



WHAT TYPE OF EMPLOYEES DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR WORK GROUP?

With resources in every work group shrinking, there is increasing pressure in U.S. companies to do more with less. This pressure has caused management to carefully evaluate the contribution of every person in the team. When there are scarce resources to get every job done, this becomes increasingly important.

Every six months or so, take a look at your workgroup and do a quick assessment of each person's contribution. How many of each of the following five "types" do you have in your group?

Leaders are those who exert influence, are motivating and inspiring, help others realize their potential, lead by example, and make a difference. Leaders are shining stars that can be groomed to replace you when you move on and take on more responsibility.

Contributors are individual employees who get the group focused on the immediate task and make noticeable contributions. A contributor will "take the ball and run with it," adding significant value to the functioning of the team.

Participants take part in completing tasks but don't show initiative. The participant willingly goes along with projects and tasks, but fails to be proactive by making constructive suggestions or in seeing what needs to be done.

Observers are employees who remain detached and fail to participate. An observer may avoid assignments and try to stay under the radar screen.

Detractors are people who constantly criticize, complain, and actively contribute to a negative undercurrent. The attitude of a detractor may be "I'll show them..." or "I'll just put in my time."

Every work group is bound to have a mix of the five types of employees. To improve the functioning of the group, you want to move people to a higher level of functioning and ultimately maximize the number of leaders and contributors. Participants are good candidates for coaching and may readily move up to the category of contributors and leaders.

Helping observers and detractors change is more challenging. They may have personal problems or be suffering from burnout. Personal issues often resolve themselves with counseling, but a true case of burnout may involve deep feelings of dissatisfaction, discouragement, and cynicism. These employees will only improve if they are motivated and willing to put in some hard work. If the motivation to change isn't there, moving the person out of the organization may be the most appropriate step to take.

Most employees respond well to an honest discussion about strengths and weaknesses. Constructive coaching along with a development discussion is a good first step. Be very specific about the type of behavior you are looking for in the future, and then be willing to follow up with some systematic coaching. Your role as manager is to get the job done through others and that involves many types of employees.

Call the EAP if you'd like to discuss this article as it relates to your specific work group. We can be reached at 1-800-648-9557.