

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



air SUPPORT

Do the people in your team feel appreciated?
Karl Hartey explains the benefits of a 'helium' culture

IN AN IDEAL business environment the following will be the norm: The principal appreciates the team and customers; the team appreciate the principal, each other and the customers; customers are selected for their ability to appreciate the team and the principal.

How do you achieve this? One way is to create a helium culture. Imagine that every human being is a balloon. Inside the balloon is helium, which represents the person's self-confidence. When you add helium, the balloon expands and rises. Take helium out and it deflates and falls. So adopt the habit of putting helium in other people's balloons.

For the next week, try playing the helium game. Say or do something to increase someone else's amount of helium – or self-confidence. It could be a friend, your employees or clients, your family or the check-out person in Sainsbury. Doing this makes you an extremely 'attractive' person. People and opportunity will be drawn to you. Your own self-confidence will increase and the atmosphere in your business will improve. Negative people will naturally move on.

As for building a successful, helium-enriched team, there are nine steps:

1 ELIMINATE *negative, miserable, incompetent employees*

When it comes to recruitment, exploit your contacts to find staff through personal referral. Write to people to ask for help in recommending suitable candidates.

2 FABRICATE *an organisational structure*

Create your organisational structure FIRST and then look at the people you've got available to fill the positions. What does the structure look like for your business?

Step 3 ORCHESTRATE *your systems*

Create systems for:

- Answering the phone

- Greeting clients
- Organising your database
- Confirming appointments
- Dealing with missed appointments
- Selling treatment plans
- Follow-up after treatment
- Standard letters

Creating systems takes time, but will ultimately save you many hundreds of hours. Use your 'buffer' days to spend time on this: decide what you need and design a system for it; create a procedures manual if necessary; make sure the systems are simple and usable; teach your team how to use them.

4 MOTIVATE *recruit, train, motivate and retain your team*

Ensure you have a thriving Helium Culture. Live your life as an example to those around you. Ensure the people in your team feel fully heard.

5 INDOCTRINATE *share your vision*

Share your vision. If you have a three-year vision, 12 month plan, 90 day goals – share as much of that information as you can with your team.

6 DELEGATE – *as much as you possibly can, except the responsibility!*

For the next few days, keep notes on all the things you do during your day. How many of these things could you delegate? To whom specifically could you delegate certain tasks?

Remember the 80/20 rule: 80% of your time is spent on activities that produce 20% of the results; 20% of your time is spent on activities that produce 80% of the results.

As a business principal, and as a principle of business, you should spend 80% of your time developing relationships, finding valuable contacts, solving their problems and managing and leading the people to whom you've delegated everything else.

WARNING 'Delegate' does not mean dump! You are still responsible.

7 CONGREGATE *listen to your team*

Group congregation (once a quarter, for at least half a day) is an opportunity to discuss and review performance and planning. It is also an opportunity for your team members to give marks out of ten on how they think the business is doing in categories such as finance, sales, marketing and personnel.

In addition, there should be one-to-one congregation (staff appraisals) every quarter. Make these friendly, light and non-confrontational. Just be open and honest and make it safe for both parties to communicate. Make sure you acknowledge all questions and write them down. This ensures the employee feels heard and acknowledged before any constructive criticism is offered.

8 COMPENSATE *your team well and institute a group performance bonus*

People go to work to make money; be appreciated; have fun; enjoy the environment. To make sure your team remains happy, motivated and loyal, follow these three steps:

- Pay them the right money: a good basic wage which is above average for the business;
- Review the basic wage annually in line with average earnings;
- Implement a group performance-related bonus. Introduce an element of pay for everyone which is linked to the performance of the business. For example, create a system whereby, if a performance target is met, everybody gets TWO WAGE PACKETS in December (an 8.33% bonus).

9 EDUCATE *develop your team's skills*

It is your responsibility to train your team to do their job better by such means as training courses and role-play.

Role-play can contribute significantly to improving your people's ability to do their job well. It will also enhance their self-confidence. Consider:

Telephony – how are the phones answered? Reception – how are your clients greeted? Point of sale – rehearse how you sell.

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