



TANZANITE
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT™



CREATING ACCOUNTABILITY

www.tanzaniteleadership.com

INTRODUCTION

In this Age of Entitlement, the issue of creating accountability is becoming a hot topic with all of our clients. And here's the reason why: Many managers and executives are saying nobody has any accountability. So we're going to talk about:

- Techniques for managing and hiring employees who have the aptitude for creating their own accountability.
- Ways to develop management styles that create this kind of accountability.
- Strategies for getting rid of people who don't want to be accountable.

I'll start out with this quote from **Michael Josephson**: ***"There's not just a bad employee. There's the bad employee and the manager who keeps him."***

To have accountability, managers and leaders need to hold employees accountable. Thus this issue involves both leadership and employees. It's becoming more and more apparent.

Here's the fact of the matter: Good employees feel like they need to be held accountable, so they'll organically seek accountability. But you need to set expectations and focus on goals.

THE DEFINITION OF ENTITLEMENT

Entitlement is the belief that someone inherently deserves privileges or special treatment. This concept manifests itself in the workplace as people who feel like the company owes them something just for showing up. What makes them so entitled?

As you can imagine, one reason is the millennial generation. This generation composes at least 50% of the workplace now, and within the next few years, they'll make up 60% of it.

Millennials are also called the Me Generation. I have a colleague who derisively calls them Overly Entitled Narcissists, which you can see in their social media feeds (especially Facebook). They feel compelled to share every aspect of their lives with everyone.

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

As a result, there's a culture clash between this generation and other generations. According to them, they're the center of the world.

THE 12TH PLACE RIBBON THEORY

Another reason for modern entitlement is the 12th Place Ribbon Theory. Everybody gets a ribbon just for showing up. It's not about winning or losing. It's about participating. Primarily, Gen Xers instilled this concept in millennials while they were children, but it's become cross-generational today.

Nevertheless, we expect more in the workplace. It's not just about showing up. It's about showing up and significantly contributing, and as all businesses coming leaner, it becomes more relevant. Every employee counts.

THE CULT OF SELF

The Cult of Self is an interesting concept. When it's all about you, it changes the dynamic of the relationship, whether it's a personal relationship or a business relationship.

Here's how this concept manifests itself: For the last 67 years, Gallup (the polling company) has been asking high school seniors, ***"Do you think you're an important person?"*** Between 1950 and 1980, 12% of high school graduates thought they were important people. By 1989, almost 80% felt that way. What makes them feel entitled? The Cult of Self.

LAUDED LOITERING

Even though the Cult of Self is most frequently associated with millennials, my toughest entitlement encounters have come from people who are well into their 40s. They feel like they should be further along in their careers, so they no longer need to work 40 hours a week. And they clearly expect that tenure trumps contribution. One of the hardest things for HR people and leaders to get their head around is the people who feel this way: ***"I've been here longer, so I deserve this."***

But this kind of seniority isn't reality anymore. It's difficult to manage a lot of old-school people who resist this reality, especially ones who have been in a company for longer than

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

five years. But today, people who have been at a company for two years are often better contributors than people have been there for five years. Therefore, newer employees are sometimes promoted more quickly than people who have been there longer.

Employees can no longer say, ***“I’ve been here a long time. Ergo, I deserve a promotion.”*** Instead, promotions should involve talent, aptitude, and potential.

ENTITLED MANAGERS

Modern entitlement doesn’t just effect unpromoted team members. When there are problems between managers and executives, employees feed off that conflict.

For instance, we have a client in the hospitality industry, and their organization chart is convoluted (to put it mildly). At this company, one person isn’t responsible for everybody. Instead, three different people are responsible, and they all report to a chief operating officer. If employees go to their boss (one of the three executives) and don’t like the answer they get, they tend to go around that person to someone else until they get the answer they want to hear.

Part of the reason for this workaround is that these three executives are in conflict all the time. So they disagree about how things should be run.

When you take a look at your management team, the first question you should ask is, ***“Are they good leaders?”*** If not, what would it take for them to be good leaders?

Then you should ask, ***“Are they a good team?”*** When you’re in management, it’s essential to function as a team. There needs to be a unified message, so every single manager needs to toe the line. Behind the scenes, it’s okay to disagree. But when you’re in front of the workforce, it’s essential to function as a team.

You should also ask yourself, ***“Are there times when you act entitled as a manager?”*** People will pick up on this feeling, too. Do you work within your company’s system, or do you go around it? Are you accountable for supporting a decision you don’t agree with?

When an executive or board of directors makes a decision, it’s easy for a line manager to listen to complaints and say, ***“Well, I don’t really agree with it, but that’s the way it is.”***

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Managers can't do that. They represent executives, who represent the board of directors. So even if you don't agree with something, the reason you're in management is to represent leadership and the board's views.

THE AVATAR OF AN ENTITLED EMPLOYEE

Let's talk about what entitled employees looks like. First of all, they're resistant to feedback, especially constructive criticism. They don't want to hear it. And as a result, they tend to be in denial. Entitled employees tend to overestimate their talents and accomplishments. They definitely have the tendency to be demanding and overbearing—not only to other employees, but also to their bosses.

One technique to have those employees face reality is to do group evaluations. Think Yelp!, or Glassdoor but where colleagues rate their fellow workers. Some entitled employees think ***“my boss is out to get me”***. That won't happen if they see results from how their colleagues perceive them.

A lot of our clients conduct an annual or quarterly performance review. And if they do them, they have employees do self-reviews. In almost 30 years of experience, I've observed that the best employees are hardest on themselves during self-reviews, and the worst employees tend to overestimate their talent. They tend to give themselves excessively high grades. An employee may think they're a 9 on a scale of 1 to 10, but the manager believes they're a 4. This discrepancy creates interesting conversations.

Entitled employees blame each other for mistakes. Nothing is ever their fault. They never take accountability or responsibility. They don't have team loyalty. Since they're in it for themselves, they're ultimately not loyal to the team; they're only loyal to themselves.

If you have entitled employees, what's your action plan for them? These kinds of employees are poisoning your workforce, so even good workers will be disheartened by the fact that this type of employee is allowed to stay at your organization. Ultimately, you want less of this type of thing.

FIRST-STRING FRESHMEN

Some people think, ***“I will always have a Job here, regardless of how I produce. This organization owes me an annual raise and a competitive salary”*** But in life, nobody is

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

owed anything.

One of the worst things we see is the fact that people say, ***“I deserve an annual raise because of seniority, not because of demonstrated competence.”*** No, you don't. If you can't justify performance issues, you don't need a competitive raise. Just because somebody you've worked for a company longer, you're not necessarily more promotable. Upfront, people should know that your employees get promoted because of competence, not seniority.

You frequently see this situation in college sports today: A talented high school senior is being recruited by a football coach, and his parents ask, ***“Can he start this year?”*** In the old days, a head coach would say, ***“He's a freshman. He'll never start.”***

But today, the vast majority of college coaches say, ***“You're playing based on your competence. If you're the best player in your position, you're going to play, regardless of your years of experience.”*** This change needs to occur in the workforce as well.

VERBALIZE SOLUTIONS

We don't want employees with this attitude. My boss is responsible for direction setting and decision-making. We certainly don't want people who always have this attitude: ***“It's not my fault.”*** It may not be your fault, but ultimately, it's your responsibility. And people need to understand this concept. So we're talking about expectations upfront: ***“What do you want, and how can you follow through on your expectations?”*** I'll address this issue more in a moment.

You want more people at your organization who understand that their employment is only justified as long as they contribute something of value. You earn what you get. The employee's attitude should be, ***“I'm responsible for better ways to serve our end users.”*** We want people to take ownership. We want their attitude to be: ***“This is my organization, so I feel responsible for what happens here. If it's not right, I fix it.”***

The best way to handle employee disputes is always to let the employees handle it themselves. And the best way to handle complaints is to have employees self-identity solutions. I don't mind if my employees come to me with complaints, but I expect them to have solutions. Otherwise, they're just whining for the sheer joy of complaining.

People who work for me know that it's fine for them to verbalize an issue they think should be corrected. But I want the solution. I want their recommendation. So if you don't think of it as a two-part issue, you'll just get people whining and complaining all the time, but nothing improves.

BACK UP ACCOUNTABILITY

Let's talk about some other mistakes you might be making as a manager. For instance, you might tell employees, ***"I expect you to be accountable."*** But you never back it up. Accountability is a funny thing. When you demand it, its purpose is generally to absolve the person demanding it. It's like saying, ***"Your problems are yours alone, so don't bother me with them."*** Generally, employees are aware that they're accountable. After all, people get fired all the time.

When employees are unwilling to take responsibility, it means they don't understand the concept of accountability. They don't feel empowered to get things done, and they expect to be blamed when something goes wrong. In other words, they're being poorly managed. While it's important to talk about accountability, it's also important to make sure you do something proactive about it.

Do you really have an open-door policy? Here's the reason I bring this up: Most managers say, ***"I have an open-door policy."*** But a lot of rank-and-file employees have a hard time crossing that threshold and talking candidly with their managers. I frequently ask managers, ***"Do you really have an open-door policy?"*** You might think so, but it may not really be one in practice.

EAT THE FROG FIRST

A lot of managers avoid difficult conversations. I used to be this way, in spades. But in order to move forward, you need to have those conversations. If you avoid these subjects, it's a recipe for disaster.

There's a wonderful book about time management, which ironically has nothing to do with the topic we're discussing. It's written by **Brian Tracy**, and it's called **Eat That Frog**. Here's his thesis: ***In order to get better at time management, take a look at all the things you have to do in a day, and handle the worst, most difficult ones first. So if you have to eat***

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

a frog, do it right away. Then the rest of your day will be easier and more manageable.

If you avoid having a difficult conversation, it will weigh on you. You'll wake up in the middle of the night thinking about it. But after you have that difficult conversation, things will almost always get better. You'll have more clarity, and you'll have a new set of expectations. And your manager will definitely feel better.

So instead of avoiding difficult conversations, I'd lead by eating the frog. Then you'll find out much easier things will be. Maybe they won't feel better right away, but they'll always feel better in the long run.

IT'S ONE-SIZE-FITS-ONE

A lot of managers follow the playbook written by old-school HR people who say you have to treat everybody the same. But that's one of the worst things you can possibly do. You can't treat everybody the same. You have to find out what's important to you, and what's important to the employee. Then you have to manage them that way. Frequently, I say, ***“There's no one-size-fits-all in the workplace anymore.”***

Quite frankly, no two employees are exactly the same, whether they're good performers or poor performers. So I'll leave my better performers alone and let them find their own way. But I have to micromanage poor performers, and therefore treat them in a totally different way.

Don't be misled by HR people who say you can't treat people differently. Yes, you can. For example, one of our clients is a small bank in the Bay Area. They brought us in because they had a 35% employee turnover ratio every year.

Our research found that approximately 99% of their employees lived more than an hour away from the bank. The bank's headquarters is in downtown San Francisco, where the living expenses are ridiculously expensive. Almost all the employees had to drive over an hour to get to work every day, which was causing burnout and departures. So I went to the executives and said, ***“We have to find a way to get some of these people to work at home three or four days a week.”***

Their initial response was interesting: ***“No, no, no, no. We have three people in credit, and we can't have them all working from home right now.”*** So I said, ***“Fine. Who's your best***

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

performer?” They said, “Well, Joe is the best one. But if he’s allowed to work from home, it wouldn’t be fair to the other two.”

I replied, *“That’s absolutely incorrect. You have a top performer who lives an hour and a half away from work, and you want to keep him on. If you don’t want to lose your best performer, you should allow him to work from home three or four days a week. Then if the others complain, you tell them, ‘Joe has set the standard in this department. If you reach the same standards, we will absolutely let you work from home, too. But until you do, Joe has this privilege.’”*

We also did some training via interviewing and five or six other things. Within two years, they went from a 35% turnover ratio to an 8% turnover ratio.

So don’t treat everyone the same.

DON’T MICROMANAGE EVERYONE

A lot of managers micromanage everybody. I don’t know of any great employee who wants to be micromanaged. You really have to establish who your great performers are, and let them work. Then you have to establish who your lowest performers are, and make sure you implement an improvement plan. They need to be micromanaged. They may not believe it’s true, but it is.

For several years, I’ve had the privilege of speaking to a lot of community bank CEOs throughout the country. When I start my presentation, I ask them who the best boss they ever had was, and the reasons why.

Almost every CEO says, *“The best boss I ever had left me alone, set high standards, and gave me enough room to make mistakes.”* Great employees want you to establish parameters, then leave them alone to do what they do best.

Both HR and line managers shouldn’t micromanage everybody, since these tactics aren’t time-effective. Instead, make sure these leaders are doing what they need to do with their lowest and newest performers.

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

CATEGORIZING UNDERPERFORMERS

— So how do you know when you should micromanage to increase accountability and productivity? And how do you know when you should cut your losses and let the employee go?

Generally, you should apply my one-size-fits-one tactic to every situation. The first time you see somebody underperforming, you have to address it right away. Don't put it at the end of your to-do list; it should be at the beginning. There could be a lot of reasons why an employee is underperforming. For instance, he or she might be having problems at home.

I divide underperformers into two broad categories:

The people who are trying as hard as they can, but just can't hit their goals. I believe the essence of management involves working with these people as much as possible. If they're trying as hard as they can, it's your responsibility to help them succeed. Ultimately, if they fall anyway, you can look in the mirror and say, "I did everything I could to help this employee, but it just didn't work out." So if I'm the manager, I spend more time with these employees.

The people who just don't care and infect everyone around them with their negativity and unhappiness. I'm not aware of a leadership technique that will change a bad attitude. So immediately cut your losses with those people.

ACCOUNTABILITY = CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

How do you help people become more accountable? The #1 way is to become very clear about expectations. Many times, our frustration with unaccountable people is due to a lack of clear expectations. Make that people know why their goals are important, what their deadlines are, and what defines success.

If the situation requires you to follow through with negative consequences, you do so. It's really important not to make hollow threats. If people are going to feel responsible for a commitment, they need to clearly understand what the expectations of the commitment are.

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

INSPECT WHAT YOU EXPECT

You can't just say, ***"I want this,"*** then never follow up on it. If you do, people won't know whether it's really important to you or not.

Back in the early 90s, I was working in the marketing division of a very large organization in southern California. The division included about 20 people.

(Years later, the head of this division ended up becoming the CEO). He was incredibly busy, so we didn't get a lot of feedback from him.

He would take a stack of papers home that was about two feet high. Then he'd spend a weekend day by his pool, making a bunch of comments on Post-its about the work we'd submitted to him.

Then when we arrived at work on Monday morning, there'd be a stack of papers on our desks with these Post-its that said, ***"See me right away."*** (Remember, this is way before e-mail). So all 20 of us would stand in line in front of his office all morning, but we'd never hear back from him. We eventually stopped doing that. Then on Wednesday or Thursday that week, we'd get a call, or he'd drop by and say, ***"What about this?"*** That's the only way we knew if something was important to him.

Ultimately, he inspected what he expected, and we were able to get our jobs done.

USE THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP STYLE

Your people have different levels of competence and commitments to goals. As a leader, it's your job to bend your style to provide the proper amount of direction and support that your people need to accomplish their goals. If you don't set your people up to be responsible and successful at achieving their goals, that's on you, not them. You have to hold yourself accountable for both.

A BIG MISTAKE

During job interviews, you can build an accountability culture by asking questions that will reveal if people will naturally hold themselves accountable and would therefore make good employees. For instance, I ask interviewees, ***“When did you make a big mistake or fail at something? Talk to me about what led up to it, how you dealt with it, and what you learned from it.”***

Here’s what I’m looking for: Will they admit they made a mistake? Some people think they never make mistakes, but they’re lying to themselves if they believe that. So did they blame somebody else, or did they take accountability for it during their discussion?

I OR WE

When I’m selecting talent and interviewing (especially for nonprofit clients), I also ask, ***“Give me an example of a time when you were part of a team. What happened? How did things turn out?”***

When I ask this question, I’m trying to find out if they solicited input and shared credit. I also want to hear the word we: ***“We did this.”*** But the interviewee might say, ***“I did this, I did this, I did this.”*** Since a member of The Cult of Self isn’t a team player, he or she generally won’t be accountable either.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Day-to-day, you need to set expectations, which you can immediately do with your existing employees. Accountability only works if employees know they’re going to have to answer for their actions.

Whether or not things go well, there have to be consequences. Employees must trust and believe there’s a fair, accurate process. Then they’ll tie their behavior to actual consequences. So if they succeed, the consequences should be positive, such as a raise, a promotion, a celebration, a certificate, or at least a thank-you note from the boss.

When you set expectations on a day-to-day basis, you emphasize the behavior you want, as opposed to highlighting the mistakes. You don’t want to say, ***“This is not how it should***

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

look.” Rather, you should say, **“This is what I want it to look like.”**

For example, your boss comes in one morning and says, **“Today, I’m really going to hold you accountable. If you do a great job today, I’m going to give you a \$1,000 bonus. And if you do an average Job today, you get to keep your Job. But if you do a bad Job today, you’re fired.”**

Here’s the first thing you’d probably want to know: What does a great job look like? And what about an average job and a bad job? After all, your boss just told you that you’re going to be held accountable for your actions, and there will be real consequences. So you’ll want to know exactly what’s expected of you. You’ll probably also want to know that somebody is keeping a close eye on you all day, so you won’t miss it when you do a great job. Finally, you’ll want to ensure that your performance will be measured, based on those expectations and nothing else.

If you set these kinds of expectations, your employees will model the kind of performance you want.

THE RIGHT TALENT

I always liked to ask leaders or executives, **“Do you have the right talent to accomplish your goals within the next five years?”** If businesses and nonprofits are honest with themselves, a lot of them will say, **“Well, we had the right talent a couple of years ago. But things are changing so quickly, I don’t know if we have the right talent moving forward.”**

To achieve your goals, it’s really important to have the right talent.

CLEAR GOALS

I can’t tell you the number of businesses that don’t clarify their goals. It could be financial or performance-based, or it could be your number of end users. Every single person—from your receptionist up to the CEO—should clearly understand your goals. When we go in and do a workforce analysis for businesses, we’ll do employee engagement surveys and employee interviews.

For instance, we’ll ask each employee, **“What are the goals of this organization? What about its mission?”** Everybody should be able to answer those questions.

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP

Regarding the best practices of accountability, remember to celebrate team wins. When you hit goals, celebrate them. Give every person a sense of ownership.

We have a client that has 20 bank branches throughout the Pacific Northwest. We worked with the CEO to have meetings with groups of employees—from the tellers to the Senior Vice President of Credit. In total, there were about 400 employees.

This CEO meets with these diverse groups of about dozen people twice a month. One of the things she'll go through is financials.

She'll say to the teller, ***“Look at our financial situation. Our upsells. When you sit with one of our customers, you say, ‘Here’s is a CD that might be good for you. When you upsell, it generates more money to our bottom line. We make this much profit. So when you talk to clients about developing other products, your leads should result in making that amount of profit.’”***

All of a sudden, that teller has a sense of ownership about the results of the organization.

PEER ACCOUNTABILITY

The best teams involve peers who hold each other accountable. In other words, a bunch of people in the workforce are holding both themselves and others accountable. In the long term, your peers hold you more accountable than your boss because you're working with your peers every day for eight hours a day (or more). So if you're not performing up to snuff, you'll get better if they hold you accountable, as opposed to waiting for your boss to say something.

INTEGRITY COUNTS

People should be called out if they don't do what they say they'll do. When anyone falls short, he or she should admit it and work on improving the situation.

It's okay to admit you didn't make your goal. But you have to implement a plan for improving

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

your work in the future.

Now is the time to set goals and expectations. In advance, make sure your employees know that you're going to hold them accountable. That way, they can adjust their behavior accordingly before it's too late. But first things first: You must have a conversation about it before anything can change. Focus on the actions that the employee can control.

If you're a line manager or executive, you should be the boss who's known for holding people accountable. And if you are, great employees are going to want to work for you. In other words, you have to be tough, but you have to help them grow if they're going to do great things.

RAISE YOUR STANDARDS

In business today, average performances are no longer acceptable. If you look at what's going on in the workforce right now, it's an uncertain time (to put it mildly). Here's the one thing I can assure you of: In the future, employees are going to be expected to excel more.

We work with almost every industry, and I can tell you that every industry is looking at ways to make more of a profit via robotics and artificial intelligence. In other words, average employees eventually aren't going to be needed. So in the future, the employees who succeed will:

- Have great attitudes
- Hold themselves accountable
- Be agile and grow
- Have a lot of potential

Take charge today. If you raise your standards, you'll quickly find out who can grow with you, and who can't. Today is always Day 1. So I wouldn't wait until tomorrow to raise your standards, and do the things you need to do to hold people accountable in the workplace.

All materials, training, and services offered by the Tanzanite Leadership Program are offered and sold with the understanding that it is not engaged in rendering legal counseling or other professional service. If legal counseling or other professional assistance is required, the services of a competent practitioner in the relevant area should be sought.

TM & © 2019 RSJ/Swenson LLC. Not to be reproduced, redistributed, or retransmitted in whole or in part. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

THE POWER OF PERSUASION

While this practice is very hard, you should separate your role as the boss from your personal feelings about people. Especially in management, you have to separate your professional relationships from your personal relationships. As a leader, you're going to be judged about your role as a boss and the way you get things done.

If you don't have authority over a colleague, use your influence skills. You don't have to say, ***"You have to do this. I order you to do this."*** Instead, use your powers of persuasion to change the way things need to be changed.

But if things don't change, maybe it's time to go to a different place, where people value accountability.

CONFLICT AMONG FRIENDS

Perhaps you have a longtime employee that's been a little bit difficult to work with. Her colleagues don't like to confront her, as they're all friends outside of work. But because nobody will really own their frustration with her behavior, it's really difficult for her management team to talk to her about these concerns.

The employee in question doesn't ***"behave badly"*** in front of their management team, but the colleagues definitely feel like there's conflict occurring. She's unsure of how to approach this subject, because it would essentially be telling her, "Your coworkers are giving me this negative feedback, but I haven't seen it firsthand. How could you handle this situation without creating internal conflict among these employees?"

First of all, the manager should ask the employees who's filing the complaint, ***"If you don't want me to do anything about this situation or identify you as being the person who informed me about it, why are you telling me about it in the first place?"***

Find out why the other employees aren't willing to be accountable. I understand that people socialize after work. But at the end of the day, if personal relationships are negatively impacting your workforce, someone is going to have to step up.

You can't allow that employee's behavior to continue, under any circumstances. So you should tell the complainer, ***"I'm going to talk to her. I won't mention any names, but we're going to have to deal with this. You need to know that."*** Then you should talk to the employee and say, ***"It doesn't matter who told me this. I'm hearing this from multiple sources."***

Then the manager should say, ***"Let me tell you what I'm hearing about you."*** At this point, the employee will ask, ***"Who told you that?"*** Your reply should be: ***"I'm hearing this from multiple sources, but it doesn't matter who it is. Multiple people have said that."***

If you have a multi-part issue, two different managers should be in the meeting to back it up. A lot of times, a really entitled employee will say, ***"You're just out to get me."*** But if you have two managers in the room, it might help alleviate this suspicion.

TOXIC EMPLOYEES

Perhaps you have an employee onsite who's a little bit more toxic than the rest of the staff. Maybe he's not a poor performer, but he has a bad attitude or addresses other employees poorly.

As his supervisor, you've addressed this topic, but you haven't really seen any improvement. What's the best way to set hard goals and expectations for him? They should be based purely on his attitude and outlook, not his actual job performance.

While this conversation might be tough to have, it has to be very direct, especially since the employee hasn't changed his behavior since he was warned. You can't start by saying, ***"Well, despite the fact we talked, your attitude hasn't improved."***

Instead, you should say,

"Despite our conversation, I witnessed this, heard this, and saw this. Do you think that's the behavior of somebody who has a good attitude? If you do, then it's time for you to leave. Either way, I'm losing patience with your bad attitude, and I don't know how to change it. I can't force you to change your attitude. If it comes down to it, you're not that valuable. In fact, no employee is that








valuable, so we're going to have to start taking you down the road that will result in termination.

Over the next couple of days, I'd like for you to think really hard about whether you want to stay here. If you don't, it's okay. Good luck to you. We'll wish you the best. On Monday morning, I want you to come back to me with a commitment: You're either going to change, or you'll give us a couple of weeks' notice.

As a matter of fact, we'll let you have a month. We'll pay you for a month, and during that time, you can look for another job.

But if you do come back with a commitment to the organization on Monday, I'm going to hold you accountable for your attitude every day. On the day you start having a bad attitude again, that will be your last day. It's your choice. Attitude is a choice."

SUMMARY

-  **Clearly define and communicate your expectations for employees and inspect what you expect.**
-  **Look in the mirror; sometimes, it's not about them, it's about you, their leader.**
-  **Don't look as entitlement as purely generational. It's individual.**
-  **If a difficult conversation needs to be had, have it.**
-  **Are they working hard, trying and struggling to succeed? Or do they just not care?**
-  **Great teams always have peer accountability. Accountability shouldn't exclusively come from the top-down.**
-  **Accountability comes with a defined consequence. That consequence must be enacted, or everyone will know it's a false expectation.**