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EMPLOYER'S  
**ADVANTAGE**  
NEWSLETTER

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**FROM JIM SIRBASKU'S DESK**  
**How to Increase the Numbers of Soaring Eagle**

"Lone eagles, soaring in the clouds, fly with silent, peaceful poise, While turkeys, in their earth-bound crowds, fill the atmosphere with noise."

Those words of scholar William Arthur Ward succinctly capture the different characteristics of two kinds of birds. But Ward is talking about more than just birds. He is telling us that we should admire and emulate the eagle, and that too many of us fit in too well among the "earth-bound crowds."

Nothing against turkeys, but Ward has a point. Yes, turkeys are the icons of a well-set Thanksgiving table, but consider what that means: They get eaten, especially this time of year. So why not soar with the eagles? That's a good goal for both individuals and organizations, and it fits well with recognizing incompetence on the managerial team and doing something about it.

If you have read Profiles' "Eight Signs of Incompetent Managers," and know you have some work to do, here are some ideas for proceeding.

- **Before you make your next managerial hire or promotion, make sure the person you are considering for a position of responsibility is**

**management material.** Some people can grow into the role, and some cannot. Scientific assessments such as ProfileXT and Profiles Performance Indicator provide insight that helps improve selection and team performance. Our clients have used one or both tools successfully, depending on their needs. Either way, these assessments work. They offer more validity than just guessing or following your instincts.

- **If you already know you have managers who are not performing to your standards, take action sooner rather than later.** Planning a course of action is good, but only if you execute the plan in a timely manner. If the person in charge of execution puts off corrective action week after week because he or the plan "is not ready," you have just discovered another ineffective leader in your organization. Leading often means going outside one's comfort zone to do what needs doing, and some managers need training to do this. Demonstrate to subordinates what action looks like. Show them that taking action is essential. Letting a poorly performing manager squeak by for an extended period can damage your organization.

- **If you determine a manager cannot fit the role of leading others, you owe it to him or her, and to yourself, to find out how he can best serve.** Look at what he was doing before management. What aspects of his previous performance prompted his promotion? Was he a strong salesman? An expert technician? Superb at customer service? If he showed strength in a prior position, your next step is to move him to the place he performs best with the message that you want both him and the company to succeed. If this employee adds value to the organization, you do not want to imply that he failed. Some people are just not management material, and chances are that your worker knows that as well as you do.

- **Use your high performers as models for both current and future employees.** Smart recruiters use PXT on the front end to make sure they are hiring people that look like the organization's top-

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performers. Creative workplaces find methods of spreading high performance around. Leaders put their high performers in teams to train others. They give them the responsibility of an important project and let them detail to the rest of the organization how they executed it. Show off anyone who does the job the right way. Remember: Praise in public, correct in private. Get to the point where you praise

more than correct, and your job will be more enjoyable and certainly easier.

These ideas will put your organization on the flight path of soaring eagles. May their numbers increase.

*Jim Sirbasku, CEO*



'So many fail because they don't get started—they don't go. They don't overcome inertia. They don't begin.'  
—**W. Clement Stone, American entrepreneur**

### **POP QUIZ** (Answers on next page.)

1. An effective manager agonizes over each detail of a big plan.

T F

2. Employee attitudes toward change are impossible to discover. If an employee knows his organization wants him to embrace change, he can mask his attitude successfully.

T F

3. A competent leader delegates responsibility only after analyzing whether the employee is capable of successfully completing the task.

T F

4. Some subordinates don't want to do what needs to be done; they prefer to exercise their creativity in their own way. A leader faced with this kind of

worker should leave her alone to work the way she thinks best.

T F

5. A verbose manager can hinder effective communication.

T F

6. Only weak leaders ask for help once they have set their course of action.

T F

7. Telling team members to observe an expert at work is the best way to develop talents in others.

T F

8. Effective managers stay with a problem indefinitely, even when it appears impossible to solve.

T F

Regarding inertia: 'Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful.'  
—**Samuel Beckett, author**

### **PRODUCT FOCUS: Checkpoint and Team Analysis Banish the 'Nightmare Boss'**

The "nightmare boss" is a popular topic during employee break-time, after-work get-togethers and in ongoing jokes. Workers complain about incompetent leaders because they believe that venting is all they can do. They feel powerless to change the dynamic of a supervisor who doesn't, a CEO who believes everything is just fine, and subordinates who must stumble along, trying to get the job done and wishing top leaders could walk in their shoes for just one day.

Profiles International offers two assessments that put teams in the driver's seat when it comes to trying to change the dynamic of ineffective leaders. One is Checkpoint, which allows managers to see

themselves through the eyes of their subordinates—and, hopefully, adopt changes that will make them more effective. Another is Profiles Team Analysis, which allows managers to put together teams that move forward productively and harmoniously.

Managers don't have to use both tools—but they can.

First, let's examine Checkpoint, which focuses on a manager's job performance in eight competency areas: communication, adaptability, task management, productivity, development of others, leadership, building relationships, and personal development. This process takes about 15 minutes,

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and can be done via Internet or on paper. Except for the boss, none of the participants uses his name. This anonymity allows for more objective, honest responses. The results go into a report that the manager receives and uses for improving his performance.

Part two of the Checkpoint process is SkillBuilder, which systematically takes the leader through the process of developing a comprehensive development plan custom-made for him.

An assessment that helps managers develop effective teams by getting to know individuals better is Profiles Team Analysis. PTA examines 12 different areas, including patience, ambition and precision. It tells the leader whether the employee is team-oriented and/or quality-oriented.

The PTA report comes in four sections:

- **The Team Balance Table.** Team leaders can see

overall representation of certain qualities—where players excel and where they might not.

- **Overall Team Balance.** This section explores characteristics that are not well represented, because a leader must be aware of his team's shortcomings—and shore them up—to ensure a successful mission.

- **Behavioral Factors.** Team players with scores in each of the 12 factors are identified so the leader can use the information to match the natural characteristics of members with team goals.

- **Action Summary.** Specific steps help the leader supervise to get the greatest contribution from every member of the team.

Relegate tales of the "nightmare boss" to the myth pile. With Profiles International's help, organizations can raise the level of break-room talk to topics that everyone—even the boss—can enjoy. Call 800-406-0087.

Regarding productivity: The person who gets the farthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare.  
—Dale Carnegie, author and self-improvement guru

#### **Answers to Pop Quiz:** (Previous page)

1. False. A manager who cannot move beyond the small details of an important plan has lost sight of the big picture.

2. False. Although some employees are adept at hiding things, top leaders can discover such things as attitudes toward change through a sharply focused assessment. Moving a worker who dislikes change to another position will result in a better job fit and more productivity.

3. True. Competent leaders delegate responsibility after assessing their workers' capabilities, interests and development needs.

4. False. Effective leaders clearly spell out their expectations for subordinates. Although constructive corrections might bruise an ego, a leader cannot lead someone pointed in the wrong direction.

5. True. By its definition, communication requires that more than one person speaks—a give and take—never a give and give and give. Even if team members disagree, considering all viewpoints can lead to creative solutions. Voila! Communication!

6. False. Seeking help to complete a project on deadline is always a more effective course of action than stubbornly pushing forward toward failure. There is no "I" in team.

7. False. Observing a master at work is only one way of developing others' skills. Other necessary methods include observation of the employee's habits, constructive criticism, and focused training.

8. True. Effective managers know that every problem has a solution. And they find it.

### **STRATEGIES FOR WINNING: What Goes Around\***

#### **See Your Managers' Strengths from Every Angle**

A senior manager announces his decision to move to a competitor and the senior management team convenes a crisis-management meeting to figure how the organization will survive. Meanwhile, for the rest of the team, it's party time! The champagne is

flowing; everyone's wearing funny hats, blowing noisemakers, and toasting their good fortune. The topic *du jour* is "With that clown gone, maybe now we can get on with business."

What happened? How can someone so valued by

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senior management work so badly with the troops on the ground? The reality is most senior managers have no awareness of how they or their fellow managers perceive them throughout their organizations, even at a time when so much is spoken about achievement of corporate goals through team-based efforts. No wonder that more than 30 percent of all people



changing jobs are doing so to get away from their bosses. They're not leaving their jobs—they're leaving their managers!

This sort of disaster can happen only in an environment where the performance of management is appraised using traditional boss-down appraisals, with performance of managers assessed only by their direct bosses. This traditional approach means that the views of those who most directly experience the effectiveness (or otherwise) of a manager's performance—peers and direct reports—are never tapped. If your success depends to any extent upon your team, that's just not acceptable any more.

### **Multi-Rater Feedback**

Modern business has rendered the traditional boss-down appraisal extinct, and a more appropriate approach to assessing management competencies and performance has emerged. That new approach is multi-rater feedback, and Profiles Checkpoint is an excellent example of this model.

Every year, more than 250,000 managers worldwide use the Profiles Checkpoint Multi-Rater Feedback System, a system that provides managers and leaders with an opportunity to receive an evaluation of their job performance from the people around them—their boss, their peers (fellow managers), and their direct reports (the people whose work they supervise). From this feedback, managers can compare the opinions of others with their own perceptions, positively identify their strengths, and pinpoint the areas of their job performance that need improvement.

The Profiles Checkpoint process is concerned with a manager's job performance in eight universal leadership and management competencies and

18 skill sets:

### **Communication**

- Listens to others
- Processes information
- Communicates effectively

### **Adaptability**

- Adjusts to circumstances
- Thinks creatively

### **Task Management**

- Works efficiently
- Works competently

### **Development of Others**

- Cultivates individual talents
- Motivates successfully

### **Leadership**

- Instills trust
- Provides direction
- Delegates responsibility

### **Relationships**

- Builds personal relationships
- Facilitates team success

### **Production**

- Takes action
- Achieves results

### **Personal Development**

- Displays commitment
- Seeks improvement

### **How Does it Work?**

Each participant completes an evaluation – a process that takes about 15 minutes. Participants are guaranteed anonymity (except for the boss) and urged to be honest and objective in their responses. Participants complete their feedback via the Internet, or on paper if desired, and results from all participants are compiled in a report that is returned to the manager.

Checkpoint reports have colorful graphs and useful charts, as well as narrative descriptions of the results, to help the manager read, understand and effectively use the data for self-development. The report has a special personal-growth section that coaches the manager and helps improve performance in development areas.

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The Checkpoint report also encourages managers to link directly into an online system called Checkpoint SkillBuilder, which takes them through the step-by-step process of developing a comprehensive and personalized development plan. You can read more about the Checkpoint system on the Web at [www.personnelinsights.com](http://www.personnelinsights.com)

### **Round and Round...**

The upshot is a more detailed and objective assessment of a manager's strengths, and of any areas where additional development might be required. This assessment then forms the basis of a development plan between managers and their bosses—whereas the managers are fully aware of the dynamics of their relationships with the people around them, they are also effectively locked into the organization by the commitment of the organization to their ongoing skill development.

After a period of six or 12 months, the process is run again; the effectiveness of the development plan is assessed; and new development goals are set for the following period.

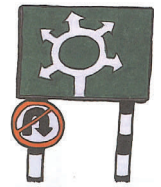
### **Multi-Rater Feedback vs. Boss-Down Appraisals**

There are several reasons managers at all levels are eagerly embracing this approach to performance appraisal.

### **Equitable**

For the manager being appraised, multi-rater appraisals differ from boss-down appraisals in the same way that judge and jury courts differ from "hanging-judge" courts. Managers benefit from a wide variety of feedback upon their actual job performance, and, to be deemed top-performing managers, are no longer solely dependent upon the extent to which they

have developed a good rapport with their direct boss.



### **Proven Effectiveness**

For the appraising boss, a positive change is more likely when an appraisal draws upon multiple sources trusted by the manager. Multi-rater appraisals are more effective than boss-down appraisals in driving a manager to make necessary behavioral changes or to improve management skills. If your boss says you need some improvement in some particular area, you may think, "What would she know?" or explain it away as a personality thing. If, however, 11 different people of your choosing, people with whom you work closely and whose views you trust and value, send you the same message, you really have to listen.

### **Team Motivation**

Multi-rater feedback systems also have a positive team-building effect. Research has proven the motivating value of the exercise for those involved as reviewers. Your people are sent a clear message that their opinions are valued, and they can help effect positive change in the management where required. Traditional reviews have given way to this much more effective tool for management development, as Fortune 500 organizations are mandating their use.

*\* From the book 40 STRATEGIES FOR WINNING IN BUSINESS by Bud Haney and Jim Sirbasku. © S&H Publishing Co., 5205 Lake Shore Drive, Waco, Texas 76710-1732. All rights reserved. Contact S&H Publishing Co., (254) 751-1644, for reprint permission.*

Regarding development of others, self-development: 'Don't argue for other people's weaknesses. Don't argue for your own. When you make a mistake, admit it, correct it, and learn from it—immediately.'

**Stephen Covey, author and leadership/organizational consultant**

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