

Accentuate the Positive

According to research in psychology and change theory, exceptional results in organizations tend to be linked to positive leadership. Here are ways to tap into the strategies of positive leaders:

Create a Personal Management Interview (PMI) program.

Such a program has two important steps: First, whenever you start new relationships with people — whether they're new hires, collaborative partners, or members of a new team — hold a role-negotiation session so that all parties know precisely what's expected of them and the full array of resources in place to help them flourish. Explicate the mission, goals, and values of the organization. Negotiate all role-related issues not prescribed by policy. Keep a written record of the agreements and responsibilities that result from the meeting.

The second step is to hold ongoing, one-on-one meetings at least once a month with each person. At each meeting, generate action steps focused on performance improvement and relationship building. Make sure both of you prepare agenda items for the meeting in advance, work together to make progress, and leave the experience personally and interpersonally enriched.

Concentrate on four keys

1. **Establish a climate that encourages compassion, forgiveness, and expressions of gratitude.**
2. **Form a relationship that's a source of enrichment, vitality, and learning for both the individuals involved and the organization as a whole.**
3. **Use communication that expresses appreciation and approval** rather than criticism and dissatisfaction. When you must give negative feedback, do so in a supportive way, using descriptive, problem-centered, validating statements

rather than evaluative, derogatory, blaming words. Describe the situation rather than evaluating it, and suggest alternatives rather than finding fault.

4. **Clarify the positive meaning** of the interaction. Make long-term benefits clear by emphasizing how the meeting will extend beyond the immediate time and place.

— adapted from *Positive Leadership* by Kim Cameron (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com)

Do You Foster Positive Change?

As a leader, to what extent do you:

- **Hold meetings at which everyone is encouraged** to express their compassionate, optimistic, and grateful feelings?
- **Be constantly on the lookout** for people who need help so that you can provide support?
- **Focus on the behavior, not the person**, when providing negative feedback?
- **Express gratitude to as many people as possible** every day?
- **Foster information sharing** so everyone's aware of colleagues' difficulties and can express caring and concern?
- **Emphasize successes**, build on strengths, and celebrate what's going right?
- **Give people a purpose** and help them look forward to a positive outcome?
- **Use a ratio of five positive messages** for every negative message?
- **Encourage people** to share personal concerns? 

Managing Diversity to Get the Best from Your Organization

Diversity management has evolved over the past several decades. *World Class Diversity Management: A Strategic Approach* by R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr. (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com) is intended for managers who know that diversity gives their organization an advantage, and are willing to boldly address each diversity situation. There are four main strategies for managing diversity:

- **Managing for representation** seeks to correct past wrongs.
- **Managing for diverse relationships** applies the Golden Rule.
- **Managing for diverse talent** maximizes individual engagement. It elicits each person's abilities

regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, beliefs, or age.

- **Managing for all strategic mixtures** maximizes stakeholder engagement. With this approach, managers focus on coping with diversity issues on an ongoing basis rather than seeing diversity as a problem to be solved and then removed from the "to do" list.

This book explains each type of management so that you can make quality strategic decisions in any type of diversity mixture. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler



Be a Master Motivator and Change Agent

Motivate others with these pointers:

Pump up your e-mails. Even a neutral e-mail feels cold and impersonal, so never send an e-mail without brightening it up. Even if you’re just transferring information, use it as a chance to provide appreciation, positive reinforcement, and inspiration to the recipient.

Give up being right. Be willing to admit you’re not perfect and you don’t always know what you’re doing. There’s nothing more powerful than saying, “You’re right about that. And I’m going to take some steps to get that done.”

Communicate about change in the most enthusiastic way possible. Understand that people pass through four stages in the change cycle: (1) Objection: “This can’t be good.” (2) Denial: “I don’t want to deal with it.” (3) Exploration: “How can I make this change work for me?” (4) Buy-in: “I’ve figured out how to make this work for me and for others.” It takes time to get to the fourth step, so be patient, let people see you embracing the change yourself, and help them discover the fun, positive side of change. Learn all you can about what’s coming so you can inform people fully and be a spokesperson for the change.

Schedule praise the way you schedule meetings. In your planner, write the name of a different person for each week. Then catch that person “doing something right” and dish up the accolades.

Remember the most crucial words in the English language, and use these words every day. The five most important words: I’m proud of you. Four most important words: What is your opinion? Three most important words: If you please. Two most important words: Thank you. One most important word: you. 

— adapted from *100 Ways to Motivate Others* (Career Press, careerpress.com) and *Smart Moves for People in Charge* (Perseus Books Group, perseusbooksgroup.com)

Six Steps toward Change

- 1. Define the current reality.** Be honest in assessing where you and your organization are now. Each bold action you take comes from some form of self-examination that takes you to the next level.
- 2. Develop support for change.** The most crucial success factor in leading change is to gain acceptance. Lift people above their initial resistance by helping them see how vital they are to your efforts.
- 3. Move forward.** Keep your plan simple, and focus on one goal at a time. Review what you learn as you proceed, and change direction quickly when necessary. Remember that the journey of a thousand miles begins at your feet.
- 4. Establish shared ownership and accountability.** Make sure all stakeholders take responsibility for the organization’s plans.
- 5. Measure progress, and celebrate successes along the way.** Share such markers as survey results and personal success stories so everyone can be inspired by them.
- 6. Keep momentum alive.** This stage includes reflecting, regrouping, and recommitting yourself. Put together a cross-functional team to become a catalyst for the next phase. Work with team members to revitalize your plan and vision.

Questions to Move You toward Bold Action

- **Have you examined your organizational values** lately? Does everyone know what they are? Are they manifested in all you do?
- **Do you know exactly what you want,** and why? Are you able to put it into a concise, compelling message?
- **Do you spend time evaluating** your own behavior regularly?
- **Do you reassess your plans** frequently?
- **How has your curiosity** helped you learn from someone different from you lately?
- **In what way do you broaden the notion** of open, honest communication?
- **Do you ferret out people’s strengths** and let them know you appreciate them? Do you set your direction to tap into their collective talents? 

— adapted from *Putting Our Differences to Work* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com) and *The Pollyanna Principles* (Renaissance Press, helpfornonprofits.com)