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# COACHING THE 3 EMPLOYEE TYPES:

*Bright-Eyed, Glazed-Eyed, & Beady-Eyed Individuals*®

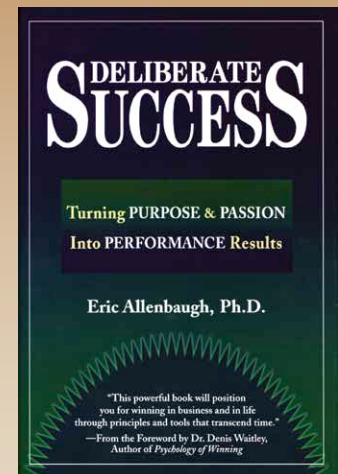
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DELIBERATE SUCCESS:  
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Identifying and releasing untapped human potential will likely accomplish more to sharpen your competitive edge than will efforts to contain costs and enhance technology. Leaders who understand this principle run some of the most profitable, effective organizations in Corporate America.

Well-run organizations also commit to long-term coaching of their associates to create and sustain high levels of performance. They do not leave development of human capital to chance — they commit to deliberate success.

*“I believe the real difference between success and failure in a corporation can very often be traced to the question of how well the organization brings out the great energies and talents of its people.”*

Thomas J. Watson, Jr.  
Former IBM Chief Executive

We all know, however, that employees differ in both their developmental levels and their

commitment to their respective organizations. Effective coaching needs to reflect these differences and tailor the approach to generate the most favorable performance results. The Gallup Organization study of US employees, revised in 2007, revealed three groups: 1) the 30% who are “engaged,” 2) the 50% who are “not-engaged,” and 3) the 20% who are “actively disengaged” at work. Human resource professionals and other leaders need to take a hard look at the implications and effectively respond to this corporate wake-up call.

You can often identify which of the three groups an employee is in by looking into their eyes. You will see 1) the “Bright-Eyed,” 2) the “Glazed-Eyed,” or 3) the “Beady-Eyed” individuals. Each of these types requires enlightened leaders who understand the differences and know how to effectively coach for deliberate success. Described below are a few of the coaching strategies and tools explored in Deliberate Success: Turning Purpose & Passion into Performance Results (Career Press, 2002) that will make a positive difference in your efforts to take talent to the top!

## Coaching “Glazed-Eyed” Employees:

Easy to spot, employees in this group (which make up about 50% of the American workforce) spring to life moments after their shift ends. On the job, they shoot for minimums. Their highlights include weekends, holidays, and paydays. This group avoids risk taking at almost all cost, does the minimum they can get by with, and tends to look to others for solutions. They are neutral to mildly negative about the company and often feel discounted, unappreciated, and insignificant. Some of these people have “retired on the job,” but just forgot to tell you! In spite of their moderate to low productivity, they tend to leave work exhausted. If they become a dominating force in the corporate culture, this group will slowly drain the vitality out of an organization.

*“Anyone who says they work  
just for the money  
has given up the hope  
that anything more  
is possible.”*

Peter Block

Important to remember, however, is that individuals in this group often started out as “Bright Eyed” employees, yet lost their spirit somewhere along the way. The first step in re-engaging Glazed-Eyed employees is to look to ourselves! Is our over-controlling leadership style getting in the way? Are restrictive policies disempowering employees? Are we catching people doing something “wrong” rather than assisting them in looking for the learning? We have a distinct responsibility to clean up our own act in positioning others for success.

Rather than fire the Glazed-Eyed employees, inspire them to achieve higher levels of performance. Ask them two key coaching questions: 1) *What is it that turns you on and turns you off about your job?* And 2) *What can we do differently to provide greater job fulfillment for you while simultaneously serving the needs of our company at a higher level?* Listening — really listening — to their responses and engaging them in creative dialogue frequently results in win-win outcomes. Notice also that this coaching process builds in accountability for meeting both their needs and the company needs simultaneously. Look for opportunities, then, to follow-through with new assignments and responsibilities that raise their performance bar and benefit the company.

## Coaching the “Beady-Eyed” Employees

While generally small in number, this actively disengaged group consumes a disproportionate amount of time, talent, and treasure to deal with their negative energy. These people work against the organization and go out of their way to seek out and find the flaws — and they do find them. Many within the Beady-Eyed group get their power through open resistance and cynicism, and their relentless negative attitude tends to suck the energy out of others. These people are known for finding the flaws in others while seldom taking any personal accountability.

Beady-Eyed employees often times started out with enthusiasm and a Bright-Eyed spirit — but something happened that might have brought them down. Once again, we need to first look to ourselves for the learning. Have we treated

employees with a lack of respect? Are our policies creating separation and resentment? Are poor managers generating ill-will? We need to have the courage to clean up our own stuff in the process of building a culture of excellence.

*“Somebody is going to do you in.  
The only question: Who will it be?  
A competitor – or you?”*

Tom Peters

The presence of Beady-Eyed employees cannot be ignored — their negative spirit is costly and contagious. Just as we need to hold ourselves accountable to clean up the conditions that might have contributed to their active resistance, we need to hold them accountable to being a positive and productive member of the team. As with the Glazed-Eye employees, work with them to identify what turns them on and off about their job. Listen to their responses and seek to co-create win-win outcomes. If they cannot or will not make the significant, positive, and consistent changes required, we need then to assist them in “finding a career opportunity elsewhere.”

A chief executive of one of my client companies taught me a great way to respectfully terminate poor performers in a caring coaching context. It’s direct, it’s sensitive, and it gets results. This coaching approach seeks to re-engage the individual and to avoid termination, yet sets the stage for parting company if significant performance improvement is not consistently achieved. How does he do it?” Three speeches. The first two steps require intensive coaching and counseling as both the manager and the involved associate focus on clarification of performance expectations and in delivering expected results. The third step results in separation.

**Speech Number 1:** *“I am beginning to lose confidence in your ability to \_\_\_\_\_. I want you to know that I support you, and I am on your team. Yet, your continued employment is contingent upon significant, positive, and consistent improvement in performance.”*

Working together, the manager and associate identify critical performance strengths, targets, specific performance improvement plans with appropriate timelines and specific follow-up dates. If significant, positive, and consistent performance results are not achieved, advance to “Speech 2.”

**Speech Number 2:** *“I am losing confidence in your ability to \_\_\_\_\_. I remain on your team and support your efforts to grow and develop. However, your continued employment is contingent upon significant, positive, and consistent improvement in performance.”*

Once again, this coaching process emphasizes expected performance outcomes, timelines, and specific follow-up dates. If significant, positive, consistent improvement is not experienced, advance to “Speech 3.”

**Speech Number 3:** *“I have lost confidence in your ability to \_\_\_\_\_. I continue to support your growth as a person. Nevertheless, at this point, we are having to part company.”*

At that point, you let them go.

This clear, direct coaching process provides clarity of expectations and eliminates the “surprise element.” While building on strengths, this firm, yet fair approach clearly defines performance targets and specific action steps required for achieving desired results. The intent is to assist the individual to succeed on the job through

feedback that is tough on the issues and tender on the person. If the individual is ultimately not a good fit in your company, then he or she needs to be freed up to find something that is more suitable. As with any issue of this magnitude, work closely with your human resource professionals and with your legal counsel to assure that you are both firm and fair in your pursuit of excellence.

## Coaching the Bright-Eyed Employees

Bright-Eyed employees are highly engaged and committed to the mission, vision, and values of the organization. A “can do” attitude characterizes their behavior, they go the extra mile in giving and doing their best, and they function in a spirit of partnership with other employees and with their customers. They shoot for maximums. These people have a clear understanding of personal accountability and tend to look to themselves first for resources and solutions. Instead of fixing blame, they fix the problems. Bright-Eyed employees feel energized, recognized, appreciated, and encouraged to be and do their best. They embrace change and look to ways in which they can reinvent themselves while continuing to provide high value. They take great pride in their accomplishments and speak well of their company. They work hard, yet seem to be energized by the quality and significance of their work.

The 80/20 Rule applies here: 80% of your productivity and accomplishments tends to come from 20% of your employees — the Bright-Eyed folks! Here is the problem, however. These people are so good that we often “reward” them with more work — taking up the slack of those

who are not performing well. We “reward” them by having them clean up the issues created by the Beady-Eyed employees. And then we often ignore them in the coaching process because they are already doing so well that coaching is “unnecessary.” We instead allow the higher maintenance Glazed-Eyed and Beady-Eyed people to exhaust our available coaching time.

*“The best managers start with  
a radical assumption:  
each person’s greatest room for growth  
is in the area of his greatest strength.”*

Marcus Buckingham

Contrary to conventional thinking, those having the greatest potential for growth are not necessarily your poorest performers, but instead your best performers! Working closely with your most talented employees will likely result in far greater performance growth than can ever be accomplished with your poorest performers. I am not suggesting that you ignore your poor performers. I am advocating, however, that you spend the greatest amount of time and resources developing your best people. The US Navy clearly understands this principle by sending their best-of-the-best pilots to the Top Gun flight school for advanced “coaching.” They don’t send their poorest pilots. Professional athletic coaches also understand this principle by sending out talent scouts to find the best athletes available and then investing heavily in the focused development of those athletes. As leaders, we need to incorporate the “talent scout” philosophy into our organizations and then “invest in the best.”

To take your most talented people to the top, I recommend that you periodically engage them in the following “**4 Career Guidance Questions,**” a coaching tool designed to both keep them engaged and provide mutually beneficial opportunities:

1. ***What makes work meaningful to you?***

This question assists in identifying the primary motivators of an individual. When you tap into their purpose and identify their passion, even higher performance results.

2. ***If you had no limits, what would you be or do?*** This question addresses the big picture dreams of an individual and can provide useful insights about the experience that they are seeking. Armed with this information, current assignments might be modified to enable them to experience at least a portion of their dream or interests on the job. By consciously seeking to create on the job at least some of what they are seeking in their dreams, professional fulfillment increases while simultaneously benefiting the organization.

*“To understand the heart and mind of a person,  
look not at what he has already achieved,  
but at what he aspires to.”*

Kahlil Gibran

3. ***What would cause you to join a particular company or leave a company?*** This key question reveals the core values that drive an associate’s career decisions and reveals strategies that can be applied in empowering that individual. People join a company for such diverse reasons as career development,

meaningfulness of work, opportunity to contribute and make a difference, challenging work, compensation and benefits, job security, etc. By listening to their responses, you can gain great insights about how to align their interests with company needs.

The second part of this question provides understanding about what would cause an employee to leave. Listen for such concerns as limited career opportunities, lack of challenging work, having an insensitive boss, poor working conditions, or a work culture poorly matched with the associate’s values. Knowing their career interests and task preferences provides an opportunity to assure a great job fit, make meaningful job assignments, and enhance job fulfillment.

4. ***What can we do differently to provide greater job fulfillment for you while simultaneously serving the needs of our company at a higher level?*** This question opens up possibilities for creating win-win outcomes while engaging the spirit of the Bright-Eyed individual. Through this coaching process, you are demonstrating your commitment to their long-term career development while continuing to benefit the company. In addition to creating stimulating options, this process builds loyalty and commitment to you and to your organization — another intangible benefit.

Coaching for results begins by discovering what motivates people and matching those unique interests to the needs of the organization. Developing and releasing individual talents in service to both the associate and the organization expands the Return on Investment of human

capital while building commitment, supporting creativity, and enhancing productivity.

Creating and sustaining a “Bright Eye” culture of excellence requires deliberate and sustained efforts by leaders to take talent to the top. Take a look around your own organization. Do you experience Glazed Eyes, Beady Eyes, or Bright Eyes? What are the results or consequences? How well are you doing in coaching each of these groups for deliberate success? You know what you need to do — so make the decision and take action. As you act with this positive intent, you will notice something significant in your own mirror — Bright Eyes!

*“If you want to be successful, it’s just this simple:  
know what you are doing, love  
what you are doing, and  
believe in what you are doing.  
It’s just that simple.”*  
Will Rogers

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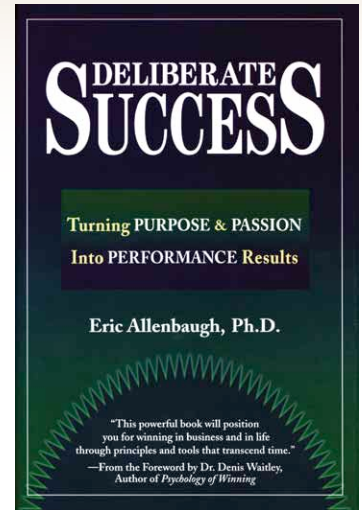
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