

# THE **SHOREMASTER**<sup>®</sup> WAY 2nd Edition

A GUIDE FOR LEADERS TO MANAGE AN EMPOWERED  
WORK FORCE IN THE SPIRIT OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT





**THE**  
**SHOREMASTER<sup>®</sup>**  
**WAY**  
2nd Edition

BY  
**DON HURLEY**

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*This book is dedicated in loving memory of Jerry Ott,  
a pioneer of continuous improvement  
at ShoreMaster*



*August 23, 1966 - July 24, 2012*



**INTRODUCTION:  
THE SHOREMASTER WAY**



In February of 2011, a radical change happened at ShoreMaster. ShoreMaster could ill-afford to continue down the path of unprofitability. A new approach was imminent. New leadership with a diverse background of experiences was established. It was a leadership team of change, action, and courage. It was, and continues to be, one that values and acknowledges that ShoreMaster has GREAT PEOPLE.

This new direction prompted ShoreMaster's mission statement:

*ShoreMaster is a customer-focused market driven company manufacturing quality products safely and efficiently with GREAT PEOPLE.*

This mission statement was the voice of change, a battle cry. It also foreshadowed The ShoreMaster Way, eliminating the former years of leadership, which were vested in control, complacency and an, "I'm the Boss" mentality. It also challenged the past decision making and paradigms of an Engineering, Operations and Finance driven company. Moreover, it focused on ShoreMaster's most important assets - our customers, dealers and GREAT PEOPLE.

After the new leadership was established, there was a lot of chaos. Many managers were removed from the company. It was middle and upper level management positions that were responsible for ShoreMaster's unprofitability because they held onto the past way of doing things. The proponents of "The Old Ways" obstructed change in order to maintain their authority and position within the company. Essentially, employees were oppressed. Pride in self, work and company was being destroyed causing people to believe that ShoreMaster was going to close its doors.

Today, ShoreMaster is market-driven. Our dealers understand and meet their customer's needs through the training and education provided by our Sales and Marketing teams. From there it is up to our outstanding folks who manufacture our quality products in a lean fashion. This equation will allow ShoreMaster to financially prevail.

That is why ShoreMaster Leadership centers on employee involvement, input, feedback, coaching and recognition. This approach capitalizes on the GREAT PEOPLE who work for the company, bringing many years of experience, expertise and ideas to the forefront.

Employees now have an increasing sense of respect and value for their work. Their leaders will praise them and listen to their ideas and suggestions. In addition, leaders will be more effective by their ability to cultivate feedback from employees who will do so without fear of retaliation by their manager. In turn, employees should feel comfortable giving professional feedback. For example, it is important to point out problems when and where they occur. If a problem is not reported, there will be unnecessary time and money spent to fix the mistake downstream. ShoreMaster will go to great lengths to make things “right” for its customers, which means that we do not pass along any product that does not meet our standards.

This means that solving problems as a team and catching each other before a problem blows out of proportion, or worse, gets passed onto the customer in the form of poor quality, will be paramount. The issue is the problem and resolution which in other words, the “why” and the “how” rather than the “who.” Blame is a major obstacle to problem solving. Corrective action need not always be punitive and hiding the problem is a hindrance to success. Sharing knowledge and asking questions

in solving problems is a sign of greatness and great leadership rather than finger pointing and placing blame.

That is why listening is a crucial skill of a leader of The ShoreMaster Way. The ability to listen and process, as well as act in a team-oriented manner to resolve or improve, is the charge going forward. Again, the leader will have exceptional difficulty with this if they are not of the right mind to embrace this vital skill. Problems, although difficult to acknowledge, must be exposed and addressed immediately. This is why empowerment is so critical to the success of the company.

The ShoreMaster Way leadership is about humility and teamwork, the result of great communication and sharing all. Nothing is to be hidden or held for personal gain. This means that authority and power are also not compatible within The ShoreMaster Way. In an environment of change and continuous improvement, leaders are facilitators and motivators. They manage ideas for improvement, coach away from mistakes and ultimately recognize employees for doing their jobs well.

Since ShoreMaster's new leadership philosophy is coaching and development, employees should have the opportunity to further their careers if they desire. Managers will encourage employees to enroll in the ShoreMaster leadership program. The ShoreMaster Way requires management to foster and groom future leadership candidates in the spirit of promotion from within and employee development through effective coaching. This also leads to good succession planning, retention of good talent, and ultimately supports the new culture.

ShoreMaster leadership seeks to have continual feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement. Employee and

customer satisfaction surveys are conducted which allows us to be scrutinized by our most valued assets, our people and our dealers. The ShoreMaster Employee Survey (SES) will determine how we are doing as leaders. This will put pressure on the old way of managing and vet out those who cannot change. In turn, the era of “The Boss” passes behind. Remember, strong coaching *without* ego fosters improvement.

That is why celebrating success will forever cement The ShoreMaster Way into the very fabric of the company. Pointing out the good things our people do is the most exceptional trait a leader can possess. Through acknowledging great ideas and prompting feedback, performance will increase, which will also lead to employee retention. Giving credit to whoever had the idea or taking blame for a mistake rather than pointing fingers, will really distinguish the ShoreMaster coach from the boss types.

The ShoreMaster Way requires an inverse relationship of its leaders who possess enough self-confidence that they should strive to manage people who know more than they do. Soliciting feedback, training, recruiting and facilitating great things from our people to the degree that ShoreMaster fully captures great ideas, will lead to a sustainable future for years to come.

I invite all to join us on the journey of continuous improvement. The path is The ShoreMaster Way.

## WHAT MADE HERB BROOKS THE BEST COACH



I would have to say the coach I admired most was Herb Brooks. I had the pleasure of being a national class track athlete in a previous life, coached by many good people. But they weren't Herb Brooks. I have also had many good managers and a few mentor types influence my professional business career.

But they weren't Herb Brooks.

When I say Herb Brooks is my most admired coach and leader, it's because of the following:

**Worked Tirelessly:** Spending countless long hours planning, thinking, testing, studying and understanding the competitions' weaknesses was his absolute strength. No one was more detail oriented and incorporated a long-term strategy based upon his keen observations than Coach Brooks.

**Individualization:** He had an impeccable skill to find out how to get the most out of a player for the benefit of the team. Although he insisted the team work as a cohesive unit, he also had the team broken up into lines with certain purposes and each line had individuals who contributed to the mission. This all rolled up into a team of incredible performance. Much is made of his "getting under someone's skin," but that was only one way of motivating. He had a limited amount of time and knew he had to get the maximum out of those hockey players.

**Systems and Processes:** He was totally committed to the process and system or style of game that the USA needed to

play in order to win a gold medal. He spent countless practices convincing, imploring, disciplining and implementing a system that even he had to devise only after he assessed what it would take to beat the top teams in the world. He never wavered.

**Strong Vision:** Coach Brooks possessed an incredible vision and always remained focused on it and he implored his players to do the same.

**Humility:** Herb Brooks was the absolute model of humility. He refused to take any credit for the Gold Medal. Instead, he constantly gave all the credit to his players and his assistant coaches. He refused to get up on the medal stand during the awards ceremony and had previously exited the Lake Placid Ice Arena immediately after the Gold Medal game was won by the USA, leaving his players to all the celebration.

May we all learn and take something of his example as we lead in The ShoreMaster Way.



**PART I:  
MANAGING GREAT PEOPLE**

**CHAPTER 1: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

**CHAPTER 2: EFFECTIVE HIRING**

**CHAPTER 3: THE 10:1 RULE**

**CHAPTER 4: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

**CHAPTER 5: EVALUATIONS**



# CHAPTER I

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

First and foremost to coaching GREAT PEOPLE is the ability to positively communicate. It is critical that our leaders and managers be able to communicate to their teams and each other. Studies show that 81 percent of employees would rather join a company with “open communication” over a company that offers great perks like top-of-the-line health plans, free food and gym memberships. Checking in with them for even 15 minutes a week can outweigh all of this. At ShoreMaster we want to provide excellent communication. This means both in written forms and in speech. Holding team meetings by facilitating, presenting, speaking, fielding questions, directing and giving feedback individually and as a team are absolutely essential in order to lead your teams. But let’s focus on conducting meetings.

Effective meetings provide the opportunity for individuals to learn and provide input. There are countless examples of great leaders who forced themselves to conduct meetings even though for many it was the most dreaded part of their position. You do not have to be a public speaker to be effective at having great meetings. In fact, most are not. If you were, you would probably be in politics! But having a plan, a message, reasons and objectives for meetings are the core of leadership. You can read it from a piece of paper if necessary, but regardless, you will find it more effective to actually have the meetings rather than avoid them. Results will suffer if you fail to have routine meetings and good communication because people start to feel disconnected to their team or to the company.

The reason for this important function lies in the very roots

of The ShoreMaster Way. When we manage people by getting their feedback, providing feedback to them and rewarding them, one must do so via some form of verbal and, at times, written communication. This point cannot be emphasized enough. So much so, that if you find you cannot develop the skills to conduct meetings and communicate verbally and in writing, then management at ShoreMaster may not be the best job fit.

But to give you hope, let's take a look at an example of a well-respected leader at ShoreMaster who hated to stand up in front of his team and speak. He avoided this at all costs. And cost it did. Communication in his group was suffering. His meeting groups were too large especially if he was going to sit while speaking. Not everyone could hear him and he couldn't read the faces of his entire audience. After further review, it was brought to his attention. He decided that he could lead a meeting and speak effectively provided he was sitting down. So, he started having smaller work group meetings in a round table fashion and was very effective after that. He didn't change what he did, which was deliver meetings sitting down. He did change how he met, which was smaller group meetings. Now he was communicating!

One thing to realize is that your team wants to follow you. They want your feedback. They want to know what you think and they want you to communicate to them how they are doing. Yet, some managers get an image of what a leader is supposed to be and no one can live up to that ideal, including themselves. Consequently, they shy away from conducting meetings and communicating in writing when nothing could be more further from reality.

Poor communication is no communication. What that

means is that you do not have to be great at spelling or typing and you certainly don't have to speak the King's English. Few do.

Yet millions of people who are not good at delivering speeches or effective writers are very successful leaders. Why? Because they are communicating anyway! General Patton was a most horrible writer but one of the greatest generals in the history of the United States Army. Lewis and Clark had terrible spelling and grammar, yet their letters go down in history as some of the most impactful information from the early 1800's. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a four-term President of the United States, and he delivered all of his speeches from his wheelchair. Find your method, but conduct meetings!

Some need to rehearse their speech or their meeting. Others can fly by the seat of their pants. Some prefer to read their communication aloud. It's an individual thing. All successful ShoreMaster leaders have the ability to communicate effectively, which includes conducting meetings.

### **Level and Frequency of Meetings**

ShoreMaster has many forms of communication along with routine meetings depending on what portion of the organization is involved. Communication must be routine, consistent, meaningful, build good relationships or teamwork and two-way. We want you to be informed, while also setting a model for which you can learn from.

Routine ensures that communication has a chance to be received. People are creatures of habit and if they become accustomed to having routine meetings, then they also expect information, which creates a positive environment for communicating.

Consistency is important and comes in many forms. The most critical is that everyone on the team hears the message at the same time and everyone gets the same message. Failure to do this correctly results in miscommunication or rumor that is counterproductive. There will obviously be some reason for less than perfect meeting attendance, such as vacations, sick time, etc. However, it is the coach's responsibility to make sure everyone on the team is receiving the same message and complete communication directly from the coach.

Meaningful is essential. The meeting information must MEAN something to the group or audience. This demands responsibility of the coach to make the topics of the meeting effective for the team. These might include:

What news has been asked to be shared from the executive team?

How is the team or group performing against a standard or goal?

What changes or improvements have been made?

Upcoming events

Bringing people together in a meeting can help build relationships and teamwork. Allow time for people to chat by perhaps encouraging them to come early. But then respect peoples' time commitments. There really is no room for wasting time. Humor is good when used appropriately and to create camaraderie. However, a well-run and prepared meeting almost always guarantees that it will be meaningful.

Finally, two-way communication is the difference. Always

seeking feedback, questions, ideas and input from the audience assures complete communication. Confirming if things were understood and taking the time to read their faces are all forms of two-way communication. At times, the coach must seek out two-way communication by calling on team members with a question that could be as simple as, “What do you think, Harold?”

For example, let’s look at the president’s meetings for these five characteristics: [Note the outcome/intent of these meetings.]

- Yearly Meetings (fosters consistency, meaningful, two-way)
  - o Evaluations
  - o Budget approval
- Quarterly Meetings (fosters routine, consistency, team building)
  - o Floor meeting lunch with the entire company
  - o Board meeting
- Monthly Meetings (fosters consistency, routine, team building)
  - o “Skip Level” meeting monthly with operations managers
  - o CEO Peer Counsel meeting
- Weekly Meetings (team building, routine, two-way)
  - o Task force meetings on projects
  - o Staff meeting Monday morning
  - o Bi-weekly conference call with the entire sales team
- Individual Meetings (fosters two-way, meaningful)
  - o Weekly individual meeting with each staff member of sales, marketing, IT, operations, finance and HR
  - o Private coaching sessions

Much has been published about communication. Sometimes it makes it all too complicated when it really shouldn't be. There are theories of methods of communication, modes of communication, how people learn and receive information and on and on. This can lead to stagnation or avoiding communication all together. Make it simple. Start talking with your team on a routine basis, give them feedback on how they are doing and ask them questions. It's that simple. More importantly, it is The ShoreMaster Way.

## CHAPTER 2

# EFFECTIVE HIRING

One of the most critical and often time neglected practices, is that of hiring the right person. Hiring GREAT PEOPLE is paramount to a sustainable culture and overall company performance for years to come. It is *that* important.

As you will read later in the book, ShoreMaster strives to “Promote from Within.” It is one of the building blocks in the foundation of The ShoreMaster Way. This approach lends itself to product quality, reputation in the industry and community, along with the retention of GREAT PEOPLE.

Obviously, management will always have to hire people. As growth, retirement, and some attrition drives the replacement or addition of new people, there must be a clear strategy as to how hiring is approached. Too often hiring is a reaction rather than a disciplined process of filtering out candidates to find the right one who will fit The ShoreMaster Way culture and enables a sustainable culture.

Therefore, spending time on the “front end” of the hiring process is crucial. It will save countless hours of failure, frustration, wasted time and costs on the “back end.” It also eliminates the exhaustion of dealing with a poor hiring decision and as a result, a bad performer. There must be a systematic and consistent filter to processing prospective candidates for employment at ShoreMaster. We have standards, or specific criteria, for a candidate to be the “right fit.” Regardless of which department is hiring, the criteria for hiring the “right” person remains the same.

Failing to fully explore a candidate’s personality, strengths,

and along with not properly defining the job description, results in disaster. Not hiring from a talented pool of candidates or settling for less also results in rework, damaging culture, poor morale and reputation, in addition to wasting time and money. It is unacceptable to engage in weak hiring practices.

Hiring for the sake of hiring, or filling a position because you have to, is wrong. This shortsighted approach results in long term stagnation because it forces the company to fill upper level management positions from outside ShoreMaster, which threatens our sustainable culture and employee retention. If there is a better candidate for further growth and career progression, he or she must be strongly considered because they are a better “fit” for ShoreMaster culture. In other words, failure to hire someone at the entry level who has the talent, the desire and fits into future ShoreMaster leadership roles, can only end with poor results. In turn, sustainability, creativity, experience with The ShoreMaster Way and retention are some of the keys to effective hiring.

It is of the utmost importance that a number of things transpire in relation to hiring The ShoreMaster Way. In the pre-2008 economy, hiring was predicated on level of education and experience. People were given promotions in a never-ending growth economy, which did not predicate itself on fitting into an organization or “getting on the right seat of the company bus.”<sup>1</sup> When the economy went into deep recession during 2008, the paradigms changed dramatically because of high levels of unemployment and huge government spending. Companies down-sized, forcing themselves into profitability. The resulting phenomenon within the companies that survived was an attempt to keep the “good people.” Indeed, “fit” was

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1 Collins, Jim. *Good to Great*. HarperCollins, 2001.

more important than experience or education.

Regardless of good times or during times of recovery, hiring for fit should be the driving force. After all, the time-honored tradition of hiring with experience is only valuable and relevant if applicable to the present rather than living off obsolete successes of the past. For example, how many folks have landlines, use phone books, or encyclopedias? Not many. Think back to pre-2008, did anyone use Google, YouTube, or have cell phones? Very few. Today, it is hard to think of anyone who does NOT consult Google and YouTube frequently, and almost everyone has a cell phone. The point is, the shift in technology happened so quickly, which relegated experience to the sidelines and replaced it with the characteristic “fit.” Does it make sense to hire someone who has past experience but refuses to function in the new technology? Absolutely not. Yet many businesses place a disproportionate value on experience with no regard to fit.

As such, strong fit results in ShoreMaster’s GREAT PEOPLE abilities to focus on the customer and not itself. We cannot teach personality, cooperation, creativity, friendliness, attitude and teamwork. We can teach the rest. This is what The ShoreMaster Way means by “fit.”

Today, it is considered a “Pre-2008” mentality to hire based upon experience and education. Perhaps, in other industries that are engineering or finance driven, experience is still a key driver of employment. But, not in The ShoreMaster Way. We hire based on talent, desire, strengths, attitude, cooperation with team and a willingness to learn. In addition, we also value different strengths, personalities and diverse backgrounds. In fact, if ShoreMaster is to sustain its recovery, it will be the fit with GREAT PEOPLE who propel it to success and not the

complacent geniuses with experience and education.

Let's revisit the huge shift in leadership, Operations, Sales, Marketing and IT, to name a few. There are no "I'm the Boss" types within our leadership team. Today, we operate in a lean fashion, which is modeled off The Toyota Way.<sup>2</sup> ShoreMaster Sales and Marketing is heavily engaged in social media and IT is a servicing enabled department. It was talent, desire and GREAT PEOPLE who were willing to change enthusiastically for the right reasons, which led us through the economic decline. And, they did so with high approval ratings from the entire company's people, who expressed this in an employee survey.

Therefore, it is expected that a consistent, but non-traditional canvassing and interviewing of new hires be based on "fit." This is best accomplished by administering the Strengths Finder Test<sup>3</sup>. Having a consistent set of questions that explores fit, rather than experience, is a great way to hire. In addition, conducting group and multiple interviews among team members is also a great way to determine if the candidate is a good fit for the company. It is a fair and consistent way to hire effectively in the "post-2008" era.

That's why ShoreMaster focuses on hiring people at entry level positions who aspire to be and do more. By placing an emphasis on a profile that fits into our culture, we can foresee a smooth transition of the new person into The ShoreMaster Way, as well as a future leader who can contribute to the continuous improvement of the company. This idea is rooted in the valuable experience a person gains from being internal

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2 Liker, Jeffery K. *The Toyota Way*. McGraw-Hill, 2001, Page 224.

3 Rath, Tom. *Strengths Finder 2.0*. Gallup, Inc. 2007.

to the company and in the *gemba*<sup>4</sup>. As you can see, the cycle of effective hiring, or hiring for fit, then train and promote, eventually leads to sustainability.

Education and experience *does* matter; however, a great candidate needs to fit into the company. Think of it this way-- would you rather have a great person who has positive energy in the workplace, or a person who is unwilling to yield to new things and ideas? Remember, experience and education can be gained on the job.

That said, the manager doing the hiring, along with personnel, must exercise the patience and persistence in order to ensure that the right person is hired. When hiring, things like time pressure, growth and need are not valid excuses for making bad hiring decisions. In short, planning, vision, anticipation and contingency will help prevent hasty hiring decisions.

It takes discipline to execute great hiring practices. If done correctly, the rewards return exponentially. It is The ShoreMaster Way!

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4 Liker, Jeffery K. *The Toyota Way*. McGraw-Hill, 2001, Page 224.



## CHAPTER 3

# THE 10:1 RULE

The 10:1 Rule really isn't a rule. It's more of an approach for managers to lead their people in The ShoreMaster Way. It means that for every critique, correction, or mistake that the leader points out, there should have been at least ten positive things pointed out over time about the employee as well. If in doubt, remember, ten positive statements for one negative reprimand.

In order for the 10:1 Rule to work, the ShoreMaster leader must observe and witness their people doing great things in the *gemba*<sup>5</sup>, or in other words, the physical work environment. This means that the manager must go to the work area in order to catch their employees doing great work. In addition, after catching them, the manager should complement an employee for a job well done.

This requires, of the manager, a consistent investment of time. It does not matter whether it's Operations, Sales, or any other department, the manager must be present in his or her employee's environment to catch them doing great things. Of course, there will be days missed, or even a day when there is nothing to compliment, but that does not mean that the manager should try to "catch up" on their compliments, either. That's why an effort to spend time in the workforce is so important - it provides plenty of opportunity to practice the 10:1 Rule.

However, some managers when asked to manage this way, often resist by making weak excuses as to why 10:1 Rule does

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5 Liker, Jeffrey K. *The Toyota Way*. McGraw-Hill, 2001, Page 224.

not work. If they could just hear themselves!

Here are some of the most common excuses why the 10:1 Rule does not get used:

- *If I tell them how well they are doing all of the time, it won't mean anything after a while.*
- *If I give them compliments, they will think they are doing all right, and will not continue to improve.*
- *I do not have time to do all of that.*
- *My people are so good they know I appreciate their efforts and that I don't need to tell them that.*
- *Why should I be complimenting them just for doing their job? They're just doing what we pay them to do.*

Is it not interesting that some managers can find it easier to issue criticism? When asked to give a compliment, they are all of a sudden silent. Ironically, it is a much more rewarding experience to compliment for a job well done than it is to reprimand for both the leader and the employee. You need to ask yourself what you would rather do, give out more compliments or reprimands? Do you want to be the encouraging leader or the cranky disciplinarian?

The reality is there has never been a workforce that has received too many compliments. This is why the 10:1 Rule is the target, and unfortunately, most managers are lucky if they can maintain a 3:1 ratio (three compliments for one reprimand). This will change the work group's performance and the respect they have for their leader because it reinforces continuous improvement. It will ultimately supercharge the team!

Of course, like all good things, there must be balance with the 10:1 Rule. This means that compliments must be sincere, accurate, and timely. In other words, if a manager gives out nothing but flattery and empty compliments, it will mean nothing at all. While that is true, there is still no excuse for failing to give out any compliments or to give them out sparingly! The manager will regret the day they fail to compliment for a job well done.

Then there comes the day of reckoning. This occurs when the manager failed to deliver a meaningful compliment to a good performer. If this person commits a mistake, or serious error, the manager must reprimand, correct, or even issue a performance reminder letter. Then what happens? Performance declines. Why? Because management never pointed out the many positive actions, the employee does on a regular basis. At this point, the leader should realize that they blew it.

That is why The ShoreMaster Way does not focus on mistakes negatively. It is the problem solving and solutions that we seek. In the spirit of continuous improvement, mistakes are ever-present and certain mistakes need to be addressed. Failure to address deficiencies in a timely manner (as we will discuss in the section on “Performance Improvement”) is just as big of a mistake on the manager’s part. Essentially, a weak leader who fails to compliment their people will ultimately wear down the performance of their entire team.

Indeed, failure to compliment is one of the oldest oversights in leadership. It is, however, easy to rectify because it is an enjoyable part of leadership, especially since it has benefits beyond the immediate individual. Let us look at an example of Bartholomew, a good employee who makes a serious mistake.

If the only time his manager has approached him is when he makes a mistake, what do you think his morale will be like? Do you think it will rub off on his co-workers? How will he feel about the company? What will he say outside of work about ShoreMaster? As you can imagine, it can grow that far out of proportion just because a leader neglected to give a compliment.

There is a great but simple way to compliment your employees...thank them! That is it! A sincere, heartfelt “thank you” for what they are doing goes a long way! In fact, the best managers go to great lengths to thank their employees and they explain exactly why they were appreciative of the employee’s efforts. Can you imagine being a part of that conversation? The employee will have a deeper sense of worth, purpose, and understanding as to how they fit into the team and what they mean to the company. To think, it all started with a thoughtful “thank you” from an outstanding leader.

ShoreMaster leaders must be grateful, humble, supportive and most importantly, they must respect their people. Issuing compliments is at the heart of demonstrating respect. This means it is never about the leader, nor should it be, because the leader will get their recognition through their group’s outstanding performance.

## CHAPTER 4

# PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

ShoreMaster believes in our GREAT PEOPLE. We strive to foster an environment of learning and continuous improvement. However, progress is not a linear path. There are many influences on the individual that can hinder performance. Other companies, and perhaps old school proponents, operate under the premise of the “kick in the pants” style of management as a way to correct the problem. They are “The Boss,” which means that failure usually results in disciplinary action.

In those types of companies there are raised voices, dictating and public reprimanding with little to no employee feedback. Basically, it’s “The Boss’s” way or the highway. That means termination is often threatened, and progression is determined by how well the employee can tolerate the reprimand. The employee is also judged by how well they remain focused on their job *while* enduring embarrassment, abuse and stress from their immediate supervisor.

There is no place for that style of management at ShoreMaster.

Our organization believes in its people and their greatness. We realize that people are going to fail at times, and in an environment of continuous improvement, it is inevitable that failure will occur. As long as our people learn from their mistakes, and continue to improve as a result, that is what is most important. It is all about the manner in which the employee, the immediate leader and management, handles the failure. As long as improvement is at the forefront of the issue, we can learn from our mistakes, which will enable our

organization to be best in class.

Mistakes can come from individuals or a collection of employees. There are four sources of a performance deficiency:

1. The employee was not trained for the task, or there was a lack of standardized procedures.
2. There were uncontrollable barriers or obstacles that prevented the employee from performing at the desired level.
3. The employee was unaware of the goal, target, or their responsibility.
4. The employee is not motivated.

Failure to recognize and subscribe to these four sources results in poor management, loss of good employees and a whole host of other unnecessary issues, which are caused by old style management practices of reprimand and discipline. This type of leadership is not acceptable at ShoreMaster.

This is why a ShoreMaster leader must be motivating, courageous and encouraging. They also have to be able to have frank and open discussions with employees in private to address a performance deficiency. It is the job of a leader to see the value of every employee. In addition to helping them to achieve the highest level of performance that benefits them and the company.

We seek to improve performance by conducting a face-to-face meeting to discuss the gap between what the employee is delivering versus what is required in the position. With the four sources of poor performance in mind, the ShoreMaster leader should not assume that their employee is failing and

needs a reprimand or write-up.

In order to understand why the employee is failing at their job, the manager should seek out what he or she is experiencing. The leader must also do so without listening to hearsay, rumor, or preconceived notions. Refraining from prejudgment often results in a better understanding of the deficiency and the need for improved performance.

Let us look at some examples, other than motivational:

### **1. NEEDS TRAINING**

If, after a private discussion, it is determined that an employee was doing the job wrong, more training may be the solution.

### **2. OBSTACLES**

If the manager failed to realize that the employee could not do the job as quickly, or efficiently, because there was another job function, or co-worker, whose function would be adversely affected, then there is an opportunity to remove the barrier and correct the situation.

### **3. NO GOAL**

If the employee has never had an evaluation, or a target, their idea of an “acceptable pace” may not be the ideal pace needed by the team, and they could totally be unaware of that fact. The simple solution would be to set a goal to eliminate the deficiency.

Note in all three examples, none required a reprimand.

The ShoreMaster leader must seek to understand, be a great listener, and above all, keep the conversation about the employee’s performance and not about the employee

personally. Ask about their understanding of the job, its target, and its effect on the customer, their co-workers and the overall team. The answers to those types of questions will give the manager insight into the deficiency. It will also help them manager to determine the appropriate course of action to help the employee correct it.

At times, these meetings can be heated. That is why a ShoreMaster leader must remain calm and maintain the peace in order to encourage an open discussion. The ability of the leader to focus is key because employees do not always accept responsibility for their performance. They may blame others, the management, or cite a personal situation. Remaining calm and keeping repose is not only paramount for a productive exchange, but it is a service to both the employee and the company to get to a better understanding of the basis for the performance deficiency.

In addition, ignoring the problem, or shying away from addressing it immediately, can only lead to worse consequences, such as perpetuating poor performance, production, and giving the employee a false sense of approval. Subscribing to the four above-mentioned sources of deficiency is the guide to having the frank and open discussion. Timing is the key; addressing things often and immediately will keep tension and misunderstanding at a minimum and in check.

#### **4. MORALE, ATTITUDE OR NEGLIGENCE**

The fourth source of performance deficiency is a result of employee morale, attitude, or negligence. These people have clearly had the proper training; they were aware of the goal and had no obstacles or reasons for the deficiency. In this case, it is appropriate to address the issue in writing. It

is a documented conversation where the ultimate goal is to deliver a formal document that the employee signs accepting responsibility. Once again, this can only result from a great ShoreMaster leader, who can keep the conversation focused on the individual performance, and not the individual personally.

There will also be times that will still warrant written documentation even though the mistake was a result of a barrier, training, or lack of goal setting or feedback. There are situations that are serious enough in nature that they must not occur again.

That is why the action is called “Performance Improvement Measure.” It is not to be referred to as disciplinary action or a write-up. Instead, it is a mindset a ShoreMaster manager must have, which is vesting in employee well-being and their potential greatness. In comparison, “The Boss” disciplinary actions happen with little or no discussion. There is no regard for what the employee has to say. There is also no focus on the root cause of the failure.

This does not happen with “Performance Improvement.”

“Performance Improvement” addresses the deficiency as a team. That is, both the employee and the manager will sit down and acknowledge that there is a shortcoming. In the sit-down meeting, the employee and the manager will agree that performance must improve and the manager will aid in that improvement. It is also important to note that the manager must be confident in the employee’s improvement plan. The ultimate goal of “Performance Improvement” is to ensure that the employee improves because if he or she does not, then further action will take place.

Therefore, the vehicle for performance improvement

is the “Performance Improvement Letter.” In the letter the performance deficiency is noted, some employee statements are cited, notice is given as to what needs to stop, and ultimately what needs to occur. Finally, it has a vote of confidence.

### **SAMPLE PERFORMANCE REMINDER LETTER**

Dear [EMPLOYEE],

This is a performance reminder letter notifying you that your [DESCRIBE PERFORMANCE DEFICIENCY] is unacceptable and must be corrected immediately. On [DATE], we had a conversation about the need for you to perform at [CERTAIN LEVEL OF MEASUREMENT] to be a valuable member of the [DEPARTMENT].

This unacceptable performance can no longer be tolerated. By [DATE ROUGHLY SIX WEEKS LATER] you will need to demonstrate progress towards, if not achievement of, [SPECIFIC MEASURE OR ELIMINATION OF DEFICIENCY]. Failure to do so may result in further performance improvement measures up to, and including, termination.

[EMPLOYEE], I have all the faith and confidence that you are capable of correcting and improving your performance. I am open and willing to support you in my capacity to help you in correcting this serious matter. But I cannot do it for you. You must improve your performance yourself. It is your responsibility.

Good luck with your attempt to make the necessary improvement(s) to your performance.

Sincerely,

[MANAGER]

This format ensures that situations are handled consistently throughout the ShoreMaster organization. It also promotes the type of learning environment that ShoreMaster strives to maintain. Not only is it a learning experience for the direct employees involved, but it also indirectly affects the people who witness a significant change in their co-worker. That change either comes in performance improvement or can also lead to dismissal.

Dismissal is never the desired outcome, nor is it something a ShoreMaster leader takes lightly. It is also something that is never threatened. It is, however, something that is in the performance letter as a reminder that the deficiency is serious. It is only in private that the ShoreMaster leader would directly refer to termination.

It is important that reference to termination occur in the “Performance Improvement Letter” because if the employee continues to fall short they cannot be kept on the team. Ideally, over a year’s time frame, the employee can progressively correct their deficiency, which means that they can continue to be a valuable and contributing member of the team.

If, however, the employee continues to fail, a second letter is issued after the agreed upon length of time *and* if no improvement has been witnessed by the manager. In this case, a second letter must be written and delivered, but only after a second private meeting is held to address the continued lack of improvement. It is important to note that the reference is to the same deficiency. Even more critical is to recognize the severity of the deficiency before allowing the employee more time to correct. If the deficiency is so severe that continuing employment is not an option any longer, then termination will be the result. Ideally, the employee would receive additional

time to continue their attempts to improve. This is in reference to the same deficiency.

There are unfortunate or ill-timed occurrences in which an employee will have another performance deficiency in a totally unrelated and separate matter. The same process must occur. The manager must have a private meeting to discuss the matter. However, the two matters are only related in that the employee must be made aware that three performance letters in their file in a year's time frame may result in immediate dismissal.

It is apparent that this approach and investment in our employees is the most respectful way of managing people. It is a very honest and direct approach to performance that at times challenges ShoreMaster leaders to address situations in a timely manner. This calls for the best leaders with the skills to embrace such a style.

The alternative is to fail to communicate to employees leaving them guessing, unsuspecting, or worse, left wondering why they weren't told or given the opportunity to improve. "Performance Improvement" is a much better way of handling delicate employee deficiencies. That is The ShoreMaster Way!

## CHAPTER 5 EVALUATIONS

One of the ways that The ShoreMaster Way can be sustained is through Performance Evaluations. In an environment of continuous improvement, and “Promotion from Within,” formalized feedback in a written yearly evaluation is the best way to plan improvement for an individual *and* an organization. The evaluation process also allows the leader and the employee a chance to have an individualized conversation about the employee’s performance, strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and development. It is a powerful tool to ensure mutual understanding.

However, all good tools must be utilized properly.

Therefore, it takes a focused leader to put a great deal of thought and time into writing an evaluation for an employee. It’s important for an evaluation to be as detailed and individualized as possible so that an employee can be rewarded for good performance and correct or improve their performance deficiencies. After the initial evaluation has been delivered, a great leader will refer to the evaluation over the course of the year, checking for progress and updating the employee. At times, there will be follow-up meetings to ensure that progress is being made, which renders the evaluation process effective and it sets the stage for the next evaluation. It ultimately enhances the mission for continuous improvement.

Fortunately, ShoreMaster has GREAT PEOPLE. In reality, most people like to know how they are doing, and as a result, they care about how they might be negatively impacting their team, company, and most importantly, the customer. That is why it takes a talented and courageous leader to deliver

objective feedback respectfully, tactfully, and honestly.

A weak leader will avoid giving honest feedback about a poor performance because it is uncomfortable to deliver bad news. What these weak leaders fail to realize is that lack of feedback would only perpetuate bad work methods, jeopardize quality, and establish complacency, which is in direct conflict with ShoreMaster's mission statement.

That is why great leaders have a high regard for the company and the individual. They will take it upon themselves to deliver honest feedback for the good of the company's commitment to continuous improvement. It is also for the good of the employee, who needs to be aware of their performance deficiency.

Here are some of the mistakes weak leaders make when giving an evaluation:

### **1. GIVING ALL HIGH SCORES**

The weak leader who delivers nothing but high scores leaves no room for improvement. It also undermines any respect or value an employee might have placed on the evaluation process. In short, a leader who commits this mistake jeopardizes continuous improvement.

### **2. GIVING ALL LOW SCORES**

This is just as bad as giving all high scores because it forces the employee to become apathetic about the evaluation. The employee would feel like no matter how hard they try, they could never achieve a high score. As a result, they quit trying, and mediocrity is reinforced.

### **3. SURPRISES**

A weak leader should never "jump" an employee in an

evaluation. Anything that is serious enough to adversely impact an evaluation, needs to be addressed well before evaluation time. There should be no question as to why a poor score in a category exists. There may not always be agreement, but the point is an evaluation should never be the first time an employee is informed of a problem or deficiency in their performance.

#### **4. INCONSISTENCY**

Favoritism or inconsistent evaluations are *dangerous*. If one employee is rewarded for something, and another is reprimanded for the same thing, there will be problems. Eventually, employees will notice the inconsistencies, and there will be a loss of respect for the leader. It will also be very difficult to get that respect back.

These are demonstrations of gross leadership failure. The only thing worse than the above-mentioned mistakes is a manager who provides negative feedback with no path for improvement. That is in direct conflict with The ShoreMaster Way and cause for dismissal from a leadership position. In short, a cowardly manager, who fails to provide honest feedback, misses the opportunity to help someone grow and improve.

Generally, employees like to be acknowledged, and much like the previous chapter, there is no excuse for neglecting to acknowledge a good performance. There are, however, rare instances where a manager will experience slight resistance from an employee who dislikes acknowledgment, feedback and praise. Contrary to the weaker manager's position, once these employees are delivered good feedback from the insistent manager, they seem to blossom. In order for continuous improvement to occur in the company, all employees need a performance review.

Therefore, the following are things that a good leader should do when giving an evaluation:

### **1. CONSISTENCY**

The remedy for a difficult or uncomfortable situation is consistency. The fair and consistent manager will win over their troops repeatedly. This is why the ShoreMaster Employment Survey asks about favoritism. In turn, the manager needs to know if favoritism exists, and if so, why. The ability to uncover that will reduce the loss of confidence a work group may be experiencing due to the perception of favoritism.

### **2. COMMUNICATION AND TIME**

Two-way dialogue is important in an evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to focus on the employee, and as such, the manager should focus on the employee's feedback, ideas, and thoughts on their performance. That is why there should be no time limit when giving an evaluation because it should be well done and thoughtful. If the employee has a lot to say, give them their time. Ask follow-up questions. Hear them out. There is no rush.

### **3. FLEXIBILITY**

At times, your evaluation may be inaccurate, which is okay. Do not let your pride or ego get in the way of correcting your mistake. Have the presence of mind and discipline to back-off from your evaluation. It is also important to give the employee the benefit of the doubt and to watch for their improvement. Be careful as to not be giving in for the sake of pleasing and risking inconsistency.

Use common sense because an ill-placed score is not effective either. However, a sort of negotiation might take place, ensuring that both the manager and the employee get

what they want. Regardless, in the next review, the real story will unfold; either the employee was right, which is great, or the manager was right, which means that there will be more performance improvement opportunity.

These are demonstrations of leadership success. Managers should give credit where it is earned, and plan for improvement where it is needed.

The most important section in the evaluation is the last section – the Performance Goals Section. Unfortunately, these sections are the most commonly incomplete and overlooked portions of the evaluation, which is ironic because they are the most critical. The Performance Goals are the map that charts the course for improvement and individual development. If the manager fails to complete this section for the employee, or does not take it seriously, how can they expect their employee to improve?

Not assigning Performance Goals would be a total disregard for continuous improvement and would be unacceptable.

Employees need to have things to work on in order to develop and grow. At ShoreMaster, we want our people to continuously improve and develop. Assigning goals are how we will help them do so professionally and personally. Due to the effect on the employee, the company, the image of the leader and ultimately, the customer – this is the most important portion of the evaluation.

While this section *does* relate to areas that need improvement, or where a deficiency exists, it is also used for those who are delegated tasks or responsibilities, such as a Safety Team Leader. As you can see, it is a wonderful opportunity to chart a course for the employee who wants to

move up within the company. What better way to do that than through the Performance Goals Process where the manager assigns a project to foster the individual's development! This is what Succession Planning is, which is discussed further in the chapter on Promotion from Within.

The ShoreMaster Way is about GREAT PEOPLE. The evaluation process is also about GREAT PEOPLE. Moreover, it is the vehicle to developing GREAT PEOPLE. In the final analysis, effectively delivered evaluations will lead to a sustainable culture.



**PART II:  
DEVELOPING GREAT PEOPLE**

**CHAPTER 6: PROMOTION FROM WITHIN**

**CHAPTER 7: TRAINING**

**CHAPTER 8: DELEGATION**

**CHAPTER 9: STRENGTHS BASED LEADERSHIP**



## CHAPTER 6

# PROMOTION FROM WITHIN

“Promotion from Within” is *the* essence of The ShoreMaster Way’s sustainable culture. This philosophy has considerable benefits and demands if it done properly. ShoreMaster cannot expect to rely only on our internal candidates to improve continually if we do not have a comprehensive leadership-training program, which models our culture and captures the creativity of our GREAT PEOPLE.

The first step of implementing this philosophy is to have a prescribed set of training modules, which lead up to a base level of competency for becoming a member of management. The ShoreMaster Leadership Pool is a certification program, which states that anyone in the company, who is interested in becoming a member of the leadership team and who has a willingness to drive improvement, will experience a progression of both in-house training courses and a project they will lead. This grooms the potential candidate, as well as enables executive management to assess if this person would make a good leader in The ShoreMaster Way. It ultimately assures that the right people will be in the right positions leading in the right manner.

The second step is to hire talented people when we are in need of external candidates. As was discussed in the chapter on Effective Hiring, to hire a person who only suffices at an entry level position is not a good decision, especially if the company wants to promote from within. Talent, strengths and motivation should be the driving decision criteria, which means that experience is a lesser consideration. Since The ShoreMaster Way is very unique, and requires a different leadership style to manage our GREAT PEOPLE, there are drastically different

demands on leadership, which wouldn't be experienced by a hire outside of the company. It will be difficult to find external candidates who will fit the desired leadership profile based on previous experience because of our unique culture. Therefore, ShoreMaster must groom its leaders from within. That is why all external candidates applying for entry level positions must be looked at as potential leaders. ShoreMaster will seek out potential, rather than solely seeking experience. To add to the challenge, is our locale in Fergus Falls, which is remote and may not always attract or possess the unique type of experience needed to manage in The ShoreMaster Way. This is why it is crucial to hire people at the entry level who want to rise within the company.

“Promotion from Within” means that we must groom our existing GREAT PEOPLE for leadership positions. It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean someone must possess a college degree, either. At this point, you must be wondering what kind of philosophy “Promotion from Within” is if ShoreMaster is not primarily interested in people with experience or a college degree?

Well, the answer is The ShoreMaster Way and our culture of continuous improvement. Standardized work for the factory, combined with the elimination of waste, and problem solving will develop a certain type of employee who possesses a certain style. This person will be unique and exceptional at coaching people, facilitating ideas to solve problems, and leading a team. ShoreMaster Leadership candidates should possess different skills than the traditional model, which places sole importance on experience and a college education. After all, colleges rarely, if ever, teach the ShoreMaster leadership style. In short, we have to model that in our people only *after* they have demonstrated

a competency in both their current position and through the leadership certification process, regardless of peer level of education.

Even though it is an uncommon philosophy, “Promotion from Within” has numerous benefits:

## **GREAT LEADERS**

This philosophy allows a new hire to see a defined pathway to a career, which ensures that ShoreMaster attracts **GREAT PEOPLE**. In addition, a clearly defined training and certification process for leadership creates a heightened awareness of what The ShoreMaster Way entails and expects of its leaders. Candidates who are proving themselves certifiable to be a leader are thinking in the fashion of The ShoreMaster Way, and are improving not only the work they are doing, but are also directly influencing their co-workers. Can you imagine the exponential change that will occur in a group of ambitious individuals interested in a career with ShoreMaster, while coaching The ShoreMaster Way and still working on the front line?

That’s right. It becomes contagious.

## **EMPLOYEE RETENTION**

Employee retention is another benefit of “Promotion from Within.” One of the top factors for employee engagement (and therefore retention) is providing an environment where individuals have the opportunity to learn and grow. Employees will experience a sense of loyalty with ShoreMaster by virtue of the company’s commitment to our **GREAT PEOPLE**, and in particular, our high performers. This is why outside experience and a college education are secondary to motivation, cooperation, and talent. Since The ShoreMaster Way is founded

on continuous improvement, it demands a culture of learning our way, and as a result, excelling. The ShoreMaster Leadership Certification Program creates a clear path of career progression, which ultimately results in retention.

## **QUALITY AND SAFETY**

A final notable benefit is the positive impact on quality and safety, which results from aspiring people, striving to prove themselves to management and their co-workers, by demonstrating the desired skills in The ShoreMaster Way. This is effective because leaders cannot be in all places all of the time. In short, having employees attaining leadership experience, while functioning in their current job and project, is very reinforcing. It makes for a safe environment because of the increased awareness and understanding of how ShoreMaster values a safe environment for its people and not take shortcuts on safety. It also creates a lean environment, which by definition is a safe environment, and one that manufactures quality products.

The final step to implementing a promotion from within philosophy is to plan the progression of an individual's development in order to groom them for leadership or coaching positions – a promotion if that is what they desire. The term for this is succession planning. Succession planning means a coach or leader has an individual or group of individuals who are planning to take the coaches place. Simply put, if that coach were to be promoted, who would take over for their current position when they leave? We need to make sure we have the “bench strength” so we are prepared to advance individuals into leadership positions when the time comes.

At times there may be many who desire the vacated position in which case there is ample opportunity for grooming or

development. This also gives rise to a great organization that can choose the best candidate and yet develop those who may not have been promoted the first time around but gathered valuable experience in the process nonetheless. Alternatively, there may be no one who expresses interest in which case recruiting of individuals must take place. Who does the vacating coach believe would make a great replacement? Soliciting those by expressing optimism that a certain person would make a good leader is a start. Sometimes, when an individual knows that others see leadership qualities and potential in them, it gives that individual the confidence they need to pursue a leadership position when they otherwise may not have.

In addition to on-going coaching, development and recognition, the main vehicle for formal succession planning is the performance evaluation. Specifically, the last section entitled, “Performance Goals.” Once the individual has expressed interest, the Performance Goals assigned in the evaluation are the best way to put a plan in place to foster the development of the prospective replacement coach. In other words, it is a prescription to bring that person up to speed as to what they need to learn or accomplish if they were to be the next leader. So things like training, experience, leading a project or work group meeting, and filling in for the vacationing leader are all examples of topics to be listed in an effort to prepare the “successor” to take over the reins as the new coach.

Every leader all the way to the president’s position must have a succession plan with someone or a group of people who may be eligible to take their place. It is sort of a sobering feeling at first unless you realize that doing this also positions you as the next promotion and in fact, you may be still managing the very person you developed!

“Promotion from Within” can literally create a wave of change, improvement, and most importantly, it leads to sustainability. It produces its own momentum, forging the ShoreMaster coaching prototype out of the ranks from the very GREAT PEOPLE who produce our quality products - experience that is not outside the walls of ShoreMaster.

## ROB KATZENMEYER: THE MODEL OF PROMOTION FROM WITHIN



The year was 1985 and Fergus Falls was preparing for ShoreMaster’s move from Carlos, Minnesota, to Fergus Falls, Minnesota. While many were talking about the new business coming to town, a 16-year-old Fergus Falls resident, Rob Katzenmeyer, was working on a way to get his foot into the door of this new business. August had rolled around and Rob had submitted his application and was hired on as General Production Labor. Rob did just about everything other than weld. He fabricated, he made bolt bags, packed boxes but mostly loaded trucks. Actually, that first year out of high school was mainly spent loading semi-trucks.

As legend has it, back then Rob did not like to wear a shirt when he was loading. One hot September day, Jerry Buchholz and Rob were loading a truck together.

“It was a two person job back then, because we didn’t have a loading dock or a fork lift at the time,” says Jerry Buchholz. “So we would be handing 12-foot dock sections to one another, and jumping up onto the trailer. One day Rob decided to lean up against the sides of the aluminum trailer. Let’s just say he learned quickly why you wore a shirt while loading.”

While working at ShoreMaster Rob caught the eye of ShoreMaster's founder, Dennis Tuel, Sr., whom at the time had big plans for Rob. "Senior," as he was fondly referred to, would push Rob to new levels and actually persuaded Rob to attend college.

So, after high school graduation in 1987, Rob went to the Fergus Community College and got an AA degree. He continued on obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Business Management at St. Cloud State University. Still, during the summer Rob continued to work at ShoreMaster as a Loading Assistant.

In fact, throughout college Rob continued to work for ShoreMaster as much as he could. He remained employed over the summers sticking to the loading side of operations. He had several titles during this time such as, Lead Loader, Shipping/Receiving area Assistant and Head of Shipping/Receiving area. Rob held the title of Head of Shipping/Receiving area until he graduated from college in 1993. At that time Rob was officially hired on full-time as a Traffic Manager. If you can imagine, Rob finally had a stable job title; well at least for two years. While Rob was busy making sure that trucks were moving out on time with the right stuff on them, Dennis Tuel, Sr., had even bigger plans for Rob Katzenmeyer.

During the 90s, ShoreMaster was starting to explore new market opportunities with its existing Plastics Division. They were starting to see some success with rotomolding of plastic floats that they had used on various products like floating docks. This new successful endeavor opened up a completely new opportunity for ShoreMaster, especially commercially. The biggest competitor at the time was a company called GalvaFoam, (which was eventually bought by ShoreMaster in the early 2000s). However, in order for ShoreMaster to compete

with GalvaFoam, ShoreMaster decided to up its game in the Plastics Department. Some of the new products produced at that time were the swim raft, plastic floats and the experimental version of PolyDock, which surprisingly had its name from the beginning.

With such a demand for plastics at the time, and no Plant Manager for Plastics Division, ShoreMaster decided it needed someone to take over Plastics and take it to the next level. The only man for the job was none other than Rob Katzenmeyer. He took over Plastics in 1996 and was responsible for the entire operation. He had to create divisional goals, review financials, track inventory, purchase raw materials, find and create new plastics, create new processes and lead the Research and Development Plastics Program.

One particular project that stood out was how Rob was able to secure an OEM project with Lund Boats manufacturing live wells. Rob remained as Plant Manager for over 10 years making sure that everything in his division was operating at top notch.

Rob was always on the move. At the turn of the century some interesting events occurred. ShoreMaster was sold to Ottertail Corp, and at the same time ShoreMaster bought GalvaFoam in an effort to expand business operations. During this time, it was Rob who was spearheading the development of a new Plastics Division down in Missouri. Rob was still in charge of the Plastics Plant here in Fergus Falls and because of his increased responsibilities; he was promoted to Director of Operations.

Throughout all of these promotions, Rob consistently demonstrated a genuine concern for the GREAT PEOPLE of ShoreMaster. He always had them as the first consideration

in any decision he made or had input, and it showed as the people responded with respect and dedication. Although Rob was very analytical by nature and consequently very reserved, everyone's faces smiled and lit up when he approached them. He gave numerous tours over the years and, without fail, it would take longer as he was always talking with the front-line folks. A mutual respect existed that was exemplary.

In 2011, Rob was promoted to his final position of Vice President of Operations but only because he turned down the President's position. The story apparently goes like this:

The President of ShoreMaster had been discharged from office. Being ShoreMaster was without a President, Ottertail Corp. decided to take charge and appoint a new President. Ottertail Corporate Offices called on Rob and Don Hurley and asked who would be President. In front of Ottertail's COO, Rob kicks Don in the shin under the conference table telling him, "You take it." While the rest is history, it should be noted Rob could have made it all the way to the president.

Which is why Rob is our ideal example of promotion from within.



# CHAPTER 7

## TRAINING

ShoreMaster strives to offer training for our employees and managers in the spirit of continuous improvement. At the heart of all training is the desire for employee empowerment. As the era of “The Boss” passes, and the new era of employee empowerment arises, the demands of ShoreMaster leaders will become more participative because of demand to handle employee feedback, which will improve quality, efficiency and safety.

This is truly the core of The ShoreMaster Way. Who is better suited to help ShoreMaster continuously improve than the people actually doing the work? With this style of leadership, the direct labor force has total control over quality, safety and productivity. To support this new style of management, there will be extensive training to guide managers to the way they manage their direct reports.

As previously stated, The ShoreMaster Way will demand a different type of leader who is capable of receiving feedback from their people, managing that feedback and making a determination of how best to act upon that feedback. This is a huge departure from the industrial age of managing. Indeed, it is the most rewarding way to work with people. Listening, coaching, changing and celebrating successes is fulfilling for all.

The key to managing feedback is to better understand and relate to people...our employees. Remember, there is a very fine line between empowerment and being a push over. An effective leader is able to understand their people *while* maintaining order and professionalism. This means that leaders must value each

of the employees, as well as their uniqueness, *while* maintaining consistency, standardization and productivity. Of course, the work environment must remain safe, void of hostility and harassment.

It's the individuals closest to the job who will have the best ideas as to how to improve quality and safety, while eliminating waste and excess costs. An effective leader has the ability to capture those ideas through individual consideration, while recognizing that each person is valuable and different. By doing this, our leaders will improve their effectiveness at relating to their people and ultimately improve ShoreMaster.

The ShoreMaster Way of training has a layered approach, is in the Training House (see diagram on next page). The initial training can be delivered to everyone within the company. This strategy allows for better cooperation and understanding within each work group or team. It also focuses the team on each other's unique characteristics, helping them to recognize every team member's differences and ultimately the value of those differences.

The starting point from which to understand this is at the foundation of the training house is Strengths Finder 2.0 and Advanced Lean Training the Toyota Way. Members of sales and management as well as leadership pool candidates and front-line employees experience these two foundational classes.

The right side of the house has core leadership training and the left side is the sales training. At the top are all engaged and responsible for the customer experience.



The following are the core leadership courses available to all ShoreMaster managers:

- ShoreMaster Way Training
- Strengths Based Leadership
- Delegation

This training house will enable promotion from within and insures our culture is sustainable. It is the reason why ShoreMaster can look for fit rather than previous experience and education. The training focuses on developing a different style of leader: those who can listen and empower their people by teaching them how to lead The ShoreMaster Way.



## CHAPTER 8

# DELEGATION

Delegation occurs when a manager assigns a task or project to an employee to complete. It is a largely mismanaged and misunderstood practice. Often times, its effect is to dump a project or task onto someone with little instruction or support, other than to state a deadline for completion. Conversely, effective delegation occurs when clear instruction, goals and measurable outcomes are determined and shared. It should also be given to those who are willing and able. However, at times, an employee may be lacking in ability, but they make up for their deficiency through their managers coaching and follow-up.<sup>6</sup>

Delegation is an art. It demands the manager to assess the person they are delegating. In other words, the delegator must be setting the employee up to succeed while realizing that the delegating manager is ultimately responsible for the results. It is an art since it relies solely on the judgment of the manager to choose the right person and determine the appropriate task and purpose of the assignment.

Since each situation is different, a very experienced person may need a “hands on” approach of delegation if the task assigned is a very new experience. Often when a high performing employee is delegated a task, a manager will have delegated in the exact same manner every time they delegate to that person. There is little to no consideration that the employee may actually need some training. This is an easy oversight, especially since high performers are typically given the difficult tasks. Even

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<sup>6</sup> The actual practice of delegation will be explained in a training module offered to our leaders from an outside consultant The Blanchard Group. The course is the Essentials of Situational Leadership, which will be touched on in the chapter “Training.”

the best performers will struggle at an entirely new assignment, which likely finds them willing, but not as capable. There is a prescription for this pitfall in the training and that is why it is so effective.

It's important to realize that delegation occurs whether we recognize it or not. It is also one of the most commonly failed activities of management. When delegation fails, other ramifications occur, such as resentment, objection, blame, and waste.

The essence of leadership development is delegation. If the manager subscribes to the idea that talent supersedes experience and a college education and if empowering people to improve quality, safety and efficiency is The ShoreMaster Way, then it means that there must be a path to internally developing our leaders in a systematic and productive approach. The most effective approach is through delegation.

In a “Promotion from Within” company, it is critical that employees, who are expressing a desire to become leaders in the company, experience duties and tasks that not only afford them the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, but also enables management to witness their talent as well.

Delegation is a powerful activity, which will result in better overall productivity, especially as aspiring new leaders become increasingly aware of the challenges and opportunities of the tasks assigned to them. Imagine if a manager has three people from their team involved through delegated tasks. The increased focus, front-line involvement, and knowledge the leader obtains from observing the tasks in the *gemba* are immeasurable. It even goes beyond that, into the realm of empowerment of every employee in the company.

Delegation enables organizational structure. If it did not occur, the president of a company would be expected to sell, produce, ship and collect for the products produced. This is impossible, but it's important to remember that it would also be reality if delegation did not occur. An organization with effective delegation results in motivation, empowerment, problem solving, increased productivity, quality improvement and heightened customer satisfaction. Indeed, it has that dramatic of an impact. No other activity for management can have as much advantage for a company than that of delegating. There is no middle of the road; it is done either well or poorly, and both outcomes have consequences.

Remember, the retiring employee who said, "For 25 years you had my hands, but you could have had my mind as well?" What he was referring to is the core of delegation, which is not only the act of assigning tasks to someone, but it also taps into the person's mind and their ideas of how to do things. If you are a good leader, you will immediately recognize when you get the people who do the work to share their ideas. Delegation enables that.

Then why are some managers so effective at this skill? More specifically, what other actions can a manager take that result in more productivity and motivated people? The answer is The ShoreMaster Way. Think about it, leaders who see their people as great will dedicate themselves to getting the greatness out of these people. Leaders will also admit that they cannot possibly accomplish everything on their own. That is why an effective leader will conclude that their GREAT PEOPLE will help produce great results.

The value of delegation is that it need not be limited to those who want to be future leaders, nor must it occur with just high

performers. Indeed, the art of delegation occurs at every level and for various reasons. Suffice it to say, anyone can experience a delegated assignment and grow from the experience, even those who would refuse the assignment at the first offering. Often the perspective everyone gains from a delegation experience can only reap rewards if delegation occurred effectively.

Empowerment is another result of delegation. Since most managers realize that they are ultimately responsible for the results of their team, the weaker leaders feel compelled to control everything. They do not realize that this need will lead to their demise because of their failure to relinquish control. Delegation is the organized process of giving up the control while maintaining observation of progress, and thereby increasing the group's effectiveness.

When you are of the mindset that everyone has a value, and that we do not come close to maximizing all of the contributions our **GREAT PEOPLE** are capable of, you will quickly realize that delegation is the answer. It is The ShoreMaster Way.

## CHAPTER 9

# STRENGTHS BASED LEADERSHIP

It is prudent to go into more detail about one particular part of the ShoreMaster Training House. It is the foundational Strengths Finder Leadership. It is foundational because much like The ShoreMaster Way which rejects the “boss” style of leadership, focusing on everyone’s strengths is a different style of leadership that values each team member and the various perspectives brought forward.

ShoreMaster utilizes Gallop’s Strength Based Leadership. At the core of this training is recognizing that everyone has strengths. Since no one is exactly alike, everyone has a different set or combination of strengths. In a world that revolves around fixing weaknesses, focusing on people’s strengths is a unique approach. Since ShoreMaster values its GREAT PEOPLE, we recognize that there is a huge potential for growth when we focus on their strengths.

Studies indicate that people who do have the opportunity to focus on their strengths are six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general. Research also indicates that having someone at work who regularly focuses on your strengths can make a dramatic difference.

The process for discovering these strengths is very easy and efficient thanks to Gallup – the same folks who do millions of surveys in all areas of society. It all starts with team members completing an assessment of their strengths through an online survey. Based upon the answers to a series of timed questions, a person’s top five strengths are identified. These are very accurate and real. Often people describe the results as somewhat scary

as to how accurate the survey depicts their strengths. It would make sense that this would be the case as Gallup has so many years of experience with surveying. Thus, we chose to adopt this program to our training curriculum.

Management will be instructed on how to utilize the information in a Strengths Based Leadership course once everyone has completed the assessment. This is one of the core training courses that managers will receive as a part of the ShoreMaster Leadership Certification program. The focus of the training is to guide the manager on how to best utilize an employee's strengths so they can motivate, and relate to their employees. Strengths Based Leadership is a very positive way of approaching an employee and work group. Imagine a discussion that focuses on what someone does well and how best to utilize their strengths and skills to get the best results.

This also has an aspect of respect for the value of the individual as well as a facet of diversity. When we embrace the different strengths that everyone brings to the table, we benefit from the full perspective of that. Too much of any predominant strength can create an imbalance. For example, if everyone was an “activator” there would be no one counter-balance that strength and hastiness and impatience would prevail. As a team with multiple strengths, we arrive at great solutions, cultivate ideas likely never considered, have a balanced perspective and ultimately, become the best business.

As of this writing, the top two strengths of the over 105 people at ShoreMaster were “responsibility” and “arranger.” Tallies are in the range of over 30 for “responsibility.” This provides great insight as to the collective strengths of our team as a whole but also speaks to the diversity. Looking forward, we might use this to hire those who may possess strengths that

our team is lacking. Quite a thought but based upon the true theory of Strengths Based Leadership and The ShoreMaster Way, however it is not unrealistic as it relates to our belief in GREAT PEOPLE!

Every human being has talents and strengths. A motivated workforce by virtue of better manager-employee relations will result in increased productivity, quality and safety. Those three benefits are recurring throughout The ShoreMaster Way and it all stems from focusing on our GREAT PEOPLE.





**PART III:  
EMPOWERING GREAT PEOPLE**

**CHAPTER 10: LEAN CULTURE**

**CHAPTER 11: EMPLOYEE SURVEY**



## CHAPTER 10

# LEAN CULTURE

Lean Manufacturing at ShoreMaster will help us work smarter rather than harder. This saves us time, reduces expenses, and most importantly, manufactures the quality products our customers demand from us. What is Lean Manufacturing? It is an endless journey in the spirit of continuous improvement. It is about people closest to the job, contributing ideas of improving quality, and eliminating waste. It is respect for employees and their abilities.

A few years ago our woodshop, which makes cedar and hardwood panels for our docks as well as bunks and guides for our lifts, was really having operational issues. First off, there was a quality issue with the wood itself. Cedar availability was questionable as was its quality and there was much waste. Inventory of the supplied wood pallets was stacked five deep and five wide outside the building with pallets of cedar and IPE in 16-foot lengths. Since the quality of that wood was always in question, the folks in the wood shop would be outside breaking open these 16-foot bundles to spot check quality - even during the harsh winter months. Some of it was rejected in the yard; however, it was a huge struggle to process those rejected claims for both the vendor and ShoreMaster. Secondly, since the 16-foot lengths of cedar had limited availability, ShoreMaster had to take additional inventory when it was available. To make matters worse, we were not nearly large enough of a customer to get cooperation from the wood provider. In fact, we were more of a pain. At times there was no cedar available or we were forced to accept less than premium boards.

For one entire year, the cedar was unavailable in the species

that was traditionally used, so yellow cedar had to replace it. It was an unfamiliar wood with no in field-testing, which caused a great deal of concern among our dealers. A large distributor forced us to take back the “older” wood as the color of the yellow did not match with the existing inventory in the field. A year or so later, it was learned that the yellow cedar warped and curved which was less desirable and meant that ShoreMaster incurred additional and unanticipated warranty expense for wood it doesn’t make!

Production was also less efficient as 16-foot boards had to be cut into 45-inch panels that left roughly a foot per board of wasted wood that went to scrap. Furthermore, a second quality inspection took place on the production line, where either the entire 16-foot boards or a portion of the board was rejected. In any case, now rejected boards had to be run through again to dispose of or be salvaged as “stringers” for the underside of the panel. Production had to keep adding more people to the process as bodies were needed to handle the cutting, the waste, and inspection, much less the actual production of a dock panel.

Operations decided to try some “lean” actions themselves. With the support of purchasing, they started asking questions of our vendor and trying different things. First, they had interviews with existing suppliers and potential wood suppliers. A new vendor who had a plan to pre-cut the boards to the 45-inch length was selected. Their claim was that shorter lengths of cedar are more available, the quality is much better; the price is actually cheaper since 16-foot lengths are difficult to come by, and they could virtually guarantee weekly delivery.

The leadership of the wood shop then went on to change the flow of the process to cut out the wasted steps in the process such as the cutting of the wood and the managing of the waste

from both the unused ends to the rejected boards.

This solved many problems. We eliminated steps in the process of cutting the wood. The quality of the wood would vastly improve and the space the excess inventory took was now freed up. The extra costly inefficiency of handling of the waste was now eliminated. The actual wood cost decreased and so did the cost of the labor associated with the entire decking operation.

It is important to note that while this took place quickly, there was and still is today continued improvements being made by that department. As it goes with lumber, there are still wood issues that occur. The negative impact was minimal due to the quick response and awareness of the lean system the team uses. It led to a quicker response to issues with better quality at the best costs being the result. Hats off to the woodshop team!

As stated above and illustrated in the wood shop example, Lean Manufacturing is an endless journey in the spirit of continuous improvement. It is about people closest to the job, contributing ideas of improving quality, and eliminating waste. It is respect for employees and their abilities.

Remember, ShoreMaster is driven by two assets: our customers and our GREAT PEOPLE.

## **1. THE CUSTOMER**

The mission statement declares that ShoreMaster is customer-focused. Those who misuse the word “lean” never consider the customer. Instead, their focus is internal, centering on the operation. Not so with the ShoreMaster production system. Lean is driven by the customer demand, and as a result, is the catalyst of our lean environment.

## **2. THE PEOPLE**

Our GREAT PEOPLE are the drivers of the lean initiative. We rely on them to work safely, point out problems, provide feedback, and to have their ideas listened to no matter what level of experience they have.

As you can see, this differs from the misperceptions of lean, which falsely claim that it is about tools, eliminating jobs and reducing costs by becoming lean while “The Boss” gives orders.

ShoreMaster rejects that theory.

Our leaders are first and foremost servants of the people who are actually doing the value added work. Our managers are great listeners, “relaters,” and coaches. They are able to receive feedback from their people, take things under advisement, and gain a consensus while obtaining buy-in from the entire group in the spirit of continuous improvement. The managers are also supportive and helpful of their team. This, in turn, takes a special type of coach. It is also the reason we spend so much time training our leaders to support The ShoreMaster Way.

The ShoreMaster Way models the concept of Lean Manufacturing, which is as follows:

### **ELIMINATION OF WASTE**

At the very core of the lean initiative is the desire to eliminate waste. Waste, an all-encompassing concept, ideally gets the customer’s order and delivery as close together in terms of time elapsed as possible. The continued effort to streamline this system results in great waste elimination and substantial inventory reduction, *while* not losing a sale or delaying the desired delivery time that a customer requests.



## IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY

A company that is truly invested in Lean Manufacturing has a substantial commitment to improvement and quality. Doing it right the first time is the goal, coupled with the discipline of not passing any defective or poor quality product downstream to the next station of manufacturing. The key to ensuring quality is to empower our front-line people to exercise the freedom to stop producing faulty products. There are **Kaizen Events**<sup>7</sup>, which is a team approach to problem solving or change for the better. In ShoreMaster's case, it means taking action to correct, and eliminating a mistake permanently without pointing fingers. Can you see that this takes a very different dynamic and coaching relationship rather than that of the traditional boss mentality?

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The result of eliminating waste is a safer environment. Waste and chaos leads to injury; therefore, when waste is eliminated, safety improves. The best part about this system is that safety and quality need not be a separate, stand-alone process or effort. They are, in fact, one in the same.

<sup>7</sup> Liker, Jeffery K. *The Toyota Way*. McGraw-Hill, 2001, Page 283-284.

All of this requires change and gradual implementation. The premise of continuous improvement is the absolute driving factor to accomplishing “lean.” There is no end to the journey of improvement. It is not a fad or a trend, and once the journey starts, there is no turning back.

GREAT PEOPLE drive progress as they have Kaizen Events and problem solving meetings. To a lesser degree, production goals can also drive meetings with the front-line people who are doing the manufacturing, and therefore, offering ideas to improve productivity. Great ideas surface from anyone in the spirit of continuous improvement, quality, efficiency, safety and profitability.

Every subsequent level of management must have the mentality of supporting the level they manage. This is a dramatic departure from the previous style of management, and by in large, a huge departure from the industrial models of manufacturing that used to be the hallmark of production for over seventy-five years.

The closer management is to the people doing the value added work, the less people they should be coaching. This helps support a lean approach. We call this Span of Control. The ideal ratio of a front-line leader to front-line employees is 5:1, which means that he or she should only be managing five people at a time. This ensures that the front-line leader/coach is constantly available to help and support their team and still able to leave their team to get them the necessary support, tools and communication both upstream and downstream. This results in efficient production and constant reduction of waste.

The ShoreMaster Production System results in greater safety, higher quality, lower costs, and more efficiency. All these desirable outcomes at once. It does so through our GREAT PEOPLE. That is The ShoreMaster Way!



## CHAPTER II

# EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The ShoreMaster leader must promote and maintain an environment of learning, respect, employee involvement, communication and ultimately continuous improvement. One of the ways to determine how well we, as a leadership team are accomplishing this is to conduct a survey of our GREAT PEOPLE. We call this the ShoreMaster Employee Survey or SES.

The most important component of the SES is that it is anonymous. There can never be honest and helpful feedback unless there is anonymity. The success of the SES is a direct link to the employee feeling completely safe in providing their anonymous opinion when answering a survey question. This is how ShoreMaster can gauge the effectiveness of our leaders *and* monitor how well the leaders are managing in The ShoreMaster Way.

The SES is a great opportunity for the entire company if managed properly. There are a few recommendations that go along with the spirit and intent of it. They are as follows:

- Employees must be honest and not vindictive.
- Leaders must demonstrate courage and patience when digesting their results. They must also have a strong desire to lead a feedback session in the true spirit of learning and fostering continuous improvement.
- Every member of management must be committed to the anonymous nature of the survey to preserve its integrity.
- Everyone must remain as objective as humanly possible.

As you can see, the intention of this survey is to provide feedback to the leaders regarding areas that need improvement. The questions and categories are key indices that allow people to be managed in The ShoreMaster Way. Getting feedback from employees is predicated on the vision statement that strives to ensure a safe environment, while absolutely producing the highest quality products as efficiently as possible. That is why the survey is a critical component of judging leadership in the spirit of continuous improvement.

The SES has three sections:

- SECTION ONE: (Questions 1-10)
  - Measures how the leader is managing their direct reports, which is the primary focus of the executive team at ShoreMaster
  - Based on how many positive answers there are, a leadership score is determined
- SECTION TWO: (Questions 11-20)
  - Directed at the middle and upper management
  - Gauges support of work group needs
- SECTION THREE: (Questions 21-30+)
  - Company compensation, work group cooperation
  - Other various questions, such as safety and lean manufacturing

## Employee Survey

For each questions, please mark the boxes provided which rating best describes your experience with each question. The first ten questions will be about your supervisor labeled below.

Employee Name: _____ Supervisor/Manager Name: _____ Date: _____	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Employee Satisfaction Survey</b>					
1. I can tell my manager what I think.					
2. My manager tells me what is expected.					
3. Favoritism is not a problem in our work group.					
4. My manager helps us do our jobs better.					
5. My manager listens to my concerns.					
6. My manager asks for my ideas about work.					
7. My manager tells me when I do a good job.					
8. My manager treats me with respect.					
9. My manager keeps me informed.					
10. My manager does not interfere with my job.					
11. My manager's boss gives us the support we need.					
12. Upper management tells us company goals.					
13. Upper management listens to ideas from me.					
14. I have confidence in the fairness of management.					
15. I can be sure of a job if I do good work.					
16. I am proud to work for ShoreMaster.					
17. Work is leading to the kind of future I want.					
18. ShoreMaster does a great job for its customers.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Employee Satisfaction Survey</b>					
19. Working for ShoreMaster is a good deal.					
20. I am paid fairly for this kind of work.					
21. The benefit programs meet most of my needs.					
22. People cooperate with this work group.					
23. There is cooperation between workgroups.					
24. In my environment, we use safe work practices.					
25. Rules and procedures do not interfere with my work.					
26. I am able to get the supplies and resources I need.					
27. I have enough freedom to do my job well.					
28. My manager is promoting a Continuous Improvement Culture.					
29. My manager focuses on quality to assure a premium product for the customer.					
30. My manager is using timely and accurate information to guide our work.					
31. The Value Stream Charts are meaningful to me.					

Let us take a look at Section One, questions 1-10, in detail. This score is calculated by measuring, in percent, the number of positive answers, which are “agree” or “strongly agree.” It is important to note that an answer “sometimes,” is not a positive response. Obviously, the answers “disagree” and “strongly disagree” are not positive responses, either.

This means that only two of the five possible answers are positive responses. They are also the numerator in calculating the leadership index. Since “sometimes” is not a positive response, it forces the leader to be a positive and strong leader. A leader who experiences a leadership score of less than 60 percent is a critical work group, which is a team that has experienced poor leadership from a leader, who has not managed their people in The ShoreMaster Way. The deficient leader has six months and no longer than a year to improve their leadership score.

Here is what will happen after the SES scores are determined:

1. The leaders who need to improve their leadership have a sit-down meeting with their group (a feedback session), the personnel manager, and the department head for an hour. In that meeting, honest but professional feedback is collected to determine why employees answered questions 1-10 negatively. They will also discuss what they think the leader needs to do to improve. Since management and personnel are present, the meeting shall remain professional. The meeting provides management the opportunity to witness the leader’s potential for improvement by virtue of the group’s faith, or lack thereof, in their leader.

2. When the feedback session is completed, management and personnel have a decision to make. They will ask - *Can this leader improve their score and gain the respect of their group based on observations of the feedback session?* If the answer is yes, the leader must produce an Action Plan that reflects the feedback from the group. This Action Plan will be an Accountability Document complete with dates and checkpoints that explain exactly how their leadership problems will be corrected. However, if the answer is no, then they must be removed from their leadership role or position.

3. The leader will have another meeting with their team to present their Action Plan. As stated previously, there is a limited window of opportunity for this plan to work. It is important to note that the time constraint placed on the Action Plan is to prevent the prolonging of deficient leadership, which could potentially damage a group and the company.

4. The deficient group will complete another survey after the Action Plan commitment dates have expired to determine if, in fact, the leader has made progress and corrected their leadership deficiencies. If the leadership score does not reach a score of 60 percent or above after the resurvey, the leader will be removed from their position.

The SES promotes balance and ensures that the fabric of The ShoreMaster Way stays intact. It offers employees the means to express their thoughts on they are being managed. It also gives upper management insights as to how employees are being managed and does so with accountability.

In actuality, every team will have a feedback session after they have taken the survey, regardless of the leadership score. Even the highly performing groups will have the chance to exchange honest feedback. Remember, there are roughly 20 more questions that may be of concern to even a well-led motivated team. ShoreMaster Management wants to hear about those concerns, too.

The ShoreMaster Employee Survey is the key to keeping our culture focused on our GREAT PEOPLE. In time, a motivated, safe, learning and creative workforce will be the path to making ShoreMaster one of the truly great places to work, produce and learn.

# CONCLUSION

The ShoreMaster Way path is clear. It is about listening, cultivating feedback and developing our GREAT PEOPLE in a manner that supports our mission statement. For the mission statement to ring truthful, we must tap into the wonderful strengths of our GREAT PEOPLE. In doing so, we will create a new culture that will be rewarding and sustainable for long after we have retired.

Indeed, we all will have changed our company into a most desirable place to work. May ShoreMaster be the source for developing great leaders who move on from the company to spread the practice of empowering all people on all levels to achieve great things.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Don Hurley is the President and CEO of ShoreMaster, LLC, a premier manufacture waterfront equipment including boat docks, boat lifts and accessories. Don has assembled a talented team and led them through a difficult rightsizing of the organization, resulting in a huge improvement in the company's financial performance. His team continues to build upon that momentum by launching a lean manufacturing initiative ala The Toyota Way that will help ShoreMaster capitalize with GREAT PEOPLE.

ShoreMaster's mission of a customer-focused, market-driven company, manufacturing quality products safely and efficiently with GREAT PEOPLE, will lead to changing the face of its industry.

Previously, Don was Vice President after being the Director of Sales at ShoreMaster, where his leadership resulted in the expansion of ShoreMaster's distribution by over 39 percent during the past recession. He managed a team of sales professionals who cover the country as well as a marketing department whose social media initiatives continues to increase voice while substantially reducing ShoreMaster's spend on advertising.

Don has sold all over the world including the Pacific Rim, Europe, Canada, Mexico, and the United States. As a Worldwide Account Executive at FedEx, he called on large fortune 100 companies such as Gateway Computers, ConAgra, the Mayo Clinic, IBM, Omaha Steaks, Intel, Fingerhut, as well as startup businesses. He is a two-time President's Club award winner and was inducted in the FedEx Sales Hall of Fame in 1995. He joined Arctic Cat, Inc. in 2002 and was awarded the Arctic Cat District Sales Manager of the Year in 2006.

Don was a Senior Manager of Operations at FedEx. He led a team of seven ops managers in the largest facility in the region with over 184 employees. His teams won awards for superior levels of on-time service to its customers. Don is a graduate of the University of Minnesota.







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