



The Wright Coach
Developing Your Leadership Potential

Attitude, Intentions, and Focus eBook

The **Wright Word** Series
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Attitude, Intentions, and Focus eBook

How do you build passion and professional fire in your employees? How do you get them excited? How can you inspire them? How do you turn around those who have lost their motivation? Whether you call it enthusiasm, motivation, or drive, we are ultimately seeking ways to inspire people to do a great job.

In the following pages we will explore many ideas that will help you inspire your people. I will leave you with useful hints, tips, and advice so that you can achieve these intentions. This eBook will offer you a practical approach to developing passion in your people by operating from the heart with compassion and humility.

Can this eBook help you become a highly successful leader? I believe, in my heart and in my head, that it can do just that if you truly commit to this goal. Even more importantly, I believe you can become successful, be an authentic leader, and consistently create a win/win scenario for you and the people you lead. Again, this is true if you are intent on learning techniques from someone with similar experiences as your own—me—who has thought extensively about the entire process and each individual step, adjusted his methods, and gradually grown into the role of a qualified, committed leadership coach.

Actively learning from the best mentor you can find is the most direct route to success in any endeavor. Modeling your own activities after those of a real person worth emulating truly works. Of course, first you have to find that person, pursue the knowledge, and fully immerse yourself in the discipline it takes to learn and change.

Leadership from the Heart

Think about this important statement: “Managers manage things; leaders develop people.”

It is deceptively simple, and you may have even heard it before. It certainly rings true if we acknowledge that our real gains and successes as leaders come from helping others reach their full potential. But have you truly thought about the impact of this principle on how you should spend your time? What will you do differently once you’ve paid close attention to being an authentic leader who achieves success through personal business?

Many leaders try to turn business into a purely logical exercise. They concentrate on the bottom line, and they are proud to call themselves “results-driven.” For guidance and direction, they look at the numbers. But where do growth and profit really come from?

In my experience, the best way to create soaring profits and long-term success is to focus on the development of people to their full potential. When we recognize the true connection between people’s overall well-being and their work performance, the apparent contradiction in the phrase “Personal Business” goes away; we start leading from both the head and the heart. People are more productive, and teams come together.

This isn’t magical or mystical. I’m offering a concrete leadership method to help you achieve the gains of Personal Business, which are:

- Finding the personal and professional qualities most important to your success.
- Focusing on those key traits and molding them to your people.
- Enabling your employees to adopt practices and habits that create a highly energized, positive workplace.

- Building the morale and productivity that we know in our hearts to be essential to outstanding customer service and excellent long-term financial results.

This is a challenge. But it’s a challenge that’s well worth it. Your commitment to Personal Business is directly on the path to realizing your own full potential. When you are successful in applying both your head and heart, you’ll get noticed as a leader. New opportunities will unfold, and your professional horizons will expand. It really works!

Becoming an Authentic Leader

Authentic leadership begins with setting a premier example for your people. Of course, this entails putting in maximum effort and being a strong drive for positive results. But this is not enough. Let’s consider a new way of laying out the leader’s ultimate challenge.

That challenge includes:

- Building a team intently focused on delivering exceptional customer service.
- Increasing results while delivering real, recognizable value for customers and shareholders.
- Creating and sustaining a culture that values people and rewards results.

The common thread here is a true commitment to developing people. Only energetic, motivated people can make these things happen—and only authentic leadership can build upon and sustain this energy. Understanding and connecting with our people must be the number-one priority. It’s more important than the monthly numbers and more important than enforcing any one policy or procedure.

Here is a list of priorities that separate managers from authentic leaders:

The Manager...	The Leader...
Controls processes	Makes informed, inspired decisions
Assumes responsibility	Sets and explains clear expectations
Manages within set guidelines	Creates new strategies and plans for success
Referees disputes	Inspires team collaboration
Exerts authority	Models, promotes, and rewards initiative
Solves problems	Forms and shares vision and values
Policing behavior	Builds self-esteem and focus
Minimizes impact of change	Sponsors and supports positive change
Manages things	Develops people

This list is not meant to minimize the importance of a manager. Instead, it is meant to show a pattern that helps better define personal business and authentic leadership. If you're acting as a manager today, you can become an authentic leader by reshaping your inten-

tions and your approach. This change centers on truly getting to know your people. You must empathize with their individual needs in order to conquer challenges, feel supported, and be valued.

Leading in the Real World

Obviously, I am not suggesting that authentic leaders are detached visionaries dealing only with emotions and abstractions. On the contrary—we are real world decision makers. But the best decisions can only come from knowing your people and business more thoroughly and intimately than your competitors. Your decisions will be respected and will deliver results only *if* you connect with your people on an emotional level as well as intellectually.

This high level of connection enables trust and respect. In turn, trust and respect allow you to be open and objective as you work to develop your people. Apply what I consider to be the three greatest leadership principles:

- People do what you reward, not what you want, wish, or hope they will do.
- People do what you inspect, not what you expect.
- When judging performance, don't listen to what people say, watch what they actually do.

In order to make inspired, effective decisions, you must set clear expectations. Then you must follow up frequently and consistently to measure individual performance against those expectations. You must always begin with an honest evaluation of your own work. Recognize that hoping for change is futile; only inspecting, judging, and rewarding excellent performance will produce outstanding results.

Setting High Expectations, Especially for Constant Improvement

Authentic leaders are fierce competitors who are intent on winning and achieving. We cannot accept a mediocre effort that produces eighty-percent of our intended results. When stepping into a new professional role, take a few months to engage with your employees and

inspect their performance. Once you've learned the terrain, act *decisively* to set clear, high standards for performance. Be sure to emphasize and demonstrate your seriousness by holding yourself and everyone on your team to these high standards.

Do not hide the fact that achieving mediocre results is an abominable thought to you. Instead, inspire strong performance throughout your team by:

- Setting high performance standards.
- Rewarding excellent performance.
- Reprimanding and correcting poor performance.
- Building and maintaining a positive environment.
- Valuing respect from your team over being liked.
- Accepting no excuses, including your own.
- Relentlessly striving to develop people's skills.
- Refusing to “carry passengers,” those who do not commit to achieving high performance.

Your most important expectation of all should be constant improvement. You should demand it and support it in every way possible. This does not mean, however, that you should expect radical change overnight. It is impossible to simultaneously address all the weaknesses you see. It does mean that you should hold an “expectations meeting” with key managers to establish a plan and detailed program for improvement.

Begin this meeting by making it clear that eighty-percent performance will never be acceptable to you as a leader, and that a culture of excuses—however well-formulated—will not be tolerated. Build the meeting around your own personal version of these expectations and key supporting actions. Here are some examples:

Expectation	Key Actions
Honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling it as it is, without excuses
Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with problems personally and directly • Working relentlessly to remove obstacles for your people
Ethical, Consistent Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking actions that support pride in yourself, your people, your team, and your company
Customer Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always aiming for exceptional service that “wows the customer” and makes him feel special • Spreading the word that your team will over-deliver on promises
Recruiting for Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching relentlessly for the right people, with the right attitude to succeed • Following standardized, demanding processes without fail • Never settling for “the best of a bad lot”
People Development and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying focused on coaching, with a “win/win” intention • Building individual self-esteem among team members at every opportunity
Focus on Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting milestones and rewarding achievement • Insisting on constant improvement that leads to exceeding plan and expectations • Celebrate successes • Remember... Words are Words Promises are Promises Excuses are Excuses Performance is Reality!

Strategies to Energize Your People and Drive Results

When I built a highly successful nationwide life insurance and investment division for a large banking company, I needed more than ability and drive. In every leadership role, I had to develop inspired and workable strategies. Strategies—clear courses of action that unify your workforce in purpose—are very powerful when they are followed through with implementation and discipline.

To develop solid strategies, you must first “do the desk time,” and focus intently on:

- Analyzing information.
- Knowing your market.
- Organizing and training your people.
- Ensuring your products meet real market needs.

A key strategy for success in increasing these insurance and investment results was increasing referrals and leveraging information available from the core banking business. We needed access to profitable bank customers, and this required strategic planning focused on building trust with our bank colleagues. How could I

convince the bank's state manager that my team would be worthy of their trust and could generate a huge profit increase for the bank itself?

The strategy that worked can be summarized in a few words: We valued the bank and its people as customers, and thus treated them accordingly. Having a clear, concise strategy is an excellent start, yet execution is the key. Our implementation required a major overhaul of a sales team that was not meeting expectations.

I dismissed a number of sales people who had lost the trust of their bank colleagues. I also put the bottom twenty-percent of our sales force in performance counseling, with a focus on improving both attitude and skills. The biggest benefit of this counseling was that it served as a wakeup call for the mid-level performers. They realized that violating the trust necessary for bank referrals would not be tolerated in the future. They also realized that with the bottom twenty-percent being "rehabilitated or released," they would now potentially be the bottom group, which motivated them to lift their performance.

I had confidence in this strategy and in our ability to implement it. I pledged to the bank's state manager that we would dismiss anyone his bankers legitimately did not trust. We agreed on a trial period, during which the bank would share information on term deposits, setting the stage for a major win for my people.

A simple counter-referral from the bank staff, followed by a needs analysis from one of our planners, prompted a \$1 million-plus transfer to the bank. This win gave our program the momentum it needed, and this strategy became a reliable driver for revenue and profit. Within six months, the profitability of our business increased by seventy-nine percent. Equally important, the bank was enjoying accelerated growth of its customer base and deposits.

When I became CEO of an investments/insurance firm, I extended this successful strategy across the entire business. The key to our success was the commitment of every manager to set strong, but fair, expectations for employee conduct that would earn the bank's trust.

Any strategy requires rigorous planning and constant review. Again, I will emphasize that the leader's role never ends with forming a strategy. Planning—including setting budgets and key actions—is crucial to implementation, and requires leadership as well. Your plans must include:

- Clear intentions and objectives that capture precisely what you aim to achieve.
- Concise measures of performance and intervals for those measures.
- Justification for the achievability of your intention.
- An established review schedule that produces:
 - Daily progress awareness for you.
 - Weekly and monthly team meetings for analysis of performance vs. plan, and required course adjustments.
 - Quarterly accountability workshops for which each team leader is responsible to give a presentation on performance vs. plan.

Staying In Touch on Every Level

Your respect across your organization will increase ten-fold if people see you frequently spending time on the floor at the grassroots level. It is important to resonate with your people on every level, showing them that you truly understand their challenges and empathize with them as individuals. Personally, I've insisted publicly to be included on the kitchen-duty list for events. Where I've seen a spill, I've cleaned it up, even though I was the CEO. As a leader, you must exemplify the phrase that "every little bit counts."

The power of visibility and participation by a leader is amazing. For you as an authentic leader, every interaction with your people should be treated as an opportunity to reinforce vision, values, and expectations as you build their self-esteem.

After all, in a leadership role you are highly visible and constantly scrutinized. Rise to the challenge of show-

ing your people that they are valued by expressing your feelings and having a sincere intent to develop them personally and professionally. The results for all involved will be tremendous!

Productive Time Management for Leaders

At this point, I want to address an objection that has almost certainly crossed your mind. You may have thought, “I’m already giving one hundred-percent and working twelve-to-fourteen hour days. How can I possibly find the time to implement all these new ideas and requirements such as interacting with my team on a daily basis?”

This is a serious objection, particularly as we are living in a time in which we are constantly bombarded with information and demands through email, telephone, print, and the Internet. Tony Monaco, who was a Westpac Regional Manager at one time, once offered me this helpful comment: “Are you busy being busy ... or busy being productive?”

Becoming desk-bound is the enemy of all your other intentions. It hinders you in developing people. You cannot successfully develop people—and therefore you will not measurably improve results—without communicating, relating, and gathering feedback. Let’s examine practical ways of accomplishing productivity in more depth.

When I’ve faced the “simply can’t find time” objection from managers, I have done my best to turn it into a development lesson. We meet over coffee to talk about what tasks can be delegated or reprioritized. Often, the manager is reenergized by reviewing what is most important; activities that develop people and feed positive attitudes clearly rise to the top.

Leadership thinker and pioneer Lance Secretan once wrote, “Unless I am vigilant, I will become a prisoner of process instead of an enjoyer of experience. How much of our time is spent on the means rather than the ends—the rules and policies, the structures (strategic plans, budgets, proposals, compensation programs, agendas,

etc.) and the rituals (meetings, voice mail, e-mail, performance appraisals, agendas, and politics)?”

Thinking about this question can help us refocus on our most important activity: developing our people in ways that promote success.

More Challenging Questions and Tough Decisions

To those who object that self-examination alone doesn’t resolve the time management challenge, I say you’re right. Only a leader can make leadership decisions, and prioritizing for results is the work of a leader. Our role is to identify workable strategies and plans—all while facing the reality of every challenge and obstacle.

Simply stated, leadership is all about making tough decisions. For many situations, I recommend consulting the following checklist:

- Is my decision as fair as possible to all concerned?
- Does it violate the law, or my company’s vision and values?
- Have I applied my heart as well as my head in looking at this decision?
- Would I make the same decision if I knew my action would make the 6 o’clock news?

What if you find yourself reporting to an ineffective leader? I see two options, one of which is to transition to another leader. The second—a better alternative for most—is to develop a skill I call “Leading Up.” In essence, this consists of applying our principles of leadership in a slightly different way, with a focus on:

- Building a professional relationship.
- Being a good finder when it comes to your leader’s strengths.
- Offering to become directly involved and apply your own strengths, without offering criticism.

For example, if you believe your leader is failing to track and interpret numbers effectively, you might say, “I’m sure you’re on top of this, but numbers are really what

I love, and where I believe I excel. Would you be open to a brief weekly meeting for me to share what I see in this area? You can let me know if I'm on the right track." In this way, the situation is kept positive and encouraging.

We could certainly debate whether this approach is honest in every way. But I think we could agree that it has a better chance of getting "win/win"-type results than a complaint or head-on criticism. This strategy also meets the standards on our checklist for decision-making—especially in its potential to improve the situation for everyone involved.

As a leader, you are intent on succeeding. I believe that the success worth achieving is success you can feel good about—in your heart, as well as intellectually. Although this doesn't resolve all of our challenges, it provides useful guidelines. My life in business has convinced me beyond a doubt that we don't have to choose between success and a clear conscience.

Authentic Leadership in Review

As you set your intention on becoming an authentic leader, it is important for you to keep a strong hold on the following concepts:

- 1. Remain humble and accessible.** "Climbing the ladder" can destroy humility. Don't let that happen. Remain in touch with your people and your own heart by following the guidelines and principles I've presented so far.
- 2. Form and maintain a total commitment to developing people as the single most important thing you do in your leadership role.** When in doubt, do something directed clearly at improving individual and/or team performance. Remember that if all you did was improve performance by ten percent in one specific area for each team member, each month, you would be an above-average leader and have a great chance of achieving above-average results.
- 3. Ask for feedback—and take it to heart.** Develop a system for obtaining feedback, and make the time to learn what your people need and how you can help. Make sure they know that you can handle constructive criticism—and that you want to hear it. Then use this feedback to add to your own constant improvement, the same constant improvement you demand from them.
- 4. Respect People.** You seek and require respect. Remember that this is a two-way street. There are simple ways to show that you care about and respect your people, including "being a good finder" and "catching someone doing something right."

Inspiring Collaboration and Creating a Culture of Initiative

This story about executing a new business strategy illustrates “fearless leadership” because we took many risks to reach unprecedented performance heights. It also shows an engagement in personal business. We recognized the value of trust, and we engaged all of our people honestly and firmly in the mission to build and merit that trust.

Another important component in your role as a leader is removing the fear of failure. Fear can often lead to mind-numbing paralysis among very capable people. In our success story, we set extremely high expectations, but kept a fair balance by acknowledging the possibility of failure; if failure occurred, it was followed by recovery and growth.

The best way to remove fear is by showing without a doubt that you believe in your people and their capacity to develop their work and themselves. This requires you to emphasize the following truths:

- Everyone fails at times.
- Failure can lead to growth and improvement.
- Success requires risk.
- Simple mistakes do not constitute failure.
- It is essential to learn from mistakes and move on.

As an authentic leader, you will focus—without fail—on building self-esteem. You can only become a source of inspiration for your people by demonstrating constant support and participation in their working lives. They will collectively generate ideas only if you show them that you value and reward these behaviors.

An excellent piece of practical leadership advice comes

from Blanchard and Johnson’s *The One Minute Manager*: “Catch someone doing something right and tell them about it.” Leading motivational speaker Amanda Gore also captures this essential insight in her recommendation to “be a good finder.” This means that as a good leader, you should find the good in every situation and in every person, no matter how hard you have to search!

A culture of employee initiative is a culture of continuous improvement. This means continually working on upskilling our people, instilling in them the confidence that you trust them, and encouraging them to use their initiative, thereby accessing the combined brain power of the entire team.

Employee initiative, especially when employees are trained in the art, enables them to work in conjunction with their supervisors. This will have a marked effect on performance.

One of a leader’s key attributes is to be able to influence others; successful leaders use this skill to encourage employees to take the initiative in decision making. This is not meant to take accountability away from the leader. Instead, it is more a way to encourage employees to be thoughtful and bring recommendations to their supervisor, even though the final decision is in the hands of the leader.

Here are some examples of an employee showing initiative:

“I would like your input. Can I schedule fifteen minutes of your time to go through a customer issue? I’ve done the research and want to make sure I haven’t missed anything.

To give you an overview, we had an unusual request from a valued client yesterday to provide a service that we do not normally provide. On the surface it looked feasible, but I put together a list of questions to be considered before we commit.”

As a leader, you have three options for dealing with this employee:

- Approving the request.
- Declining the request.
- Working with him to provide a win/win outcome.

An appropriate response might be, “If I could see you this afternoon or tomorrow morning that would be excellent, as I want to get back to our client by the end of the business day tomorrow.”

This statement displays a high level of initiative and has three potential outcomes:

- It enhances employee confidence, attitude, and job satisfaction.
- It creates speedier results by efficient use of management’s time.
- It gives the leader the opportunity to look at providing additional services that create win/win outcomes for clients and the business.

Some employees will be ready to take initiative like this now, while others will require some training, coaching, and encouragement to reach this level of initiative.

As your people gain confidence in utilizing these newly acquired skills they will feel their jobs being enriched. In turn, this job enrichment will encourage more initiative, shifting what they do and how they do it. As they continue to grow, involving them in the decision-making processes of planning and setting budgets is the key. This gives employees the room to be creative and to set their own challenging intentions; it encourages further self development; and it allows the employees to view themselves as an integral part of the big picture. This sense of accomplishment builds trust and loyalty.

An initiative culture will encourage employee participation, so it is important to be prepared for some of the following situations:

- Requests for an employee consultative committee.
- Input in decisions before they are finalized.
- Contact with clients to gain their perspective.
- Demands for greater employee autonomy.
- Participation in the setting of team goals.
- Career planning.
- Flexible working hours.
- More employee incentives.

A leader must be careful with handling requests for increases, as it is very important that these requests are handled respectfully to protect the developing initiative culture and ensure that the rising people power is not halted.

In an attempt to increase employee initiative, I have used a method called “Employee Suggestion Initiative,” which gives frontline employees the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. This process has diverse applications, but, regardless of how it is used, it is important to recognize employees who have offered inspired suggestions. This recognition is essential, and if the culture has not previously been one of sharing ideas you may need to jumpstart this program with monetary incentives as well.

In my past business endeavors, I have received invaluable employee suggestions that have allowed us to improve:

- Workplace efficiency.
- Customer Service.
- Products.
- Expenditure reductions.
- Revenue enhancements.

Igniting Passion in Your Team

A leader may not be able to fix every bad attitude, but on a daily basis, whether she realizes it or not, she is putting out positive or negative vibes which will influence every employee's attitude one way or the other.

Every business goes through phases in its development cycle, and in each phase there is the potential to energize or de-motivate. The way the team reacts to each situation has to do with how that particular phase is viewed and handled by the leader.

For example, a rapid growth phase may bring forward some of the following challenges:

- Constant accelerated change.
- Stress and anxiety with co-workers.
- New employees in need of mentoring and training.
- Strain to meet customer demands.
- Loss of service quality.
- Product delays.
- Longer work hours.

It is not unusual for a business experiencing a rapid growth phase to find they have frustrated employees. But if the leader is not on top of the situation, this frustration will turn to anger and de-motivation.

Good leaders are confident, imaginative, inspirational, and courageous in challenging times, and they possess the ability to turn negative energy into positive energy. In stressful times, employees want to be assured that their leader has a sense of how to get them through tough times. In this step, we will look at ways to keep employee attitudes positive and morale high.

Strategies to Energize Your People and Drive Results

In order to build a highly successful nationwide life insurance and investment division for a large banking company, I needed more than just ability and drive. In every

leadership role, we must develop inspired yet workable strategies. Strategies—clear courses of action that unify your workforce in purpose—are very powerful when you follow through with implementation and discipline.

To develop solid strategies, you must first “do the desk time,” and focus intently on:

- Analyzing information.
- Knowing your market.
- Organizing and training your people.
- Ensuring your products meet real market needs.

Motivation and Morale

The word motivation literally means “a reason to move.” Almost every move we make has a reason behind it: We sleep when we are tired, we eat when we are hungry, we drink when we are thirsty. This should also apply to the business setting.

When working with new employees, a leader can and should immediately establish a motivational workplace by his or her mood, passion, and personal enthusiasm. This positive attitude will have an uplifting effect on new people by giving them the confidence that they have selected the right company.

As a leader who knows how to motivate people, it is important to understand human behavior and what drives them. Do not assume that money is your people's key motivator. Find their “hot buttons”—the individual reasons that will make them strive to achieve—by asking them open-ended questions and listening attentively to find their motivators. Clearly, different people are motivated by different needs. As a leader, it is important to know what specifically motivates each individual employee.

One or more of the following nine needs will be the motivator for 99-percent of people:

1. Achievement and Growth

These employees want to use their talents for success. They desire to grow through learning new roles or educating themselves. Provide them with challenging projects suited to their skills and they will achieve.

2. Money

These employees desire to earn substantial income. Give these people a remuneration system that rewards achievement, bonuses that reward excellent planning, or an open-ended commission structure based on performance.

3. Teamwork

These employees enjoy being part of a successful team. They thrive while interacting with people; group projects motivate them, as does the social aspect of the workplace.

4. Power

These employees are motivated by controlling and influencing others. They enjoy making decisions and being in a position to lead and direct others. Tread cautiously, as merely wanting power will not necessarily make them a good leader.

5. Approval

These employees seek recognition and praise. Offer them positive feedback and public recognition of their achievements and contributions. Ensure that this feedback is genuine; they will notice insincere approval, which can actually be a de-motivator.

6. Security

A steady income, fringe benefits, and a stable workplace is what drives these employees. Give them attractive base salaries and a comfortable work environment with low risk.

Do not place these people in a position where income is primarily performance-based or in a commission-only role.

7. Independence

These employees seek autonomy and freedom to set their own work hours; they love to work alone. These people will enjoy roles such as being on a mobile team or working from home.

8. Stability

These employees want to work in a position where there is minimal disruption and change. Do not place them in roles where change is rapid or day-to-day duties are

radically different. Their professional ideal is a stable role with set schedules and a minimum of disruption.

9. Equality

These employees desire fair treatment. They will analyze and compare their duties, work hours, salary, and benefits to other employees and will become disenchanted if they perceive themselves as being treated unfairly.

Once you have analyzed your employees and found their motivating hot buttons, it's time to become innovative. You must structure their roles and rewards to match their needs, which will give them the feeling that you truly care about them as individual employees.

According to Gallup Organization, research only twenty-percent of employees in large organizations surveyed felt their strengths were utilized on a daily basis—eight out of ten felt like square pegs placed in round holes.

“People will forget what you say. They will forget what you do. But they will never forget how you made them feel.”

-Carl W. Buechner

Now that we have a plan to motivate individuals, let's take a look at motivating teams.

While team motivation begins and ends with motivating individuals, the team will be highly motivated and most effective when the following items are in effect:

- Each person is a willing member of the team.
- Each person sees being a team member as personally rewarding.
- The team is challenged to produce its best work.
- Team meetings are frequently held with honest input from all members.
- Each team member has pride in being part of the team.
- Each team member has a sense of group accountability.

- Each team member takes pride in the team achieving intentions.
- The team celebrates their successes together.

You will inevitably face situations where it appears difficult or impossible to motivate an individual. Let's examine some examples:

1. Mary, a trusted administrator with ten years of service, is finding it increasingly difficult to juggle her home life and work commitments due to a recent move and having a ninety minute commute to and from work. The writing is on the wall that Mary will leave your team soon due to these obstacles.

Here are some potential solutions:

- a) Talk to Mary about offering flexible work hours that will allow her to avoid peak traffic and reduce her commute time.
- b) Consider setting up a home office and change Mary's work to incorporate duties that can be completed off-site.

2. Bill is a long-standing, respected employee who is very popular within the team. He has eighteen months until retirement and he knows that he has reached the ceiling with promotion and income. Achievement in his current role is not a motivator as he feels he has achieved plenty and he appears to be coasting to retirement.

You cannot dismiss Bill based on his performance as he has mastered doing enough to retain his current role. In addition, due to his popularity in the office, if you attempt to force him out based on performance issues, others will see this as dismissing an employee with years of loyal service, which will reduce office morale.

A potential solution would be to meet with Bill in a casual setting, perhaps over coffee. Let him know you view his years of service positively and let him know that you would like to work with him to design a role that would take advantage of his immense experience and skills across a wide range of positions in the organization.

The win/win result of this exchange would potentially be one of the following:

- Special projects that will show a positive short-term result. It's important that Bill sees his efforts as clearly measurable and that concrete results are produced before he retires.
- Place Bill in a mentoring role that gives him the responsibility to teach new employees. It is critical to let him know the importance of this role, as he will be impacting if new people start with passion and a positive attitude. Create a system that rewards him based upon the success of new employees.

Motivating people requires ongoing work, but putting your people in the right roles will repay your efforts with a more dedicated and loyal workforce and lower employee turnover—which will all lead to higher productivity.

"People say motivation doesn't last.
Well neither does bathing –
That's why we recommend it daily."

-Zig Ziglar, Motivational Speaker

How to Motivate Different Generations

One of the biggest challenges facing today's leaders is that for the first time in history they could be managing four distinct generations. No wonder we have plenty of opportunities to experience generation gaps!

Matures – Boomers – Xers – Millennials are all in the workforce, these groups have different values and provide challenges for leaders in getting to know their traits and manage them effectively.

This does not mean that you generalize and manage your people according to the generalizations of their particular group. What it does mean is that smart organizations and leaders obtain information on the values of these different generations to use as a starting point.

This knowledge will be a great base to start from, but ensure all leaders take into account employee individuality and do not generalize.

Organizations must build relationships and manage according to age-based cohorts to be successful in the current business atmosphere (Workers under 35, Workers between 35-54, and Workers over 55). Focus on skills not age. Tailor management according to cohort characteristics (McNulty, 2006).

We need to be careful not to stereotype these workers as often they are motivated by one of the nine things we covered previously, but leaders need to understand what may be motivating factors for people of different age groups.

Workers under 35 – less loyal to institutions; want responsibility and chance to offer input right away; are not afraid to make decisions. Place this group in positions of responsibility right away; relationship with immediate manager supersedes one with the organization; anticipate this group will leave to pursue educations, other

employment opportunities, travel, etc. Make it easy for them to return.

Workers between 35-54 – anti-authoritarian; idealistic; ambitious; flexible; industrious; independent; people-centered. This group distrusts leadership; negotiating busy lives; want merit-based pay systems; and participative management. This group are usually middle managers that will stay in their roles longer because the older generations are working longer. Provide new opportunities, mentoring roles, and knowledge sharing. Consider compensating them for transferring to lateral positions as a retention program.

Workers over 55 – trust authority; respect rules; loyal to institutions; expect people to “pay their dues” before receiving authority; value financial security; difficulty with ambiguity; strong social skills. This group should be interacting with people and utilizing their expertise and historical perspective. Offer chance to master new skills and be sensitive to younger professionals managing older workers.

High Achieving Individuals

Generally, your high achievers will be the employees who have inner drive, are self-motivated because they know what they want, and are sometimes in a role that matches their motivating factors simply by chance.

High achieving employees execute the basics superbly, day in and day out. Use them as role models to provide training sessions at your skills workshops. Most high achievers are delighted with tasks like this, as it plays to their ego and will also help them hone their skills in preparation to deliver these presentations.

Soft Focus

Once you have your team motivated, you need to ensure that the team members remain focused on their tasks.

In today's ever-changing world, there is a need for a "soft focus;" the focus must be on everything and nothing at the same time. It is impossible to simply focus intently on one facet; we must constantly be aware of our surroundings and concentrate on several items at once. Through the use of soft focus, we can be aware of all that is taking place in the business world.

"There are many supremely talented people who have not met expectations. Do you know of one supremely focused person who has not achieved his business and personal goals?"

-Ken Wright

Overcoming Negativity

Negativity is certainly something a leader must deal with in his or her employees. To combat negativity, here are several types of thinking to avoid:

- Ignoring the small positives. This involves blocking out all good indications and turning these into negatives.
- All or nothing thinking. This involves categorizing actions or events into clearly defined areas: Good/Bad, Success/Failure, Winners/Losers.
- Mind reading. Do not assume another's point of view. Simply ask what it is.
- Rigid thinking. Being dogged and determined about an idea, feeling, or belief without looking at alternatives.
- Catastrophic thinking. Thinking the worst will happen and often rehearsing this undesirable outcome in your head without objectively working through the situation.

To combat these and other negative behaviors, there are certain types of attitudes and behaviors to encourage. Here are some examples:

- Planning. If you have a clear plan and structured short-term and long-term goals, planning promotes confidence at all levels.
- Let negative people be lonely. Refuse to associate with negative people. Let them know how much you value positive thinking and politely inform them that you cannot allow their negativity to invade you.
- Positive self talk. Congratulate yourself along your journey. Highlight the positives and coach yourself to achieve your full potential.

- Take action. One step is all it takes to change a negative path. Take bold action and force the apathy and negativity to dissolve.
- “If you say so.” Every time you negatively frame one of your skills or actions, say to yourself, “If you say so.” For example: “I am unlucky.” “If you say so!” While this may sound silly, it is amazing how this simple statement can force you to appreciate your skills and reverse negative thinking.
- Look into your heart. This is where the true wisdom lies, and at times when you are unsure of yourself, take some deep breaths and think about what your heart says. A heartfelt decision is generally a wise one.

“The difference between a positive spirit and a positive attitude is that one comes from the heart and the other from the head.”

-Amanda Gore

Lifting Morale

The biggest effect on group morale is the mood and behavior of the leader. It is every leader’s responsibility to ensure that he or she create a positive environment and keep a levelhead. As you develop your people and improve results, morale will climb, as everyone loves to be part of a winning team. This creates a cycle of success and high group morale, which is a winning outcome for all.

Some constructive tools to improve group morale may include:

- The leader’s words: The words used by leaders will have a profound effect on morale. Here are some suggestions:
 - Use “We,” not “I.”
 - “Thank you”—say it often.
 - “You did an excellent job.”
 - “I’d like to hear what you think about...”
 - “I think that deserves a ‘Ta da!’”

Praising employees for jobs well done will likely lead to an increase in productivity, as they will feel like valuable members of the team. The goal is to avoid negative thinking in employees, such as:

- “I don’t feel appreciated.”
- “I don’t get the support I need.”
- “I don’t like the atmosphere here.”
- “I don’t feel special.”
- “I don’t think anybody would care if I left.”

It is important to keep employees feeling useful and appreciated, both for their own personal wellbeing and for the wellbeing of the company. If they do not feel this way, it is likely they will ultimately leave your organization.

Empathy

Empathy, or being able to feel the pain or joy of another individual, is an important characteristic when dealing with employees. Teachers of empathy insist that if you cannot feel the pain or joy of others, you are unable to feel the same thing in yourself. Can you feel your own joy, acknowledge your own pain? If you are unable to register these feelings, this should be your starting point. Learn to experience your own feelings.

In William Ury’s book, *Getting Past No*, he makes the point that it is important to see both the factual point and the emotional point of another person. He offers this example:

An employee says, “I just found out Dale makes two thousand dollars more than I do for the exact same job!” The employee is hurt and angry. Trying to explain all the valid reasons why Dale makes more money will only make the employee more frustrated. Instead of this response, you should acknowledge the facts and the feelings first:

“You think we are taking advantage of you and you’re understandably angry. I can understand that. I’d probably feel the same way if I were in your shoes.”

Someone who is angry does not expect this response. By immediately acknowledging his feelings, you've immediately calmed him down. His next statement might be: "Well, I don't earn as much as Dale." That statement indicates that he's ready to hear your explanation of the situation. Showing empathy isn't about letting go of your own needs. It simply means you are able to see things from the perspective of others and acknowledge their unique feelings.

Respecting feelings is extremely important when managing a group of people. Feelings rule people, and individual people are what ultimately make a business succeed or fail.

When it comes down to it, the main ingredients needed for a great business include:

1. People selection and development.
2. Excellent strategy, mission, vision, and values.
3. Great products, service, and marketing.
4. How people feel.

You may have all the other key business drivers in place, but for the business to perform exceptionally, your people have to feel inspired, excited, enthusiastic, creative, and that they are individually contributing to the success of the business. Feelings are crucial!

To publicly credit a job well done and thus improve positive employee feelings, consider creating an achievements box to acknowledge employees for their fine work. Include customer service stories, great sales results, projects completed, and personal accomplishments. Read these achievements out loud at weekly team meetings, and to encourage participation have random drawings for movie tickets, chocolates, or bottles of wine. People forget the positives if you fail to relive them; it is your job as a leader to remind them of their successes.

"Daring ideas are like chessman moved forward; they may be beaten, but they may start a winning game."

-Goethe

Prescription to Cure Bad Attitudes

Bad attitudes must inevitably be dealt with. This step continues to show us the importance of the leader being a positive role model. Whether it is in the mood they display or their attitude and passion, leaders are constantly under the spotlight, and their team will respond in a way that reflects their own demeanor. As you think about the type of role model you are, it is important to focus on the following skills we have discussed in this eBook:

1. Strategies to Energize People and Drive Results

Develop clear strategies of action that unify your workforce in purpose. Create trust and be a role model of the behaviors you want your people to portray, set high standards and don't tolerate negative attitudes.

2. Inspiring Collaboration

Collaboration is crucial to innovation; the leader needs to pave the way internally and externally to ensure all parties are collaborating.

3. Create an Initiative Culture

For continuous improvement to flourish, it is essential to have an initiative culture. When you have employees trained to take initiative, you will find that this quality enriches their roles, they enjoy their work, and results are enhanced, while trust and loyalty rise.

4. Motivation and Morale

We explored the reasons why an employee's attitude may wane. Is he in the type of role that corresponds with his key motivator and hot buttons? After discussing the nine motivators, your challenge now is to become innovative and structure employees' roles to match key motivators.

This concludes the Attitude, Intentions, and Focus eBook. I hope that you are ready and equipped with the knowledge that will catapult you from manager to a leader who everyone in your organization looks to for guidance and advice. If you're interested in learning more about leadership both in the workplace and in life, sign up for my free eNewsletter at www.TheWright-Coaching.com.

Thank you for accompanying me on this journey!



About the Author

Ken Wright found his calling as a leader early in the course of his business career. Beginning as a bank teller in Australia, Ken was quickly promoted and became the youngest bank manager appointed at the time in the Westpac Banking Corporation. He later went on to become CEO of Westpac Financial Services Limited in 1993, whose profitability grew by 425% under his guidance and leadership. He joined Aussie Home Loans, Australia's leading non-bank lender, in 2000. As an executive there, Ken used his leadership capabilities and strategic planning and implementation skills to grow the business and raise profitability significantly beyond the expectations of management.

Ken's success as a leader is not only limited to his professional life. He has applied his drive for achievement and his ability to set and focus on his goals to his personal life as well. He played three different sports—football, athletics, and cricket—semi-professionally while building his business career in Australia. He has also completed five marathons.

In 2004, Ken married Amanda Gore and moved to Dallas where he is now COO of *Amanda Gore International*. Ken is also the founder and President of The Wright

Coach, a business coaching and leadership development firm specializing in individual and team development. His business also inculcates the message his wife Amanda offers to audiences throughout the world and provides a mechanism for them to implement the strategies she recommends through one-on-one personal coaching and group leadership coaching.

Ken has three children living in Australia, Rebecca and Renee, who are both lawyers, and Matt, who is into horticulture more than law. Rebecca married Tim in October 2006, while Renee and Matt still enjoy the single life. Being a parent taught Ken many skills, and he uses some of these in his coaching today.

Ken's business experience includes 32 years in the financial services industry and 8 years as a CEO of a major financial group. With a long history of realizing his potential both in the business world and in his personal life, Ken attributes his success to being an approachable and understanding leader with very high expectations. He feels displaying empathy is important as you concentrate on developing and inspiring your people while having an intent focus on superb implementation of key business objectives.