

## **We May Have a Failure to Communicate**

*Three successful strategies from a leading Business Coach*

The ability of a small-to-medium sized business to recruit the top talent needed to compete against larger competitors can hinge on its communication style, according to ActionCOACH founder and CEO Brad Sugars. He offered several strategies for attracting high performers by signaling the company's willingness to support and accommodate their unique needs.

“High performers share many characteristics with the entrepreneurial owners of small-to-medium sized businesses,” Sugars said. “While it’s not surprising that strong personalities might clash, my research indicates that most of those incidents begin with a miscommunication. To recruit and retain top talent, the business owner has to understand that dynamic. She must develop a communications style and company culture that nurtures high performers.”

Miscommunication is chronic at all levels in a company. The growth of emails, then IMs and text messaging, has compounded the problem, as many people are simply not capable of writing with clarity and logic. Management spends way too much time re-communicating, and repairing employee relationships. Project delays, misconceptions, and conflicts occur because people do not comprehend the differing communications styles of their peers and bosses.

Owners should learn to communicate effectively with every employee, but especially to the high performers – those employees who make the most significant contribution to the company's success. The problem: many high performers are high maintenance as well. Their abrupt, hard-charging style makes high performers a frequent source of turmoil and hurt feelings. If not handled properly, high performers can disrupt the entire team. It is critical that the owner understand their communication preferences. Sugars offers three tips for business owners in their communications with high performers.

### **Coach, Don't Command**

Many high performers really dislike being told what to do. Ask questions that guide them to the correct conclusion and course of action. Don't answer their questions. Instead, provide information and options for the employee to consider.

### **Empower Their Decision-Making**

High performers are high strung and will usually be the most impatient people on the team. As results-oriented people, high performers are ready to see the bottom line. Provide the information they need to make decisions and then turn them loose!

### **Forget the Rules**

Imposing rules on high performers will only challenge them to overcome those rules. To change the high performer's direction, use "what if" questions to help them understand the consequences. By working with a competent Business Coach, business owners can develop the communication skills to attract top talent and minimize the time spent resolving conflicts.

**About ActionCOACH**

ActionCOACH is the world's number one business coaching firm, with more than 1,000 offices in 26 countries. To learn more about business coaching and ActionCOACH, go to [actioncoach.com](http://actioncoach.com).