



Tips to Building a Better Maintenance Team

This month's tip is a topic of much concern for most of us in the maintenance world but it is not limited to any particular industry as it crosses everything from manufacturing to facilities to the municipal, state, and federal organizations.

I gave a presentation earlier this year on this topic in Las Vegas at the National Facility Management and Technology (NFMT-Vegas) conference. It was received well and drew a lot of comments and questions so we decided to discuss it briefly for this month's tip. There is much more information here than I can easily put into the typical length of the Nuts and Bolts tip so we have the presentation available for download.

All of us that have spent some time in leadership and management positions have struggled with the thought of *How do I build a Better Team?* Even if your team is pretty good to start with we all have seen the need to do things better. With a better and more skilled/qualified team you can accomplish things faster, safer, and cheaper with better customer service just to name a few. In this tip I will focus on three critical areas of the challenge:

1. Interviewing and Hiring Tips
2. How to Identify Performance and Skill Gaps in Your Current Team
3. Changing the Organizations Behavior and Culture

Again for more details download the presentation and who knows; this may turn into a magazine article sometime in the future.

1. **Interviewing and Hiring Tips** - The obvious first component before you begin the hiring phase is the interviewing process. To do that well you must be prepared and understand what kind of individual you are looking for. Develop good job descriptions and requirements if you don't currently have them. This is the foundation for the hiring process, without this you have no idea what you are looking for. Here is a list of the key components needed in the interviewing process:
 - Review resumes in detail, looking for accuracy and quality
 - Perform extensive interviews using peers and other members of management to assist
 - Check references closely even using social media
 - Contact previous employers for work history and performance. Ask the question, *Would you hire them back?*
 - Validate their experience, looking for voids in work history
 - Ask what their vision is for their future
 - Where do they want to be in 5 years?
 - Ask about outside activities
 - Are they a leader, self-starter, etc...?
 - What is their overall attitude and demeanor?
 - What kind of questions do they ask of you?
 - Remember a good candidate will interview you as well



- If the job is technical in nature (salaried or wage) validate their skill level
 - Consider aptitude and or skill testing

Keep in mind that in the hiring process you only get to do it once. 'Do-over's' don't happen. So be prepared, take time to do it right, and involve others in the interviewing process.

2. **How to Identify Performance and Skill Gaps in Your Current Team** -The next important component for developing a great team is being able to determine where your lost opportunities are in the team's overall performance. Here are some items to focus on:
 - Work Audits,
 - Can you measure objectively how your team is performing? What kind of performance measures of scorecards do you have in place?
 - Customer Surveys
 - How do the people you serve feel about the team's performance
 - Personal Performance Appraisals
 - These should be done on everyone, including you, once per year at the very least

Remember what "Deming" said "*You cannot manage what you cannot measure!*"

3. **Changing the Organizations Behavior and Culture** - The last major component is to begin the change process and layout a path and vision for taking your team to the next level. The key components to this section may be the most difficult because it is centered on the ability for you to lead your team to be the best they can be.
 - Lead Don't Follow
 - Set the example, be the example
 - Go Before
 - Not with or behind
 - Set the Vision,
 - Create the culture and traditions
 - Be Part of the Solution
 - Not part of the problem
 - Communicate the Vision and Culture
 - Live, eat, and breathe it
 - Set the Goals for the Organization
 - Operate with Discipline and Accountability

And finally, expect a lot from your people; **but** when you get what you expect, reward them! Here is a quote from Stephen Covey that explains the leadership component very simply.

"Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success. Leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall."