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Team:

We all have known managers and “would-be” leaders who constantly complain when they have not achieved their level of performance expectation. They might blame the market, their team, their interchange partner and the list goes on.

Look further and I believe that you’ll see another pattern; they also make the same mistakes over and over again. Maybe if we look hard enough we might even see a little bit of that behavior in ourselves.

To continuously improve means we have to take responsibility. Managers who complain instead of taking responsibility never give themselves or their team the tools to break out of those negative patterns of performance. One sure-fire way to avoid repeated mistakes and stay on the road to continuous improvement is through an internal attitude adjustment in the form of attributions.

Attributions are the reason that we come up with why things happen. (Think excuses!) On a personal level attributions position a manager either inside or outside of the situation. In our mental game there are both positive and negative attributions. Positive attributions place you in the middle of it all. That place of leadership, power, control and responsibility. When we put ourselves in the middle of a situation and take ownership, we put ourselves in position to influence and control the outcome. That inside position leads directly to a more confident attitude and makes us better problem solvers.

In contrast, negative attributions position a manager on the outside of a situation because you have allowed the responsibility for the solution to be in someone else’s hands; you have reserved yourself to be powerless, a victim of circumstance who has no influence over the desired outcome. Think about it. What position would you rather be in?

Remember to be engaged in the mental game of being a great leader with the necessary management skills is not about the past; it’s about now and the future continuous improvement we can achieve. The only thing that matters is how we progress from where we are--how we can improve performance, reduce errors and come up with creative ways to be the best we can be. Yesterday’s performance was good enough for, you guessed it, yesterday. Taking responsibility and reaching for positive attributions will continually lead us to the next level.

Make it a great week ...or not. The choice is always ours

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