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The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus by Eric Harvey, David Cottrell, and Al Lucia

or "How to Get the Big Things Done in YOUR "Workshop"... All Year Long

Don't forget the 'Super Stars'. The super stars earned their way into that category by exhibiting consistently outstanding performance. Like everyone else, great performers don't like to be ignored or taken for granted. Even though some may not admit it publicly, in private most realize that they need to be worked with, involved, recognized, and rewarded.

Suggestions:

- Get them involved in decision making, strategy setting, procedure development, and problem solving;
- Delegate extensively and avoid 'micro-managing' them;
- Encourage them to teach and mentor others... including you;
- Provide them with highly-specialized training and other career-growth opportunities;
- Show interest in their work .. and their lives away from work;
- Hold their co-workers accountable for doing their own jobs so that the super stars don't have to pick up the slack;
- Avoid punishing them for good performance: "You did such a good job handling that mess, the next time we get one, we'll give it to you again."

As a leader, the key to dealing with superstars is to demonstrate – through words and actions – that you know and appreciate the fact that these folks are the best of the best.

Set the example. As leader, you are constantly being watched. You're employees are learning what is acceptable behavior, especially when it comes to matters of ethics and integrity, by watching you. You must model the behaviors that you expect from others. You must take the lead and be the first to 'walk the talk' when it comes to things like:

- following ALL your rules and procedures;
- treating EVERYONE with dignity and respect;
- ALWAYS telling the truth;
- NEVER breaking a promise or commitment;
- building superior quality into EVERYTHING you do;
- CONTINUALLY giving your best effort;
- CONSISTENTLY taking a stand for what is right.

Establish guidelines and accountability. Because ethics is so important, you can't rely on your example alone to ensure that everyone does the right thing. You need to ensure that all employees are well-versed in the laws, rules, and procedures that apply to them. Santa suggests the following to guide the actions and decisions of everyone (including you):

The 'What's Right' Test

1. Is it legal?
2. Does it comply with your business rules and guidelines?
3. Is it in-sync with your business values?
4. Will you be comfortable, guilt-free, or even glad if you do it?
5. Does it support your goals, commitments, and mission?
6. Would you do it to your family or friends?
7. Would you be perfectly okay with someone doing it to you?

8. Would the most ethical individual you know do it?

As a leader, building accountability for proper behavior involves:

- Keeping your eyes and ears open to what's happening. Know what's being done and how it's being accomplished.
- Providing ongoing feedback. Regularly meet with your employees to discuss their performance, share your observations, and re-emphasize the importance of integrity-driven practices.
- Displaying 'zero tolerance'. If an ethics or rule violation occurs, take swift and deliberate action. Stop the offense, conduct an investigation, and initiate the appropriate consequences.

Remember that everything counts. Doing right involves more than avoiding the big sins; it's the day-in, day-out behaviors that determine the overall culture of your business. As a leader, you have to set the proper example and hold everyone accountable. Look at:

- the way everyone treats and talks about each other;
- the types of jokes that are shared;
- the commitments made and kept – or broken;
- the 'unimportant' rules that are followed – or broken;
- the level of quality put into your products or services;
- the credit appropriately shared (or not) with all involved.

These, and scores of behaviors like them, reflect what your business culture is all about and what your organization stands for. Looking at them helps you to understand and remember that being good and doing right are not *sometime* things – they are *every time* things involving everything you do. EVERYTHING COUNTS – for your people, and especially, for you as their leader.