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Stars In A Sea Of Sameness

By Chris Herrmann

The training administration team at Glasburg Associates perform miracles on a daily basis. Not only are they preparing for next week's batch of training courses, they are assisting in courses running each day and they are covering the phones to sell training to new clients. Their job is never boring but it rarely changes from one day to the next. Oliver Hollins and Philippa Ibbitson are both on the team and, although Oliver considers himself to be better at the sales aspects of the job, Philippa has phenomenal accuracy and speed in producing course material. Neither seems to receive appropriate recognition of this.

Unlike project teams, office teams do not necessarily have a beginning, middle and end to their main activity that you can easily gauge. Week-in and week-out they will plough through an unending landscape of sameness that they are well adapted to. For these teams recognition must be tied into efficiency, improvement and customer service measures.

There is a 3-point guide to building a recognition and reward framework for office teams:

Communicate and agree the reward and recognition scheme clearly and unambiguously

Design the rewards to be tied into behaviors that are business critical

Have a reliable measurement system that demonstrates progress

Agreement is the key to formal team recognition. Clear guidelines about what is expected and sympathetic handling of questions about what happens at the boundaries will motivate teams to drive for results.

The trainers at Glasburg Associates use "Delegate evaluation forms" to gauge how well they have been received by their audiences. Trainers receive a bonus if the forms demonstrate an average score of 8 or better out of a possible total of 10. So many questions were raised about "How many evaluation forms should be counted?", "What if the average score is 7.9?", "Can we exclude really low scores caused by trouble-makers?", "Can we take the average of all of the courses held that month?" that a

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decision was made to change the focus of the recognition scheme. It became clear that experienced trainers found the target easy to meet but inexperienced trainers became disillusioned because they were starting from a lower baseline.

The 8 out of 10 figure is still retained as the standard to be worked towards and experienced trainers are recognized for maintaining high scores that exceed this figure. However the others are now rewarded for making more than a 0.3 improvement month on month. The system is not perfect but they now have a method of motivating everyone in the company to improve their performance.

Teams exist to offset the weaknesses of individuals and to benefit from the strengths of each member. A recognition scheme can bring a greater awareness of this by highlighting the different skills necessary to achieve success.

Glasburg Associates now use the same approach with their Admin team as with their training team

allowing Oliver Hollins to be rewarded for his superior sales skills and for Philippa Ibbitson to receive acclaim for her efficiency.

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God Made the Stars, Also

By Joyce C. Lock

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And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries;

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and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude. Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it.

Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ... O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever: The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever: The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light ... While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.

Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning,

and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

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Joyce C. Lock is a published author, poet, and columnist. In addition, she founded and maintains the e-mail ministries "Heavenly Inspirations" <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HeavenlyInspirations/> and "Share a Smile" <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/smilesaring/>. Joyce's writings encourage us in our relationship with God and each other.



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