May 2010

The last Pontiac was produced last May. The brand was formally killed on Halloween, as GM contracts Pontiac dealerships expired.

The 84-year-old GM brand was famous for muscle cars.

Forks, spoons, and knives

Last production date: June 2010

The last flatware factory in the US closed last summer. Sherrill Manufacturing bought Oneida Ltd. in 2005, but shut down its fork & knife operations due to the tough economy. CEO Greg Owens says his company may resume production "when the general economic climate improves and as Sherrill Manufacturing is able to put itself back on its feet and recapitalize and regroup."

Incandescent light bulb

Last production date: Sept. 2010

The incandescent light bulb (invented by Thomas Edison) has been phased out.

Our last major factory that made incandescent light bulbs closed in September 2010.

In 2007, Congress passed a measure that will ban incandescents by 2014, prompting GE to close its domestic factory.

Note: A reader pointed out that the Osram/Sylvania Plant in St. Mary's, Penn. is still producing light bulbs to fill old and international contracts. However, the plant has announced plans to wind down incandescent production.