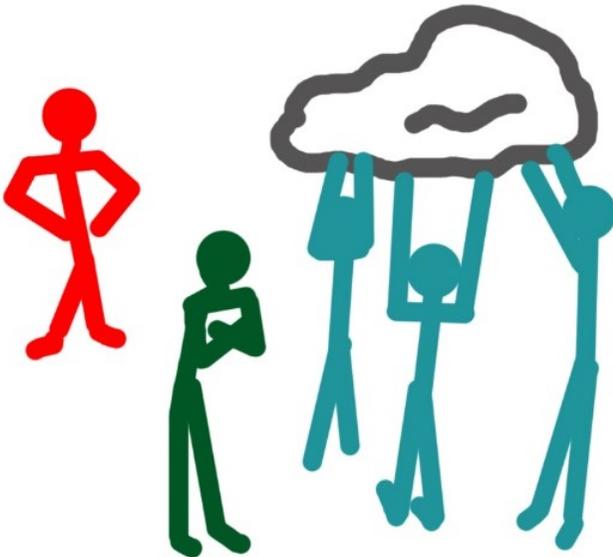


SPARTADIA

A BATTLE PLAN FOR TODAY'S BUSINESS

E-Book Excerpt

PICK THOSE WHO
PICK THEMSELVES



By Ray Martin

E-Book: Encouraging Self-Starters excerpted from:
Spartadia: A Battle Plan for Today's Business
by Ray E. Martin

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Encouraging Self-Starters

Self-starters pick themselves to be on the team—they don't wait to be chosen. These people naturally rise to the top and emerge as leaders. They accept criticism without being too sensitive; in fact, they tend to be their own best critics. They show initiative but not fear. They know what they are capable of, even for tasks that they have not yet learned. In a sense, they pick themselves for the roles they want by making themselves visible and relevant.

To be an effective manager of a business or a department, it is important to identify and hire these types of people. By establishing expectations clearly, and by giving employees the information required to see the project through, a culture of self-reliance is formed.

The best way to motivate and mold self-starters is to remove controls, and instead give them complete ownership of a job, by making sufficient information and procedures directly available. These people can be relied on to make decisions in the manager's absence. They fulfil the ideal delegation scenario, by being able and willing to take on independently as large a subtask as is viable.

Mistakes will happen, certainly, but these too can be learning opportunities. For example, rather than chastising an employee for using judgement in a way that did not meet expectations, greater progress, learning and loyalty can be gained from asking questions, such as, "What was your thinking process that led to this result?" It's important that employees know that managers and employers are not looking for perfection or asking to have a project handled in an exactly specific fashion, but rather that there is a willingness to accept an individual's own form of decision-making as long as it achieves the company's objectives, beginning to end.

When a problem appears, short answers or tips from managers can be useful, but when an employee lays an entire problem at a manager's feet, it is wiser to tell the employee to present a full set of facts and come back with their own suggested solution. When a subordinate simply hands responsibilities back to the manager, they become dependent and remain that way, ultimately demonstrating

themselves as inadequate to the task and possibly to future opportunities or needs.

At smaller companies as well as in the departments of larger companies, every employee must frequently wear many hats or perform duties outside the original job description. When an atmosphere of success and motivation exists, the employees will achieve it naturally—they will become self-starters.

I have found that the ideal starting point for identifying the degree to which this self-starting ability is innately within an individual is to ask three questions:

1. What are your primary strengths?
2. Which tasks bring those strengths into play in a way that will benefit the business?
3. What is your learning style?

Self-starters are not without weaknesses. Every employee will have weaknesses, that's a given. This means they should not be required to handle work responsibilities that collide with these weaknesses, without receiving adequate training or coaching first. Usually of course, self-motivated individuals will seek a solution independently, which is admirable, but can always be bolstered by some coaching, as I describe in the next chapter. A coachable employee will allow a good coach to guide past (or at least around) the weak points, while still matching his/her talents to the company vision.

Having a self-starter on your team does not guarantee you will have a perfect employee—this personality type simply represents a person who has goals, who wants to grow and move ahead, who is reasonably realistic about abilities and weaknesses, and who is open to learning new things. Such a person should be considered a premium player with tremendous potential, and as such should be empowered to learn in the way that best fits.

Download additional e-books at: spartadia-recruit.com.



SIDEBAR: Hire People Who Don't Have Bad Habits

As the leader of Qualifirst, I don't believe in wasting time and resources on so-called motivational strategies, creating subjective bonus and reward schemes, or enabling poor performances from employees who don't serve the company's needs and goals. For me, the winning strategy has been to give our people the support they need without hindering their efforts or micromanaging projects or day-to-day performance.

Our technique has always been to hire people who don't have bad habits to unlearn. We have focused on finding the right people rather than an exact set of qualifications or experience level. For that reason, many of our best long-term employees are right out of school or relatively young when hired, affording us the opportunity to filter them into our environment instead of the other way around.

We know that after a couple of years, a well-honed amount of "best judgement" will do far better for the company than any rulebook.

We look for people who are coachable, yet disciplined enough not to need handholding.

