## manageris

## Dare to **demand more** from your team

## The challenge

Many managers are uncomfortable asking subordinates to improve their performance. There are many reasons for this, such as the fear of upsetting an otherwise satisfactory status quo, the desire to preserve a harmonious atmosphere, the fear of conflict, the desire to be liked, the belief that it won't do any good, etc. Although managers must be supportive, too much understanding can be counterproductive, as it may not stimulate high performance. The following approach will help you be more demanding when necessary.

## **Key steps**

The following five steps will help you gradually develop your ability to be more demanding:



- Don't try to solve every problem simultaneously. If excessive demands place your subordinates under too much stress, they may become demoralized.
- Start by selecting one critical objective, whose importance and urgency
  can be clearly demonstrated. This will make it easier to create the momentum
  needed for change.
- Gather all relevant information beforehand to demonstrate why the requested improvements are justified.
- Explain the benefits of improved performance both **for the company** and **for the individuals** who will make the requested effort.

E.g. A bank branch manager who wants to sell more to existing customers could emphasize the impact of multiple product detention on customer retention, and thus on bank profitability, but also remind people that it is easier to sell to existing clients than to new prospects.

- Define two targets to set expectations clearly while establishing a realistic minimum that must be achieved.
- Ideally, try to set measurable objectives. When this is not possible, define "deliverables".

E.g. "Provide an updatable progress report format and update it weekly", rather than just saying "Improve communication within the team".

- Communicate objectives **orally**, but also in **writing**, specifying the ideal target, the minimum requirement, responsibilities, deadlines and constraints.
- Be **precise** and prefer **concrete** objectives.
- If objectives seem to contradict one another, explicitly discuss this apparent paradox and explain why both objectives must be pursued simultaneously.
   E.g. "You must increase your productivity while making fewer mistakes."
- Clearly assert that your subordinates not you are responsible for realizing the required improvements.
- Define an **improvement plan** outlining the required steps and status updates.
- Offer help when requested, in the form of "expert advice" or occasional support.



When your subordinates show signs of improving in one area, you can then tackle other objectives, while ensuring that they continue their efforts to maintain what has already been achieved.