



Dealing with Poor Performers

Some Practical Strategies for Maximizing an Indispensable Organizational Resource

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Why is this important?

- We all like to think of ourselves as above average.
 - The hard truth is—half of us are below average.
 - And we can't run our organizations without the contributions of these “poor performers.”
 - So how can we get the most from the people on the left side of the Bell Curve?
 - Though politically incorrect, it's a question that matters.
 - This presentation will begin to answer it.
- After mastering the information in this presentation, you will be able to
 - Identify three challenges that poor performers present,
 - Describe three practical strategies for dealing more effectively with poor performers,
 - Explain why these strategies make sense, and
 - Explain how to deploy these strategies in your workplace.
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What challenges do poor performers present?



- They are not “the best and the brightest,” but they are “net positive” for the organization.
- They plod, but they make progress.
- They complain, but they get the work done.
- They need to be reminded, but they finally follow through.
- They see their work as just a way to pay the bills, but they show up most of the time.
- They do only what they have to do, but at least they do that.
- They rarely go above and beyond, but they occasionally do.
- They drag in at the last minute, but at least they come to work.
- They waste time and they are inefficient, but they eventually get most of their work done.
- They are not fully engaged, but they generally go along.
- They are not highly motivated, but at least they lend a hand.

What are some practical strategies for dealing with poor performers?

- Field the best possible leaders at every level of the organization.*
 - Extrude poor performers who are “net negative.”
 - Trade up at every opportunity.
 - Stop trying to transform them into exceptional performers.
 - Lower the bar.
 - Clarify minimal expectations.
 - Avoid criticism.
 - Remain unfailingly good-humored.
 - Identify their passions.
 - Focus on *their* goals.
 - Watch for pride and reinforce it.
 - Help them find the “zone.”*
 - Predict and manage their reactions.
 - Focus on their strengths.
 - Recognize their need for approval.
 - Accommodate their sensitivities.
 - Create checklists.
 - Provide praise for routine accomplishments.
 - Focus on their contribution to the team.
 - Ask for their help instead of giving orders.
 - Discover and celebrate their uniqueness.
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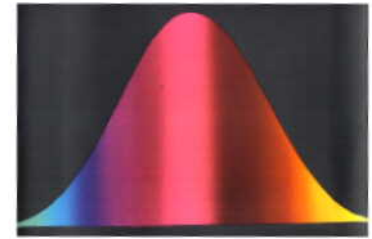
Field the **best** possible leaders at every level of the organization.

- Why should you?
 - This is your first obligation to your organization and your community.
 - Leaders set the tone.
 - Managing poor performers effectively is not possible if the organization has settled for less than the best possible leaders.
 - Inept leaders provide convenient excuses for poor performance.
 - Mediocre leaders contribute confusion instead of the clarity that poor performers require to succeed.
 - Inadequate leaders naturally focus on others' weaknesses instead of their strengths.
 - How can you?
 - First, ask yourself whether *you* have fielded the best possible team of leaders.
 - If you haven't done it, do it.
 - When you have, ask your boss to do the same.
 - Offer your resignation as evidence of your commitment.
 - Persuade your colleagues to take the same approach.
 - Participate in meaningful succession planning.
 - If you are an executive, remind the CEO that this is her primary obligation to the organization and the community.
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Help them find “the zone.”

- Why should you?
 - This is where individual passions intersect with organizational needs.
 - This zone exists for every single worker.
 - It is the place where work becomes a joy instead of a chore.
 - It is where we feel we are accomplishing something meaningful and worthwhile.
 - It is the place where opportunity—not threat—is the primary motivation.
 - It is where organizational alignment becomes reality.
 - How can you?
 - Find the zone yourself.
 - Learn from others who are usually in the zone.
 - Ask people what they enjoy most about their work, and then listen very carefully.
 - Arrange for them to do more of that.
 - Focus on what *they* want to accomplish instead of what *you* want them to accomplish.
 - Watch for the natural emergence of pride, then reinforce it.
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What have we learned?



- Below-average performers make up half of our organizations.
 - While they are unlikely to become exceptional performers, they are critical to our success.
 - We leaders—not the poor performers—are the keys to unlocking their potential.
 - We ought to concentrate on ourselves, not them.
 - Realistic expectations—clearly communicated with genuine respect—are among the first steps to maximizing the contributions of these critical organizational stakeholders.
 - The good-humored deployment of proven management strategies will produce exceptional results.
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Where can you learn more?



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What questions remain?



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