



Human ♥ Edge

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Q: I keep emphasizing to our reps that supporting customers takes a team effort, but they continue to behave like self-centered prima donnas. What am I doing wrong?

A: You're right, managing a world class support organization is a lot easier when everybody plays team ball. Here are a few thoughts.

1. Revamp your reward system to include team goals.

If your people are measured solely on their individual efforts, there's not much of an incentive for them to join forces with their peers. Who wants to be a team player when you get dinged on your performance evaluation and in your pocketbook!

So complement individual goals and incentives with a reward system that encourages the kind of team play you want to see.

For instance, if you want your seasoned pros to mentor rather than cold-shoulder new hires, give them a stake in getting each newbie up to x level of performance in y months. (This is also a strong incentive for your old pros to be as particular as you are in the new hire interview process.)

And, if you want your reps with specialized expertise to share freely in solving a customer issue that "belongs" to another rep, establish a unit goal for, say, 24-hour resolution rate. You'll be amazed at the level of collaboration a measure like this can inspire.

2. Avoid unnecessarily pitting your people against each other.

Try to structure goals and incentives so that excellence is determined by achieving a measurable performance threshold

in this issue

- 📄 [Special Account Services: One Size Does Not Fit All](#)
- 📄 [Patterns of Project Management Success](#)
- 📄 [Running Technical Support with SaaS Solutions](#)
- 📄 [Feedback Gathering: A Process, Not an Event](#)
- 📄 [Selling Service Contracts through Channel Partners](#)
- 📄 [Beyond Satisfaction to Customer Loyalty](#)

rather than “beating out” other support unit members. When only one individual can win, this can breed jealousy and counterproductive behaviors.

3. **Share your goals with team members.**

Be sure your people know how you are measured and where your unit fits in helping the organization succeed in the marketplace. When people feel part of the big picture, they are better able to move beyond self-serving behaviors.

4. **Model team behavior in your relations with other functions.**

Don't just preach teamwork; model it in your relations with the other parts of your organization. And when you make concessions that jeopardize your parochial interests in favor of the greater good, discuss this with your people so they can see what sort of behavior you are expecting of them.

About the SSPA Support Staff Excellence certification program.

The Support Staff Excellence Program reinforces product knowledge and technical acumen with the relationship management skills your people need to ensure total customer satisfaction.

Certification-driven, and developed in partnership with support staff best practices authority, Impact Learning Systems, the Program delivers an industry-recognized standard of performance that may be merchandized to both inside and external audiences.

To view the impact of the program on important call center metrics like call handle times, first time resolution rates, escalated calls and customer satisfaction levels, simply request our complimentary **SSPA Support Staff Certification Impact Study**.

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