

INSIGHTS:

A COACHING NEWSLETTER BY BILL PULLEN, PCC, CPCC



Getting the Support You Need

Joel is the vice president of a rapidly growing internet business. The company's growth has increased the demands of his job dramatically. He works long hours but feels less and less productive as his "to do" list gets longer rather than shorter. Joel does not feel supported by his team. He is angry, frustrated and resentful that his people are not pulling their weight. He has to chase them down to meet deadlines or to follow up on his requests. This prevents him from accomplishing his own work. He delegates less than ever because he does not trust the team to get the job done. It is easier for him just to do their work. He is at a point where he cannot take it anymore. He is ready to fire the whole team or to quit himself. Either way Joel is ready to step away from leadership.

Is this scenario familiar to you? Does the struggle to balance team management, task completion and leadership of your organization leave you frustrated? Do you feel like you are not getting the support you need from the people around you?

The problem for Joel, like for many of us, is that as his organization grows his leadership role changes. With change comes the need for a different work style. In the early days of his organization, Joel set the company's direction and strategy. He was able to manage the tasks required to execute the strategy successfully. Now there are many more tasks than he can manage. A single individual could not manage them all. Joel's job has changed. He needs to change with it. How must Joel change? How does he need to grow?

As we develop as leaders and assume greater levels of responsibility, we need to delegate tasks to the people around us in order to focus on strategic activities. We need to be sure we have the right people around us if we are to delegate successfully. In his book *Good to Great*, author Jim Collins writes that we need to get the right people on the bus and in the right seats.

That accomplished, we must provide our people with the tools required for their success. We must give them the information they need to do their jobs, to support our organizations and to support us effectively. Such information includes clear statements of our needs and expectations. As leaders, we must offer training and we must be sure that each member of the team is personally and professionally capable of meeting our expectations.

The biggest challenge to leadership comes when we have the right people properly trained and in place, and when we have communicated our needs and expectations clearly. We must then let go and let them do their jobs. The job of a leader is to create environments where people can be successful and to give them the room to succeed.

Because Joel has a rigid idea of how things should be, he is frustrated that nothing is working out exactly as he planned. He fails to realize that his team members are finding creative, innovative ways to get the job done. Their efficiency supports him and enables their organization to move forward. He runs the risk of stifling them by taking away their ability to innovate, to be creative and to take initiative. By getting out of their way, by letting go of his old way of thinking and of his need to micromanage, and by trusting the people around him (after making sure they have what they needed to succeed) Joel feels more supported. Their organization is free to move forward and to achieve greater results.

- In what ways do you feel a lack of supported from the people around you?
- Do you have the right people on the bus? Are they in the right seats?
- What information or training will they need to succeed?
- What needs or expectations have you not expressed?
- What are you holding too tightly?
- Where do you need to let go?
- What will you focus on after you let go?
- How will the new focus benefit you and your organization?

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