

LEADERSHIP LEARNING GUIDE / EPISODE 11

From Nearly Fired to Rising Star: Developing Employee Potential

Topic: Employee development, clear expectations and fair accountability
Audience: Leadership, management, operations and organizational behavior courses

ABOUT THE EPISODE

Managers in a powder coating department wanted to terminate an employee because of attendance and attitude concerns. Pete discovered that the supervisor had not clearly discussed expectations with him. After listening to the employee, the managers established an action plan with clear responsibilities, deadlines and measurable results. The employee improved, exceeded his goals and was eventually promoted to Powder Coat Department Group Leader.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After watching, students should be able to:

· Recognize the difference between employee disengagement and a lack of clear direction.
· Explain why listening to employees can reveal barriers to performance.
· Develop an action plan with clear expectations, responsibilities and measurable outcomes.
· Explain how support and fair accountability can uncover leadership potential.

FOUR PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Communicate expectations. Make attendance, reliability and performance standards clear.
2. Listen before judging. Seek the employee·s perspective and understand barriers to success.
3. Create an action plan. Agree on responsibilities, deadlines and measurable results.
4. Follow through. Review progress, reinforce improvement and recognize achievement.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What had the supervisor failed to do before recommending termination?
2. How might ignoring an employee·s ideas contribute to disengagement?
3. Why were measurable expectations important to the improvement plan?
4. How can a manager balance empathy with accountability?
5. What signs of improvement would justify greater responsibility or promotion?

FIVE-MINUTE CLASSROOM ACTIVITY / BUILD AN ACTION PLAN

In pairs, role-play a supervisor meeting with an employee who has attendance and performance concerns. Identify one question to understand the employee·s perspective, two measurable expectations, and a follow-up date. Agree on what support the supervisor will provide and how progress will be reviewed.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Before deciding that an employee cannot succeed, examine whether you have given that person clear expectations, support and a fair opportunity to improve. Effective leadership develops potential while maintaining accountability.

LISTEN FIRST. SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS. DEVELOP PEOPLE.

EPISODE 11
https://theascenttoleadership.org/episodes/developing-employee-potential/
Scan for Episode 11 viewing details.
Watch the episode: https://youtu.be/7Wj0uWKcQFs

Companion resource: Pete Maher's *The Lean Leader's Playbook: Guiding Teams to Excellence Through Empowerment and Effective Leadership* is available on Amazon in Kindle, paperback and hardcover editions.