

## Fed up with managing people

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I'm fed up with having to manage people. My employees keep saying, "I work really hard." So what? I'm working hard, too. I want results. Help?

Many business owners find themselves at cross purposes with their employees. I often hear owners saying things like, "I'm the only one in here on Saturday." And, "No one besides me takes this seriously enough." And, "They all want rewards, but I'm the one taking the risks." These are symptoms that things are out of balance and need adjusting. Let's get to work.

If you want your employees to deliver, define what it is you want. Then ask for reports. Set goals and measure results. Meet regularly and frequently to review performance and hold people's feet to the fire on delivering.

### DEFINE WHAT YOU WANT

Most business owners and their employees operate on a constantly shifting landscape. What was needed yesterday is different from what's needed in this moment. Just as owners admit they'll get lost in the day-to-day sometimes, so do employees.

Break the cycle of dealing with what's urgent instead of what's important by defining activities that will deliver what's important. Focus on inputs that get those results. Examples of inputs include number of sales calls and proposals, number of customers that fit the profile of a good customer and number of units produced and shipped.

Define three to four things that each department has to do each week that will lead to improved performance. Come up with some measures yourself, as examples, then ask the departments to add to the list. Here are questions you can ask to get the ball rolling:

- What activities does your department do each week?
- Which activities contribute to the department's long-term success?
- What should the department be doing more of, to be more successful?

### SET THE GOALS

Coach the conversation to include activities you consider essential to the department's long-term success.

Ask each department manager to set goals that lead to success. For example:

- Sending out one proposal to a new prospect per week may not be enough; you may require five per week
- Negotiating with one vendor per month, when you have 50 vendors to manage, means there will be 38 left to negotiate with at the end of the year
- Planning to produce five items for delivery per day when you only need 10 per week results in extras sitting around
- Selling a lot of products or services at a gross margin of 30 percent, when you want an overall gross margin of 60 percent can be counter productive.

Figure out how to measure the number of times each success activity is performed. If you're having trouble figuring out how to measure, you may not be specific enough about what's expected. Keep trying. It's important to be clear.

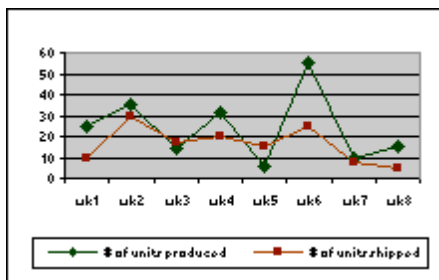
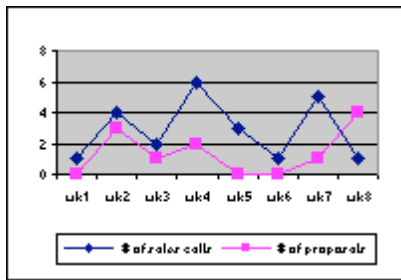
### MEASURE RESULTS

Set up a tracking form so each department can report weekly on how it's doing. I prefer to use Excel. It's simple, it adds up things and you can keep expanding it to track and graph activity over time. Set up time to meet and review results with each manager each week.

Here's an example of what a tracking report and graph might look like:

	wk1	wk2	wk3	wk4	wk5	wk6	wk7	wk8
# of sales calls	1	4	2	6	3	1	5	1
# of proposals	0	3	1	2	0	0	1	4

# of units produced	25	35	14	31	6	55	10	15
# of units shipped	10	30	17	20	15	25	8	5



By reporting, tracking, graphing, and meeting with people to review results, it's possible to see if, and how, activities relate. Catch shortfalls and opportunities more quickly by talking through the graphs. Increase accountability by establishing goals and measuring performance against those goals. Identify the truth about who's getting the job done and who's not, and deal with that reality.

Looking for a good book? Try "Balanced Scorecards & Operational Dashboards with Microsoft Excel," by Ron Person.

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