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## Mastering the Workplace

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### In This Issue

### Quick Links

### [Newsletter Archives](#)

**Brian Tracy**

**Goodies:**

[10 Goal Method](#)

[Video Clip](#)

[Manage Your Time](#)

[Video Clip](#)

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Dear Reader,

### *Hands-Off: Not An Option*

*"Failure is the foundation of success... success the lurking place of failure." -- Lao Tzu*

As we are getting closer to the state of the union message this month, I am reminded of the conundrum that is our governing body. How does a leader take over the reins when the proverbial carriage is loaded with nitroglycerin and the horses are snarling with rabidity. Of course, I am alluding to congress, the pundits, the public, the will of \_\_\_\_\_, well, you fill in the blank. On such a stage, the stakes are too high for failure to be an option.

Ironically, failure is where the most valuable lessons are learned. But that only happens when there's a relatively level playing field, and some trust that the players are doing their job.

I think there's a tipping point in all this. In organizations, as in the government, positional power becomes an addictive force. Is there a dysfunctional political culture in your workplace? Does your organization need leaders to be more forceful in exerting their decision-making authority?

I coach professionals who are very good at what they do -- so good, that they get promoted into management positions. The problem arises when management skills haven't quite caught up with their new position.

To help them become skilled and effective managers, I engage them in implementing the essential habits of a great work boss. Employees want direction. Hands-on does not mean micro-managing. Managers need to be effective performance producers.

Don't fall into the trap of "there's nothing I can do," or "I don't have time to provide guidance," or "they will either sink or swim," or "my hands are tied." Real management is hard work. Start with asking yourself, "what do I want from each one of my employees?" and "what do they want from me?" Managing is about solving all the small problems so that the big ones don't explode in your face.



Here are some essential tips (you probably know -- but it's a good refresher) on how to get your employees to help you get all the work done that you are ultimately responsible for.



1. **If you manage people** and don't set aside one-on-one time, the rest is meaningless. Have daily one-on-ones
2. **How we talk** changes the way we work. Talk like a coach. Don't use blame words, use descriptive terms to describe how a person is behaving
3. **Discover the joys** of accountability. Spell out consequences and rewards related to expectations from day one and consistently
4. **Make the right decisions.** Keep the people who respond and perform. Get low performers off the team when all else fails (make sure all else doesn't fail)
5. **Don't wait** to have a difficult confrontation. It's doomed when people feel it comes from nowhere. Keep pointing them in the right direction. Have lots of conversation on what needs to get done. If you don't have the time for this, you don't have the time to be a manager.
6. **Be effective**, not defeated: learn to steer through corporate hurdles. Know the rules. Don't fight them. Thoroughly document everything and avoid future headaches. Be the one in your organization that is loved by HR. If you are fighting the rules and oppose the corporate values, you already know you don't belong there.

As a coach, I can help you avoid pitfalls and improve your skills. I can show you when to guide, when to direct, when to support and when to coach. Remember, the employee who is not performing might just need the right approach. What if giving the appropriate direction turns him/her around? Incorporate these tips into your daily habits and be the effective, productive and respected manager you always intended to be.

Get the support you need to make significant internal changes to manage your external world. Allow yourself to be the powerful human being you were meant to be. Call me or contact me and make things happen in your life in 2010. Read what people say about my work on [linkedin](#).

*Be sure to watch the Brian Tracy video clips under Quick Links on this page.*

*Reflections on Haiti:*

*With heartfelt acknowledgment I praise all those noble and humble volunteers who have stepped into a darkness to lift survivors out of the wreckage. I am inspired by who we are as a nation. We are made of that stuff, that in the worst of times, we rise to the occasion and tell the world who we are. We wear our compassion and generosity on our sleeves. Time and again, we are the nation that reaches out to help others. There's no better example at the moment than the unimaginable disaster in Haiti.*

*We are not a hands-off nation. It is not an option for us.*

Have a comment? Go to my blog, [Chart Your Change](#).

*To experience a complimentary coaching session, click on [Coach Me](#).*

*Have a Joyful Month,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Flo'.

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