

Four Things Your Staff Needs to Know

By Bill Sharp

Leaders of high performance teams consistently do a good job of letting all they supervise know four important things about their work:

What am I supposed to do?

Why am I supposed to do it?

How good is “good”?

How am I doing?

What am I supposed to do?

The answer to this question is the stuff that fills job descriptions. Many people have spent hours trying to “cover the bases” making lists of both regular and periodic tasks staff members will be expected to finish. And, just to make sure nothing could be considered overlooked, they add the phrase, “*And other duties as assigned.*”

Staff members need to know the major work they will be expected to do, but more importantly, **they need some sense of which tasks are most important...to you.** No two yards are alike, and no two leaders alike. If you were hit by the bread truck, and someone had to fill your shoes while you recovered, that person could easily arrive and say, “*Who hired these people?!?*” Of course, you did. We make hiring decisions based upon many factors, and one is compatibility. Does the person you’re about to hire seem compatible with your values and belief systems.

Likewise, priorities about store will be different from a leader in another facility...even if both are part of the same group. Ask yourself some questions:

- What are the three most important tasks you want people who report to you to perform well, consistently?
- If time permits what other tasks would you like to see completed?
- What are some tasks you must do (about which you may not have positive feelings) that are necessary because of policies or regulations?
- Are there assignments your staff will be given only periodically or at certain times of the year? If so, why do you do this?

Developing a big list is not the objective. Accuracy is the issue. ***If your staff were asked by a third party to name the most important things they are to do on a daily basis, could they?***

Another aspect of “***What am I supposed to do***” is avoiding N.E.T.M.A. criticism (**Nobody Ever Tells Me Anthing**). Leaders periodically see things happen that are not acceptable. Before taking corrective action, ask yourself, “*Have I ever mentioned this before?*” If it has previously been discussed, and staff members know your expectations, you’re free to move immediately to corrective feedback.

If however, this is a “*I hadn’t thought about that and haven’t mentioned it before*” thing, move gently. It’s okay to let staff know your concern, but wrap your words in phrases like “*I know we haven’t discussed this before, but I realized...*” or “*I understand that you didn’t know that may be a problem because I haven’t mentioned it before, but...*”