

In Search of Honor

## “Viagra” Needed For American Management

By  
Adele B. Lynn

American management has lost its passion! Too many managers just aren't excited about what they are doing every day. The face of work looks worn, tired, and familiar to the point of boredom. We're not saying American managers aren't busy. They may be busier than a centipede in a toe counting contest, but sadly, they have lost their passion and fail to find meaning in their particular brand of toe counting.

Can you imagine a symphony conductor without passion for music, a football coach without passion for the game, an artist without passion for his canvas? What about you? Do you have passion for making widgets or processing a deposit? I've lost you? What is exciting about creating widgets or making a loan? If you don't know the answer to that question, my best advice to you is to find an answer. Search your soul until, on some level, you can find worth and meaning in what you are doing every day. And if you can't, then stop doing it and find something else to stir your soul.

Leadership, especially for the front-line or even middle layers, isn't always about sweeping visions of change. It is easy to feel passionate about ideas or visions you helped create. And we encourage you to bring those ideas and visions forth to create or find a better way. However, as middle managers and supervisors, sometimes our greatest challenge is to bring passion to the mundane. It is much more difficult to bring passion to a workplace in which you must sometimes accept things that are less than or different from what you would like. But if you choose to accept the challenge of managing or supervising, then you have another choice to make. You must choose being positive over being negative. You must choose to bring your spirit to work every day and invite others to do the same. By making this very choice each day, you have chosen to be a leader. You have swallowed your “Viagra” pill.

### How to Invite Employees To Bring Their Spirit to Work

This generous advice to leaders comes from nearly 1,000 interviews from people at all levels of the organization:

1. Believe it yourself. *Don't give us a line of bull. We know when you are telling us the truth and when you are handing us the line.*

2. Ask us how to make it work. *Don't just tell us what to do. We have a brain. Ask us what we think.*
3. Lovingly shout, "No, no. Wrong direction." *Don't expect us to know the goals if you haven't told us. Don't ridicule or belittle us.*
4. Set the example. *Don't tell us that customers are the No. 1 priority and then blow them off or call them jerks when they leave.*
5. Act like you give a damn. *Don't expect us to care when you don't care about this place, this job, or our customers.*
6. Direct and focus our energy in the same direction simultaneously. *We hate when you tell Susan to do something and then give the same assignment to Jeff. We should be working together. That's demeaning and we feel like it is a waste of our time. Is this a contest or what?*
7. Deal with the people who aren't doing the job. *Don't ask us to do more when they aren't carrying their share of the load. That's unfair.*
8. Don't give us inconsistent messages. *Don't tell us one minute to do something and then turn around and tell us the opposite the next minute. We're not stupid.*
9. Ask us what is going wrong. *When we're not meeting our goals, there is usually a reason. We probably know what it is. Ask us.*
10. Take responsibility for failures. *Don't leave us out to dry. Have the courage to tell them it was everyone's mistake, including yours.*
11. Give us the big picture. *You don't tell us why or how things fit together. Give us the big picture and then hold us accountable for making the right decisions.*
12. Believe in us. *Believe that we can deliver. Believe that we can make good judgments. We can. We will come through.*

One of the greatest gifts a leader can bring is passion for the vision – whether he created the vision, or he is merely charged with carrying it out. Passion is exciting; passion is energizing; passion is contagious. Passion and deep caring about the vision, the job to be done, and ultimately, the people doing the job, are the seeds of inspiration. If you have ever had the pleasure of working for someone who passionately believes in what he is doing, you know how this feels. Give that same pleasure to your employees and the passion that follows will be yours.

In Search of Honor is a monthly column written by Adele B. Lynn. Adele is the author of the book *In Search of Honor – Lessons from Workers on How to Build Trust* (BajonHouse Publishing) ISBN 0-9664084-4-6. Comments can be address to Adele Lynn, Lynn Learning Labs, 609 Broad Ave. Belle Vernon, PA 15012, 724 929-5352 or e-mail, [lynnlabs@westol.com](mailto:lynnlabs@westol.com).