



# Help Your Employees Soar: PILOT Them to Higher Levels

Lead your organization to greater heights with this five-step method.

*By Elizabeth McCormick*

**H**ave you noticed that staff members in your organization seem stuck and unable to move ahead? Does it seem as if they're just getting by rather than reaching for the sky? If so, it may be time to PILOT your employees to their highest cusp. PILOT stands for:

## P – Potential

One of your most crucial jobs as a leader is to develop the potential of others – their potential to perform better in their jobs, to become better people, to grow into leadership. Leaders develop leaders.

What's the best way to do so? First, you must be someone people can emulate. Show your employees that you're learning alongside them. They need to see you handling failure with grace and ease. Use your failures as learning experiences that you can share with your team. These experiences will create a culture that allows for creativity and educated risk-taking. People tend to learn more and grow into their potential when they feel safe and secure enough to make mistakes.

Many employees aren't as successful as they could be, simply because they don't realize the power they have within. Be a coach to your employees and a catalyst to their growth, helping them uncover, develop, and use their abilities to best advantage.

## I – Implementation

Have you ever had a meeting to discuss the meeting before the meeting? Are you spending more time getting ready to get ready?

The remedy is to stop preparing and simply take action. Rather than continuing to plan in hopes of reaching perfection, ask yourself:

- **Is it more important to get this done** or to keep trying to make it better?
- **What will we gain or lose** by pulling this trigger? What will we gain or lose from waiting?

Involve everyone on the team in the problem solving process and put everything up for consideration. Discuss the pros

and cons for each possible adjustment. Then move ahead with your plan.

## L – Leadership

Two vital pillars of leadership are communication and inspiration:

- **First, you must communicate your vision** clearly, concisely, and stirringly.
- **Then you must inspire people** to help turn that vision into action.

Use those two tools daily so that you and your employees are constantly moving closer to your goals. Every day, you need to show your employees that you believe in your organization's vision, your employees, and the work that they are doing. To do this effectively, you need to lead from who you are, in order to drive the action.

## O – Optimization

Sometimes the best way to achieve your objectives is to make the best of what you have. That's what optimization is all about. As an optimizer, you need to explore all possibilities to find the best option available. To that end, encourage everyone's input, and ask yourself:

- **Do you draw out** quieter employees to be sure that everyone has a voice?
- **At the close of every meeting, do you ask** participants if they have anything they would like to add? Do all participants have feedback over what was covered in the meeting?

- **Do you ask people** for their ideas on a regular basis and actively listen to their responses? Do you take the time to explore those ideas fully?

## T—Tenacity

Success is less about talent than it is about perseverance. Those who succeed keep trying until they reach their goals. Great leaders know how to motivate others to accomplish their objectives without growing discouraged and quitting. Leaders don't give up on themselves, their employees, or the vision they hope to achieve. 

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