

A manager's guide to developing
effective people



Grow your own Achievers

Lesley Morrissey

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About the Author



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Lesley is also a professional writer, specialising in commercial copy aimed at getting the reader to take action – just a different aspect from that of getting your staff to take action.

Lesley has written since she was a child, and professionally since 1981. Her books show her dual career path as a human resources manager and management trainer as well as a commercial copywriter.

Lesley writes in two areas; management development and writing to market a business.

Preface

Every manager dreams of managing a high performing team. Unfortunately, the manager who is lucky enough to manage such a team is a rare individual.

Much more common are the managers who complain: “Why don’t my staff work as they are supposed to?” So what is the secret of getting a high performing team – is it luck or is it hard work and good management?

The answers are in the following pages. It’s not rocket science; these techniques are good common sense and work for anyone who wants them to. It doesn’t matter where you are in the hierarchy – whether you’ve just made supervisor or are a senior manager with managers reporting to you. They work for human beings.

The techniques don’t provide a quick fix; they require a certain amount of time and effort. However, on the bonus side, they take less and less effort the longer you use them.

They are good management practices and contribute to such strategies as Investors in People (IiP) and ISO 9000/1/2, as well as helping the individuals involved to gain their own qualifications, such as NVQs, City and Guilds certificates and professional qualifications.

Staff managed with these techniques have higher levels of job satisfaction, and are more creative, innovative, dedicated, optimistic, energetic and enthusiastic. Managers who use these techniques are successful, high performers who get promoted and gain the respect and admiration of their peers and superiors.

What are the drawbacks?

If other managers don't use these techniques, the staff in your department may feel they have to operate on two levels, as they will find other departments may not cooperate with their preferred way of working. However, with the right input, staff will continue to perform for you and for themselves.

If senior managers don't 'buy' your methods, you may have to deal with a certain amount of negative input. However, in most companies, senior managers are usually delighted with anything that gets higher levels of performance. If you do your preparation properly you will be able to point to the bottom line with confidence, showing that your team's efforts have improved it.

So – you get a high performing team, you get promoted, and you can directly affect the company's profit line – what are you waiting for?

Lesley Morrissey

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Part 1

How the head works

Chapter 1 How can you GROW an Achiever?

In this chapter:

- ❖ Recognising negative attitudes and their effects
- ❖ Using your attitude to influence others
- ❖ The secret of a positive attitude and how it is created
- ❖ The impact of being positive

Some people in your team may already achieve well and, possibly, quite consistently. However, there are bound to be some people who never seem to get out of first gear.

Why aren't they achieving now?

The first step along the way to turning your team into high performers is to look at each individual. Would you describe them as positive or negative in their approach? Do you hear words or phrases such as:

'We can't do that.'

'That won't work.'

'It isn't worth it.'

'There's no point in doing that.'

'Nobody notices what we do anyway.'

'It doesn't matter.'

'I don't care.'

'*They* don't care.'

'We'll never get that done in time.'

'I'll do my best.'

'I'll try.'

'I'll see what I can do.'

'I haven't got time.'

'We never seem to get to the end of this.'

'*They* expect miracles from us, we're not superhuman.'

The language that people use indicates the way in which they think. People who use negatives such as 'not', 'can't', 'won't', 'don't' and 'haven't' are the sort of people who see challenges as problems and give up easily.

People are often quick to blame others – '*they*' can always be held responsible. '*They*' are usually 'the management'. This is just another way of people in your team not taking responsibility for their own actions.

Recognising negative attitudes

People who use words like ‘try’, ‘I’ll see’, and even ‘I’ll do my best’ are telling you that they haven’t decided to succeed. They probably don’t think it’s possible, but they know you are expecting a positive response. Listen to the tone of voice – it usually tells you far more than the words.

How many times have you heard someone say “I’ll do my best” and known that they have no intention of doing their best? In fact, they probably have no idea what their best is – they have never tested themselves to the limit.

People with negative approaches are not necessarily depressives who cast doom and gloom over everyone they meet. Most of them function quite adequately and their negative attitudes go unnoticed in the workplace.

Attitudes are contagious; is yours worth catching?

Think about your own attitude. You will have absolutely no chance of influencing your team if you are Mr or Ms Negative yourself. You were not born with a negative approach, any more than anybody in your team was. Your attitude is the result of many years of programming and experience – but it doesn’t have to stay that way.

Developing a positive approach is something you can choose to do. Your current attitude is the result of *other people’s* programming. Why let others decide your attitude? Take control and choose to be positive. It will take work and there

will be days when you find it hard to maintain, but if you really want to become an achiever yourself, stick with it.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 will show you how to develop a positive approach and the tools to maintain it. Practise these first on yourself until you have successfully got to the point where you don't have to think about how you do things and how you say things. At this point you can start using them to help your team to develop.

A word of advice – you can help your team get there much more quickly if you act as 'programmer' and support. If you want to get there more quickly yourself you may need a mentor or partner to help you over the tough patches.

What is positive attitude anyway?

On the surface it is the way you communicate your mood to others. When you are optimistic and anticipate successful outcomes and encounters, you transmit a positive attitude and people usually respond favourably. You only visualise success and, therefore, reduce the likelihood of failure. Problems and obstacles are seen only as challenges to be overcome.

When you are pessimistic and expect the worst, your attitude is often negative and people tend to avoid you. You are looking for obstacles and problems to stop you – and if you look hard enough you are sure to find what you are looking for!

Attitude is never static – it is an ongoing dynamic, sensitive, perceptual process. Unless you are on constant guard,

negative factors can slip into your perspective, which will cause you to spend time on obstacles rather than opportunities.

Why are people negative more often than positive?

If you are around negative factors for long enough, they will be reflected in your attitude. The negative overshadows the positive. Most human beings focus on negative outcomes and effects, so it's hardly surprising that people 'infect' each other with negative 'vibes'. It's a challenge to reject the negative factors – those who learn the 'trick' will reflect it and others will notice.

What is the secret of 'getting' a positive attitude?

No one can be positive all the time – excessive optimism is not realistic. Positive attitude is not an act; it must be genuine. When things are going well a positive attitude become self-perpetuating and easy to maintain. There is always something that will challenge your ability to bounce back – winners are those who can regain their positive attitudes quickly.

*It doesn't matter how many times you fall down;
it's the number of times you get back up that counts.*

When something turns your mental focus in a negative direction, positive people know that a positive attitude is a state of mind that can be maintained only through conscious

effort. In other words, you choose how you react to any situation.

Does it matter if your staff are negative?

This depends on how interested you are in getting high levels of results from your staff. Positive people get better results more quickly than negative people. When difficulties occur, negative people will spend a great deal of their time explaining why a certain outcome is not possible. Positive people look at what has to be done to overcome the problem.

Positive people have more energy and much more enthusiasm than negative people. Being positive helps your mind to think freely; ideas and solutions rise to the surface. A negative attitude, on the other hand, has a stifling effect and creativity is suffocated.

What is the difference?

When it comes to your staff positive people get results; negative people tell you why they can't get the results you want.

Your positive approach rubs off on your team and encourages similar behaviour. Negative behaviour influences those around you and gives rise to negative expectations – which would you prefer?

The sales pitch what's in it for ME?

Your ability to keep your own attitude positive will ensure:

- ❖ You see challenges to be overcome and not problems that stop you achieving.
- ❖ Your success rate will improve.
- ❖ Other people will notice the results.

I'm sure you can think of many more benefits – some will be specific to you and your particular situation. It's worth writing these down to remind yourself why you should stick at it.

If you can influence your team to be more positive:

- ❖ They will save you time trying to solve their problems as they will start to think of solutions for themselves.
- ❖ They will be more enthusiastic and energetic about their work.
- ❖ They will be happier and easier to be around.
- ❖ They will get more out of their jobs in the way of satisfaction.

There are other benefits that you and your team will experience if you make the effort. Get people to think about what the outcomes will be for them to help to keep them on track.

Remember, everyone is different and what will make one person keen to work, may not do anything for somebody else. Ensure everyone thinks about themselves and how positive outcomes will get them what *they* want.

Things to think about

Think of the most negative person you know.

Part 1 – How the head works

- ❖ How do you feel about this person?
- ❖ What is your emotional reaction to their verbal comments about things that are happening in their life or at work?
- ❖ How would you feel if you overheard someone describing you like this to another person?

Think of someone you know personally who has a very positive approach to life.

- ❖ What is it about them that makes them positive?
- ❖ Think about the words you would use to describe this person to someone who had never met them.
- ❖ How would you feel if someone described you like this?

Action points

Ask your staff to complete the following questionnaire.

Give yourself marks out of ten for the following – 1 is low; 10 is high (the best you can be).

- 1) Based on our communication over the past month, my boss would give me ___ out of ten for positive approach.
- 2) My co-workers would rate my attitude as ___.
- 3) Realistically, I would rate my current attitude as ___.
- 4) In dealing with other people I would score the effect of my attitude as a ___.
- 5) My current creativity level, based on my approach to problems and difficulties is ___.

- 6) If there were a meter that could gauge my sense of humour I believe it would read ____.
- 7) The patience and sensitivity I have shown others recently deserves a rating of ____.
- 8) When it comes to not allowing little things to bother me, I deserve a ____.
- 9) Based on the number of compliments I have received lately, I deserve a ____.
- 10) I would rate my enthusiasm towards my job during the past few weeks as a ____.

Your total:

- ❖ A score of 90 or over is a sign that your attitude is ‘in tune’.
- ❖ A score of 70-90 indicates that minor adjustments may be required.
- ❖ A rating between 50-70 suggests that a major change is needed.
- ❖ If you rated yourself below 50 a complete overhaul is suggested!

Do the exercise for yourself and then assess how each of your staff will rate themselves – before you see their results.

How close were your assessments of their scores to their own?

Where do you disagree with their self-assessment?

Part 1 – How the head works

Talk to them about it and discuss what steps could be taken, by you and by them, to improve things.