

## Are You Tolerating Less Than Your Standards

"What You Tolerate Becomes Your Standards." This is a critical management philosophy that will assist you in driving high performance. When your employees are not performing, here are the steps to take to analyze why that performance is lower than the standard and suggestions for imbedding this philosophy into your organization's culture.

1. Do you have clearly defined standards? When employees are not performing, the first place to look is to your definition of what you would like for them to do. Too many job descriptions are vague or contain perceptions instead of clear behaviors. Do your job descriptions include standards like, "Responds to Customers in a courteous manner", "Dresses professionally", or "Responds immediately to Customer concerns"? If any of these statements sound familiar, the first reason why you may be experiencing low performance is due to the lack of clarity of your standards. Define "professional" "courteous" and "immediately" and then your employees will have a clearer understanding of what you expect them to do.

2. Do your Managers hold your employees accountable for following the standard? If you look around your workplace and find that people are not dressed professionally, are eating in the work environment or are communicating in ways that do not meet your expectations; look to your Supervisors for answers. When someone does not follow the dress code, is this communicated to the employee? If Supervisors are not holding employees accountable for following the standard, then the employees will do as much as they think they can get away with. People's performance only rises to the highest level of tolerance of your standards, not to the standards themselves. Teach your Supervisors how to effectively communicate the standards and how to convey messages that could be perceived as negative. When you have to tell employees that they are not following the standard, it can be an uncomfortable situation. But it doesn't have to be. Teach your Supervisors how to use "I statements", clearly stated facts and how to avoid accusatory language and their exchange of ideas will be more positively received.

3. Do you instill consequences for lack of performance? Once you create clearly defined standards and you teach your Supervisors how to communicate the desired level of performance, you must ensure that you instill the consequences for lack of performance. If your attendance policy states that after the 4th absence, there is a verbal warning given- be sure that this consequence is administered. Employees need to trust that you will do what you say you are going to do. If they know the policy and you do not follow through on the consequences, employees will lose respect for your organization. Employees need to trust that you will do what you say you are going to do- both positive and negative things. If employees observe you following the policies with some employees but not others, they will feel that you treat them unfairly. If they perceive a level of unfairness, they will become irritated and disgruntled. Then this can lead to unnecessary time being spent on HR related issues. Follow through and adhere to the consequences that you have in place and you will create a fair and respected environment.

By following these three general rules of standards, you will increase your levels of performance, increase your productivity, increase your morale and create a more WOW place to work for everyone.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

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