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Auto Shop Tip #21

Creating Independent Teams – Part 4

Praise in Public, Coach in Private

By Michael Strautman

When is the last time an employee was truly recognized for a job well done? This is an often missed step with many managers. Employees tend not to hear from their boss unless there is a problem. For some employees, this is a favorable, but to most employees silence is worse than hearing they've done something wrong. How do you handle it when they have done something wrong? Are they called out in front of the team and spoken against in front of others? These two critical communication errors can be detrimental to creating an independent team.

So much of creating an independent team has to do with eliminating fear from the workplace. With consistency, management can create a non-threatening environment which leads to independence. If your team is only praised individually, they are individually encouraged to continue performing well. If you praise in public, your entire team will be encouraged to perform well. In the same way, coaching (or reprimanding) in front of co-workers will be discouraging to the entire team, and in some cases, can cause your team to take their co-worker's side.

We have all heard of, "Going above and beyond the customer's expectations," as a general rule of customer service. Your employees may actually be afraid of going above and beyond expectations for fear of being corrected in front of others. Therefore, praise individuals for a job well done, and do it in front of others in your organization. You can coach individuals' behavior in private to avoid negative morale in the workplace.

Observing the principle -- "Praise in Public, Coach in Private," will help you develop a long term, and positive work environment. The longer an employee is able to flourish in this environment, the more likely they will become a part of a team that is independent of the manager.

If you have the desire to learn how to create a more independent team, coach in a more productive manner, and don't know where to begin, I'm happy to help. Please feel free to email or call me: mikestrautman@turnaroundtour.com or 270-782-6455.

