

**Getting
Extraordinary
Results**

STAFF EDUCATION TRACK

from Ordinary People!

Presented
by
Tom Shay

Getting *Extraordinary* Results from Ordinary People

1. Reviewing the old standards of hiring and "training"
2. One dozen questions to ask yourself as you assign work and want to get extraordinary results from ordinary people:

Do they know *why* they should do it?

Do they know *how* to do it?

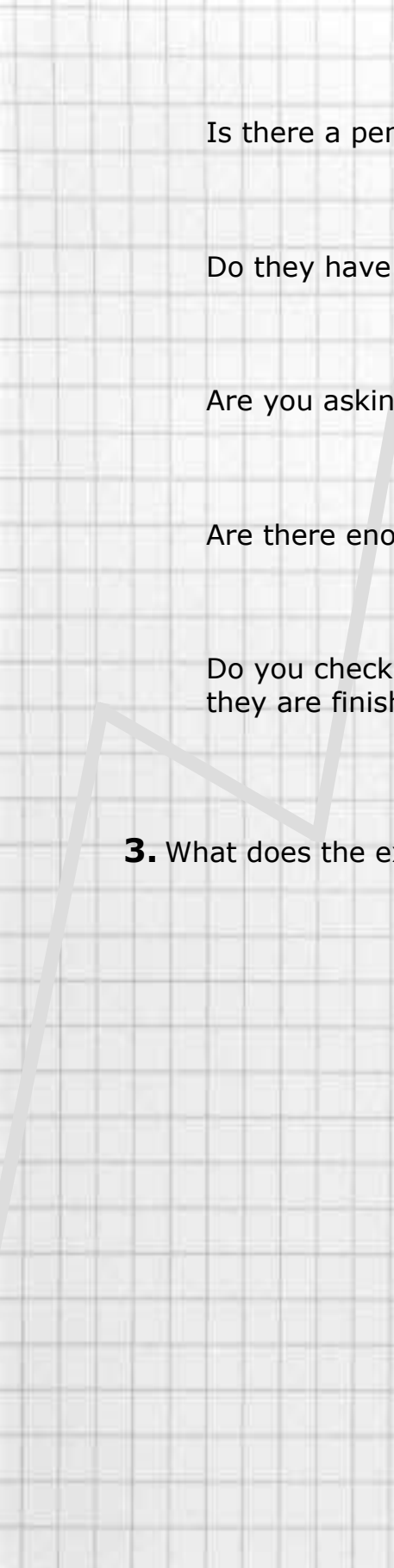
Do they know *what* they are supposed to do?

Are they confident your way will work for them?

Have you asked any questions about how they think it should get done?

Do they understand the importance and timeliness?

Is there a reward for their doing it?



Is there a penalty for poor performance?

Do they have the skills to do this work?

Are you asking them to do this task because you cannot do the task?

Are there enough time and the necessary tools to complete the task?

Do you check in on the progress of the task or wait until they tell you they are finished?

3. What does the extraordinary person know?



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SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS

Several sales representatives are having a discussion at a tradeshow. The discussion centers on businesses and their staffs. Undoubtedly, these businesses have a varying number of employees.

If we could ask the sales representatives to grade the businesses they call on using the same letter grades we all knew in school, we would find as much variance from business to business as there are businesses in the group.

If we were to examine all of the businesses that earned an "A," we would find as much variance as we would find in the businesses that earned an "F." There would be businesses with large numbers of employees and those with only a few; businesses with more than one owner, as well as businesses that had multiple generations working in them.

A scientific survey was done a couple of years ago. A company wanted to develop an aptitude test that could be given to job applicants. The people in the human resources department hoped the test would determine which applicants would make exceptional employees. In developing the test, they asked several companies to allow their best employees to be tested. They asked for employees they referred to as "tenfers"—those who gave 110 percent in everything they did. They tested over 200 "tenfers" for some 45 traits: high IQ, educational background, aptitude, logic skills and other traits you might expect to find in exceptional employees.

When the scores were totaled, the researchers were surprised to find there were no common traits. They had failed at creating an aptitude test for exceptional employees.

If we re-examine the businesses that earned an "A," we are basically going to see the same results as did the company that tried this research initially.

Allow this writer to suggest there is a common trait that can be found and that the research company made an error in its work. The error is that they tested the wrong people. Instead of testing the employees, they should have tested the employees' supervisors.

It has been my experience that while a "tenfer" may occasionally walk in your front door and apply for a job, those businesses with several such people on staff—as well as those that have developed their own "tenfers"—have done so largely because of the talents and skills of the owner, manager and supervisor.

There are two main ways to make this happen. One is to understand and use the Maslow theory. The second is to apply some well-developed management skills.

The Maslow theory says there are five steps to creating productive individuals. The first is to provide them with the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. While most would view these needs as being satisfied by the employees' wages, exceptional managers tend to add effective incentive programs.



Getting extraordinary results from ordinary people (continued)

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The second Maslow step is to provide an opportunity for the employees to feel they are part of a team. To accomplish this, we suggest having team meetings, giving employees meaningful titles, and doing little things like creating business cards for each employee.

Step 3 is to provide the employees the opportunity of receiving the esteem of others, while Step 4 is to encourage the development of self-esteem.

For this to be achieved, the steps must be achieved in order. If your employees are to have self-esteem, they must first receive the esteem of customers and their fellow workers.

Ask yourself these questions: Does the business provide a learning experience? Are employees assisted and encouraged to learn more about the products and services offered? Are they given opportunities to make decisions on behalf of the business?

Our favorite question is: how many employees have a key to the front door of a business that is filled with hundreds of thousands of dollars in inventory, fixtures, and equipment—yet are not allowed to make a decision with regard to a product having a value in excess of \$10?

The fifth point of the Maslow theory is this: There must be the opportunity to give to others. People in education have noted that many learn more effectively when the student takes the information and shows others how to use it. This is referred to as "teaching the teacher."

Another thing to observe in exceptional businesses is how the owner, manager or supervisor conveys information and instructions to the staff. In many cases, an employee is doomed to failure in his or her assigned tasks because of how the instructions are given.

Check the following questions next time you give someone instructions and see if you are guilty of missing the mark on even one of them. If you are, there is a good chance you will not get the desired results from that employee.

Do the employees know why they should be doing the tasks? Good managers do not use "because I am the boss" as a reason.

Do the employees know how to do the jobs? Expecting employees to have all the information they need is an invitation for disaster. Making sure employees know how to perform assigned tasks gives them the opportunity to succeed.

Do the employees know what they are supposed to do? Were your instructions overly general; i.e., "wait on the customers," "stock the shelves"? Specific instructions go a long way toward ensuring the job is done correctly.

Are the employees confident your way will work? When subordinates have confidence in their leaders, they excel in their efforts.

Is there a reward for success? A penalty for lack of success? If there is no positive or negative response, why would an employee make an effort to achieve success for the business.



Getting extraordinary results from ordinary people (continued)

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Do the employees have the necessary skills? Not every employee has the skills to complete every task. Not every person has the skills to work in a situation with customers. Without these skills, there is no way to succeed.

Are you asking the employees to do something you cannot do? Think of your own experiences. When given instructions by someone you do not think knows how to do the task, have you put forth your best efforts?

Do the employees have enough time and the proper tools? Without sufficient time or the right equipment, any task you assign the employees is doomed to failure or less-than-expected results. Employees need enough time, an understanding of the importance of a timely completion, and the necessary tools to deliver the results you are expecting.

Do you check on the employees' progress? Imagine a situation in which an employee has been instructed to perform a task requiring several hours of effort. Do you examine the results before the job is finished? Corrective suggestions offered 30 minutes into the task can save hours of wasted effort. Do not hesitate to give needed guidance.

Have you asked the employees how they think the job should be done? It may be your option to decide how to complete a task, but your employees were hired in part because they demonstrated some level of intelligence. Asking employees how they think a job should be done shows your interest and respect.

Getting extraordinary results from ordinary people is a goal every business should have. These guidelines should help you succeed.