

## **Road to success starts with getting Turtles up to speed**

### **Edward Marshall**

Every organization has at least three types of people - the Stars, the Turtles, and the Bad Apples.

Usually, the Stars comprise 15 percent to 20 percent of the work force, while the Bad Apples represent 3 percent to 5 percent.

It's pretty straightforward what to do with Bad Applies - they need to be let go. The Stars are already on fire - which means the company is getting their best effort.

The real issue for businesses that want to be best-in-class is how to get the other 75 percent to 80 percent of the work force, the Turtles, to be on fire - or close to it.

The goal of a high performance company is to have 80 percent of its people on fire 80 percent of the time. However, research over the past 20 years has found that, on average, companies are operating with 60 percent of the people at 30 percent.

Clearly, you can't be best-in-class operating at that energy level. Fortunately, there is an opportunity for real changes.

### **STARS AND TURTLES**

We don't have to settle for 30 percent. Leadership's challenge is to discover how to get 80 percent at 80 percent.

Stars are relatively easy to work with and usually operate at 70 percent to 90 percent. They are self-starters who are assertive about who they are, what they do and where they want to go.

Sustaining that energy level can be difficult, however, when the company goes through difficult times. Creating a supportive work environment in which Stars can meet challenges becomes critical to sustaining their loyalty and ensuring that their intellectual capital remains in the company.

For Turtles, there is a complimentary strategy. First, let's acknowledge that there's nothing wrong with being a Turtle. They are the heroes of implementation, the ones who provide structure, persistence and discipline for the companies. Every company needs its Turtles.

There are, however, at least two categories of Turtles. One group could be called the Complainer Turtles. They represent about 10 percent to 15 percent of the work force and tend to be half-glass-empty types who see themselves as victims in the organization, even though

some of their problems may be of their own making. This often is a hard group to motivate, but left to their own devices, they can drag a company's culture down.

The Producer Turtles, who comprise the remaining 45 percent to 60 percent of the work force, are the stalwart ones who diligently work through the specifics of what needs to get done and make sure it actually gets done.

Often quiet or keeping to themselves, Producer Turtles can be swallowed up in a negative work culture. It is crucial that they become engaged in more than just doing their jobs. The need to "own" the workplace where they spend most of their lives.

Here are some things that can be done to get 80 percent of the work force on fire 80 percent of the time.

### **MAKING EVERYONE A STAR - THE 80-80 FORMULA**

- Align them on the strategy: It's one thing to have a meeting where the corporate strategy is presented; it's another to hold focus groups that explain the meaning of that strategy for every part of the business so that all employees can buy into it.
- Create an ownership culture: People take care of what they own. Leadership can commit to building a culture where everyone has a stake in its future and where the people on the front lines and the middle help formulate direction.
- Build two-way communications: If senior leadership truly listens to the work force and creates an open environment free from fear of retribution for what people say, then the untapped ideas, creativity and talents of people will begin to flow.
- Engage everyone in teams: We get work done in teams, whether they are in a department or across groups on specific projects. Providing a common template for how people will collaborate in those teams will channel their energy.
- Provide skills development: Give the work force opportunities to learn new skills. This says the company is committed to their professional development and the ownership culture.