

The good, the better,
and the best



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Running head: THE GOOD, THE BETTER, AND THE BEST
The Good, the Better, and the Best
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Abstract Many companies use different techniques when communicating and stressing the importance of communication.

Many organizations use weekly meetings, conference calls, emails, and annual performance evaluations to connect with their employees. They also use a variety of these techniques to communicate with teams of people. Communication is crucial to the success of a business and teamwork is as well. However, you may think you have good communication and demonstrate the ability to work with others by keeping in contact with them and overseeing day-to-day operations, but do those attributes link you to having positive relationships with your co-workers? You may be wonderful at delegating and criticizing your employees, but how often do you commend them for a job well-done? How often do managers initiate conference calls to let employees know how valued they are? Are employees satisfied and motivated when they never hear anything positive coming from their supervisors? Continuous, supportive communication from managers, supervisors and associates is too often underemphasized. It is a major, major motivator (Nelson, 1994, pg. 12). The Good, the Better, and the Best
Introduction This project will take a closer look at the importance of positive relationships and positive reinforcement in the workplace.

My research will identify that job satisfaction, motivation, goals, values, feedback, and rewards are all important components within a person's career. It will mention ways in which employees have been (and can be) satisfied, motivated, and rewarded for their hard work. This project will

address the amount of job satisfaction one gains when they have been positively commended for their efforts. It will also take a closer look at how the ??? Power of Positive Relationships,??™ (Blanchard, 2002) can influence one??™s life outside the workplace and the impact it can have on family, friends and a person??™s daily routine. ??? If you??™re going to help people reach their full potential, they need to be recognized and rewarded.

Everyone needs that (Nelson, 1994, pg. 128)???. Method For the research of this project I have gained information from eight different sources.

These include business publications, self-help books, managerial books, and my own personal experiences. Thoughts, ideas and quotes from these sources will be used throughout the paper. Text Ken Blanchard??™s book ??? Whale Done!??? describes how to communicate effectively with your co-workers. The book describes how to accentuate the positive and really make your employees and teams not only motivated, but self-motivated.

Management should take the time to find out about the needs and desires of those reporting to them. ??? Finding out what motivates employees is important (Blanchard, 2002, pg. 55)???.

It is noted that managers who have implemented this strategy have affected their bottom line (Blanchard, 2002, pg. 58). ??? Any new business improvement today, whether it??™s a technology or a service innovation or a pricing strategy becomes instantly known and copied by the competition. That means that your only real competitive advantage is your relationship with your people. If they trust and respect you and believe in your goals, they will want to please your customers. When that happens, no one can beat you.

The one thing your competition can never steal from you is the relationship you have with your people, and the relationship they have with your customer (Blanchard, 2002, pg. 58)???. Companies should make it a priority to build trusting relationships with their employees.

They should be aware that individuals are motivated by different things. ??? Knowing the particular things that motivate and compel each person helps you add power to their motivation (Blanchard, 2002, pg. 59)???. Motivation is based on what you bring to it as an individual.

What is motivation to one person isn't motivational to another. Observing your employees is a great way to find out what motivates them. Along with observing your staff, you could simply ask them what it is that you could do to recognize their efforts. This would be done in terms of the short run as well as the long run.

Short run would pertain to day-to-day. Long run would pertain to monthly, quarterly or yearly. Never assume you know what motivates a person. I could be motivated to perform my job exceedingly well knowing I'm going to be recognized for my efforts at a company banquet. My coworker could be motivated to perform his job day in and day out because he will be rewarded for his diligence with something monetary. ??? Accentuating the positive only works when you're sincere and honest (Blanchard, 2002, pg.

62)???. If you're a supervisor who constantly belittles or points out the mistakes of your co-workers, it may come as a surprise when you try to praise them for something great. When managers suddenly use encouragement or rewards, it doesn't ring true. Managers can simply

begin by practicing saying ??? thank you??™ and their employees will gain respect for them.

When your staff knows how much you appreciate them, they are much more motivated. In my personal experiences I have used ??? thank you??™ cards when I feel it is appropriate. I explain that I truly appreciate what that person has done for the business and our team. I want my employees to know that their efforts do not go unnoticed and I make it a point to tell them that as often as possible. It is crucial that the organization you work for knows what makes their employees satisfied. In many cases employees who are not satisfied leave jobs (which causes an increase in turn-over) and may even begin to speak negatively about the company. Morale goes down and job satisfaction is definitely not met. ??? Rewarding employees for their exceptional work is critical for keeping them motivated to continue to do their best (Blanchard, 1981)???

Every person has a different level of ability. We are all interested in different topics or areas. I think it is important to establish goals according to the factors listed above. We can not assume that coworkers know how to do everything that is being asked of them. Spencer Johnson states, ??? One Minute Goals work well for me when: 1.

I focus only on what is important-the 20% of what I do (my key goals) that gets me 80% of my results. 2. I write, on a single sheet of paper in 250 words or less, my key goals-specifically, what I want and how good it feels to have it. 3. I take a minute to read and reread my goals frequently, knowing that repetition will lead to change.

4. I take a minute every now and then to look at my goals and then I look at my behavior. I see if my behavior matches my goals. (Johnson, 1984, pg. 77)???.

Setting this standard for your employees could be helpful. Giving your co-workers a goal that is a challenge is good, but you must understand that a challenge leading to a lot of frustration can make them less motivated to complete the job. ??? The first thing an effective leader needs to do is create a common purpose or vision that helps point the team in the right direction (Blanchard, 1990, pg.

26)???. I believe that a leader??™s vision and one??™s goals really go hand-in-hand. They balance each other and when one is established, everything is much clearer to the individuals working towards a positive outcome. ??? An effective team starts with a clear purpose. The hoped for end results are optimal productivity and good morale.

The means to those ends are empowerment, relationships and communication, flexibility and recognition and appreciation (Blanchard, 1990, pg. 26)???. Having a clear vision explains why individuals are working together. It creates meaning and helps everyone flow in the same direction. ??? I believe that most managers know what they want their people to do, they just don??™t bother to tell their people in a way that they would understand. Managers assume they should know. I never assume anything when it comes to goal setting (Blanchard, 1981, pg. 66)???.

If a leader skips over the basics of explaining the procedures, goals, visions of a company a few things can occur: ??? Too many things begin to fill up our

plates. There is misinterpretation and unclear communication, mixed messages from leadership and priorities are no longer established. People are unsure about what's important. We lose the "big picture" view (Pande, 2007, pg. 212). Explanations of goals and visions contribute to making us more motivated. When we know what we are working to change, develop, or continue we get a sense of satisfaction that keeps us focused on the bigger picture.

Vision inspires performance and commitment. Knowing where you are headed and having everything move in the same direction is critical. But alignment around shared vision or purpose is just the beginning of the road to a high-performing team (Blanchard, 1990, pg. 27). You can not force someone to be motivated, but you can supply them with the knowledge and tools to do so. Take a minute: look at your goals, look at your performance and see if your behavior matches your goals (Blanchard, 1981, pg.

74). Every organization has values. Either they can be created on purpose by leadership, or they will emerge on their own.

If the values are published, they can be repeated, recognized, and rewarded, with positive results (Blanchard, 2001, pg. 38). Values are a big deal. They are the cornerstones of the culture the leader is trying to create. Our values are the beliefs that drive our behavior (Blanchard, 2001, pg. 39). Establishing the values that you want to have driving your team is important. Values, along with goals and a vision are a good basis to start with.

Vision as well as goals, give employees a good idea about where the company is headed. Whether the vision pertains to technological advancements, recruiting/staffing, logistics or community outreach, you are leading your team in a positive direction. You are communicating exactly what is going on. ??? Employees deserve to know what??™s up and will handle the responsibility better than you imagine (Nelson, 1994, pg. 41)???. Past experience has led me to believe that anyone who is part of the team (work, school, or otherwise) wants to stay current and up to date with what??™s going on in their workplace. Doing this makes everyone feel included. They get a sense of camaraderie and the feeling that they are assets to the company.

Also, how you perceive yourself and the value you give yourself has a big impact on those working in your environment. Someone who demonstrates ethical behavior, along with having solid values is a great example to their peers. When you exude a certain amount of confidence, others view you differently. They may become more motivated and confident in their own decision making as well.

Someone who may be a little lenient and tend not to see the importance of good ethics may give their coworkers this impression. A leader with these characteristics may be headed for an unproductive work environment. It is vital that you motivate your people, customers and employees, anyone who can contribute to the company??™s success (Nelson, 1994).

In every interview I have participated in, I am always asked ??? what would you have changed about your previous supervisor??? Maybe not worded

exactly like this, but I always know what the person is trying to get at. More frequently than not, I find myself explaining the importance of feedback. I have been supervised by many wonderful people, all of whom have had different techniques for implementing this part of my job. Whether it be during performance evaluations or a phone call, I've been lucky enough to receive ample amounts of feedback. This has enabled me to do my job to the best of my abilities.

The feedback was both positive and constructive criticism. I never felt that when I was being corrected for doing something incorrectly it had a negative connotation attached with it. I find that many individuals tend to take things far too personally, and don't see the constructive criticism. This may refer back to the fact that everyone has different things that motivate them. Any time you make someone feel better about himself you are building stronger self-confidence (Nelson, 1994, pg. 113). Everyone handles feedback, positive or negative, differently.

In my current position a few of my coworkers appreciate feedback because they have a strong desire to learn more, be more helpful to their customers and efficient. Other coworkers don't seem to mind one way or the other. Feedback is crucial to the success of a business. Feedback presents itself anywhere at any place, almost every hour of your work day. Not only is it important for you to give your employees feedback, but I believe it's equally important to hear what your employees have to say about you.

Great leaders are always interested in ways to enhance their own knowledge and skills. The very best leaders are learners (Blanchard, 2001,

pg. 72)???. A great leader to me is not just book smart, but a people-oriented person willing to listen and learn from his/her peers. What better way to learn than to listen to the advice, critiques and criticisms of your staff. ??? Having some access to upper management is important in terms of how employees feel about the organization, and how they look at themselves. When employees know that the decision makers are accessible to them, they feel that their ideas are worth more (Nelson, 1994, pg. 35)???

The ??? Whale Done Response??? in Blanchard??™ s book is as follows: ??? Praise people immediately. Be specific about what they did right or almost right. Share your positive feelings about what they did. Encourage them to keep up the good work ((Blanchard, 2002, pg. 40)???. I would personally follow these steps towards positive feedback.

Results of a recent survey by the Council of Communication Management confirm what almost every employees already knows: that recognition for a job well done is the top motivator of employee performance (Nelson, 1994, xv)???. As stated at the beginning of my project, we all have different factors that motivate us. Once we are motivated and have achieved a positive outcome, we could potentially be rewarded. Rewards come in many different shapes and sizes and are not always monetary. In fact, most of us who are employed would rather be rewarded with advancement opportunities, flexible schedules and the opportunity to learn new skills (Pande, 2007) Matching the reward to the person, matching the reward to the achievement and being timely and specific with the rewarding is important (Nelson, 1994).

??? Recognition is so easy to do and so inexpensive that there is simply no excuse for not doing it (Nelson, 1994, pg. 17)???. Examples of these inexpensive rewards include: e-mail acknowledgements, promotional gifts, open praise, meal with staff member, vice president or president, bulletin board notices, increased territory and a contribution to a favorite charity. Recognizing and rewarding is something a leader should be doing all of the time. Not every company has the financial means to recognize their employees on a continuous, day-to-day, weekly, or monthly basis. This is when it is critical for the manager (or person leading) to be creative and achieve praise without having to spend a lot of money.??? In today??™s business climate, rewards and recognition have become more important than ever for several reasons.

Managers have fewer ways to influence employees and shape their behavior. Managers increasingly must serve as coaches to indirectly influence rather than demand a desired behavior. Employees are increasingly being asked to do more and to do it more autonomously. To support looser controls, managers need to create work environments that are both positive and reinforcing. Demographics predict that fewer workers will be available in the post baby boom era and that those who do exist will likely have fewer skills than their predecessors. This new pool of employees have different values and expect work to be both purposeful and motivating. In tight financial times, rewards and recognition provide an effective low-cost way of encouraging higher levels of performance from employees (Nelson, 1994, preface)???. Studies indicate that employees find personal recognition more motivational than money.

Yet, it is a rare manager who systematically makes the effort simply to thank employees for a job well done, let alone do something more innovative to recognize accomplishments. Bob Nelson concluded that a primary reason why most managers do not more frequently reward and recognize employees is the lack of time and creativity to come up with ways to do it (Nelson, 1994). If a manager asks her employees what it is that leads them, this may allow her to creatively think of a way to reward that person. Maybe she can reward her associate with something that relates to her hobby.

This would not only make other aware of the fact she has gotten to know her employee, but she's also focusing on something that this person can do outside of the workplace. This is something fulfilling for this person when they aren't on company time. For every four informal rewards (thank-you notes) there should be a more formal acknowledgement (a day off from work), and for every four of those, there should be a more formal reward (a plaque or formal praise at a company meeting), leading ultimately to such rewards as raises, promotions and special assignments (Nelson, 1994). In a study of more than 1, 500 employees in a vast spectrum of work settings by Gerald H. Graham, professor of management at Wichita State University, the most powerful motivator was personalized, instant recognition from their managers. Managers have found that simply asking for employee involvement is motivation in itself. (Nelson, 1994) Graham's study determined the top five motivating techniques: 1. the manager personally congratulates employees who do a good job.

2. The manager writes personal notes about good performance. 3. The organization uses performance as the basis for promotion. 4. The manager publicly recognizes employees for good performance. 5.

The manager holds morale-building meetings to celebrate success. In addition, it is recommended that leaders be held accountable for effectively recognizing employees and that organizations avoid using a blanket approaches to motivation. ??? Jelly bean??? motivation-giving the same reward to every member of the organization-not only does it not inspire employees to excel, but it may actually damage performance as top achievers see no acknowledgement of the exceptional job they have done (Nelson, 1994).

The good, the better, and the best of positive reinforcement have been outlined above. Of course, every manager??™s idea of reinforcement differ, I suppose these ideas are mine. What motivates each of us is clearly different. It is evident that we all prosper when we have goals and a complete vision as they pertain to the organizations in which we work. When our leaders have visions and demonstrate good ethical decisions, these too make for a pleasant workplace. Feedback is necessary. Not only for your employee??™s self-esteem, but for the future of the company you work for.

Sincerity and honestly are extremely critical when approaching your employees Feedback should be understood, frequent, positive, constructive, and relied upon. Everybody knows that accentuating the positive works best. Instead of focusing energy, as most of us do, on what went wrong, leaders must redirect that energy toward a positive outcome. I am quick to question

my employees when there is a discrepancy with customer service, operational issues, technological issues, or communication. I would say I am an assertive leader, but I also take pride in making my staff aware of all the good they do and the contribution they make to our company. I give constructive criticism. Not only are they learning from mistakes, but I am learning as well.

My staff knows what is expected of them and if they have questions, they ask. We still experience our fair share of miscommunication, but store meetings and one-on-one time really reduce these problems. If managers realized all it took was a quick, sincere ??? thank-you??? our workplaces would be much more productive and inviting. We would feel appreciated for our hard work and really feel valued. I would much rather receive a card, e-mail, or phone call instead of a fancy dinner. For me, one of the keys to great leadership is the amount of positive reinforcement I give my staff and coworkers. I will continually learn what motivates my staff and accentuate the positive.

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