

Rachel Bolt
123 Washington Street
Downers Grove, IL 20033
(630)555-8282

April 28, 2016

Mr. Rogers, Vice President
Sprinkles Ice Cream Store
1234 Main Street
Charleston, SC 29403

Dear Mr. Rogers,

This letter is an acknowledgment of the newly applied policies and practices at Sprinkles Ice Cream Stores. As an addition to our freshly established 360-Degree Process, I would like to propose the inclusion of the twenty questions noted below.

- **Identify three ways this employee sets a personal example of what s/he expects from others during the work day.**

This question asks the participants to provide numerous examples of expectations to identify whether or not the employee is exemplifying both commitments of Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Practice #1 - Model the Way. Depending on the participant's response, the feedback may include aspects of Commitment #1 and/or #2 to find out if the employee clarifies values by finding his/her voice, affirms shared values, and determines if the leader sets the example by aligning actions with shared values (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 17). "If disagreements over fundamental values continue, the result is intense conflict, false expectations, and diminished capacity," (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 58). Creating and establishing core values is fairly simple, it is the execution that will be analyzed and criticized by followers and can lead to resistance and underlying resentment.

- **Discuss two experiences in which this employee followed through with his/her commitment, promise, or word during his/her daily schedule in charge.**

This question provides another opportunity to analyze whether or not the employee is leading by example but specifically considers the setting in which s/he is carrying out his/her average daily tasks. Abiding by a promise or commitment, no matter how big or small, will earn follower trust and affirm shared values. "Setting the Example is all about the *do* part. It's about practicing what you preach, putting your money where your mouth is, following through on commitments, keeping promises, walking the talk, and doing what you say," (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 74).

- **To what extent does the employee lead by example during his/her daily routine?**

This question is an extension of the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. By answering this question, the employee will discover whether or not the s/he has aligned his/her actions with his/her beliefs. "We started our discussion of personal-best leadership with Model the Way, and

we've come full circle. If you want others to believe in something and behave according to those beliefs, you have to set the example by being personally involved. You have to practice what you preach. If you want to build and maintain a culture of excellence and distinction, then you have to recognize, reward, reinforce, and celebrate exceptional efforts and successes. You have to get personally involved in celebrating the actions that contribute to and sustain the culture. And if you want people to have the courage to continue the quest in the face of great adversity, you have to encourage them yourself." (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 315).

- **What does the employee do to consistently lead by example during his/her daily routine managing the work environment?**

This question identifies which of the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership are being applied.. By answering this question, the employee will discover whether or not the employee s/he has aligned his/her actions with his/her beliefs. "Through their daily actions, they demonstrate their deep commitment to their beliefs and those of the organization...Leading by example is more effective than leading by command. If people see that you work hard while preaching hard work, they are more likely to follow you," (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 17).

- **In what ways does this employee showcase his/her commitment to the organization and his/her subordinates?**

This question explores the ways in which the employee demonstrates his/her commitment to the organization they are working for and the subordinate they aim to inspire. Leaders "need to make something happen, to change the way things are, to create something that no one else have ever created before," (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 18). Odysseus is a great example of an ineffective leader who fails to show commitment to the common goal and his followers. He was a man guided by selfish ways, "Odysseus is too proud. His hubris is his downfall," (Davis, 2014, p. 3), and because of this, his actions are in the best interest of himself and nothing and no one else.

- **How would you recommend the employee improve his/her team-building skills regarding in-store communication, mentoring, and coaching?**

his question explores the employee's approaches of enlisting others. "Part of enlisting others is building common ground on which everyone can agree. But equally important is the emotion that leaders express for the vision. Our research shows that in addition to expecting leaders to be forward-looking, constituents expect leaders to be inspiring. People need vast reserves of energy and excitement to sustain a distant dream. Leaders are expected to be a major source of that energy. People aren't going to follow someone who's only mildly enthusiastic about something. Leaders have to be wildly enthusiastic for constituents to give it their all," (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 129). This question allows an opportunity for employees to analyze the way team members interact with one another and eventually build trust. By analyzing another person's interaction, they will also become conscious of how they build relationships with coworkers. □

- **How would you describe this employee's approach or approaches when attempting to inspire employees innovation and increase productivity?**

This question analyzes how this employee gets what s/he wants or needs out of his/her followers."Statistical analyses revealed that a leader's behavior explains the vast majority of constituents' workplace engagement A leader's actions contribute more to such factors as

commitment, loyalty, motivation, pride, and productivity than does any other single variable, “ (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 25).

- **Name two scenarios in which the employee encouraged and/or transitioned team members through a challenging situation?**

This question will help us identify if the employee had influence over his/her followers, ultimately clarifying if s/he has already established a leadership mentality and approach in their work environment. This feedback is beneficial because the employee learns whether or not they effectively, “search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 29). We can relate this question to Virginia Woolf as she challenges the process through her analysis of unequal opportunities for women. Woolf was envisioning a future where women no longer stood in the shadow of men, clarifying that even when working in poverty and obscurity, it is worthwhile because even those opportunities taken for granted, are still opportunities (Woolf, 1928, Approx. p. 69).

- **Provide multiple examples of how this employee took productive action after hearing unfortunate news or experiencing an unexpected encounter in the work environment.**

This question is useful because employees will acknowledge the proper way to handle problems by speaking out of irrational reactions. In turn, employees will challenge the process and start thinking logically instead of reacting emotionally. □Successful leaders, “demonstrate how powerful listening and empathy can be in building trust. You need to see the world through others’ eyes and make sure that you consider alternative viewpoints. Your constituents have to feel that they can talk freely with you about their difficulties. For them to be open to sharing their ideas, their frustrations, their dreams with you, they have to believe that you’ll be caring and constructive in your responses; they have to feel that you know them, ” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 225).

- **When has this employee responded empathetically to another’s personal problems? What did they do to help and/or resolve it, and were they successful?**

This question acknowledges the employees with the capability to empathize. This type of behavior encourages the hearts of employees and creates a nurturing, caring work environment by fostering collaboration and building trust. “Research indicates, for instance, that ‘if you have a best friend at work you significantly more likely to engage customers, get more done in less time, have more fun on the job, have a safe workplace with few accidents, innovate and share ideas, feel informed and know that your opinion counts, and have the opportunity to focus on your strengths each day.’ Friends are not only good for your health but good for business. There is plenty of opportunity for strengthening these relationships because, unfortunately, only 18 percent of people report that their organizations offer opportunities to develop friendships at work,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 312).

- **When this employee works with coworkers, what social skills does s/he demonstrate to enable the growth of trust and the promotion of teamwork?**

This question looks at how this employee interacts with the people surrounding him/her. It is a broad question, but because of that, it can lead to examples of exemplary leadership that were previously unknown. “Research across a wide variety of disciplines consistently demonstrates that this kind of social support enhances productivity, psychological well-being, and even physical health. Researcher and former Harvard teaching fellow Shawn Achor, for example, has found that among undergraduate students, ‘social support was a far greater predictor of happiness than any other factor, more than GPA, family income, SAT scores, age, gender, or race.’ Other studies have found that social support not only enhances wellness but also buffers against disease, particularly during times of high stress. This latter finding is true irrespective of an individual’s age, gender, or ethnic group. Even after adjusting for such factors as smoking and histories of major illness, people with few close contacts were two to three times more likely to die during the study period than those who regularly had friends to turn to,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 311).

- **To what extent does this leader promote positivity during times of change in terms of promotions, launches, updates, etc.?**

This question will give the reviewer an opportunity to analyze the employee’s ability to control the environment when any change occurs. When a leader applies tactics to improve everyone else’s knowledge, they are ultimately growing the business. The employee can choose to take an Ubuntu style approach of “I am because of you” meaning the business thrives because of its employees. “We get to experience the deepest parts of our own humanity through our interactions with others,” (Varty, 2013, 2:05), and when we treasure these interactions it leads to innovation, success, and change.

- **Please identify two actions this employee has participated in that showcased his/her level of confidence regarding a task or problem at hand.**

This question allows the employee to analyze his/her own confidence and how it is perceived by his/her followers. “Empirical studies document how self-confidence affect people’s performance. Managers were told, in one study, that decision making was a skill developed through practice: the more one worked at it, the more capable one became. Another group of managers was told that decision making reflected their basic intellectual aptitude: the greater one’s underlying cognitive capacities, the better his or her decision-making ability. Working with a simulated organization, both groups of managers dealt with a series of production orders requiring various staffing decisions and the establishment of different performance targets. When faced with difficult performance standards, those managers who believed decision making was an acquirable skill continued to set challenging goals for themselves, used good problem-solving strategies, and fostered organizational productivity. Their counterparts, who believed that decision-making ability was latent (that is, you either have it or you don’t), lost confidence in themselves over time as they encountered difficulties. They lowered their aspirations for the organization, their problem-solving deteriorated, and organizational productivity declined,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 263). Therefore, by increasing your own self confidence, you will also increase the confidence of your counterparts.

- **Name three actions this employee makes to celebrate small and large, on-the-job, achievements.**

This question explores if the employee chooses to encourage the heart with the various ways to, “celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 24). Celebrating minor and large accomplishments can have a significant positive influence on team bonding. “Celebrations provide concrete evidence that individuals aren’t alone in their efforts, that other people care about them, and that they can count on others. People are reminded that they need each other, that their work gets done because they’re connected and caught up in each other’s lives. Celebrations reinforce the fact that it takes a group of people working together with a common purpose, in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration, to get extraordinary things done. By making achievements public, leaders build a culture in which people know that what they do is not taken for granted, and clearly feel that their efforts are appreciated and applauded,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 312). Celebrations are also considered rites of passage, since “the rite of eating and drinking together...is clearly a rite of incorporation, of physical union, and has been called a sacrament of communion,” (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 29).

- **How does this employee show his/her support and appreciation for newly hired employees?**

The question demonstrates the significance of social interactions between employees. The way an individual treats others on their team can tell us a lot about what type of leader they are aspiring to be. “One of the significant lessons learned from an extensive ten-year study of service quality is that social support networks are essential for sustaining the motivation to serve. Shortfalls in service performance are highly correlated with the absence of social support and teamwork. Indeed, an antidote to service burnout is ensuring that co-workers support one another and feel a sense of achieving together. People who don’t like the folks they’re working with don’t stay around very long,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 310). No matter who the individual is, or what their background, social support appears to influence people the same way. Even “as elite athletes, they had achieved the highest recognition in a field demanding top physical skills. Yet for almost two-thirds of them, their words of appreciation were less about technical or practical assistance than about such factors as emotional support and friendship,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 311). Reflecting on the employee’s efforts and approaches for showing support and appreciation will help identify ways that individual can encourage the heart of his/her followers.

- **When leading others, what type of management style does this employee prefer and what actions have occurred to chose this decision of style? (Styles may include the classical approach, authoritative approach, transformational leadership, human relations and/or Human resources approach.**

This question allows the reviewer to describe the employee’s management style in their words. Although the reviewer may not know formal management style theories and approaches, this question will provide characteristics and descriptions used to determine what approach the employee officially uses. “People actually remember downbeat comments far more often, in greater detail and with more intensity than they do encouraging words. When negative remarks become a preoccupation, an employee’s brain loses mental efficiency,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012,

p. 146). The leadership style approach is important because followers respond differently depending on the approach.

- **Does this employee bring any special characteristics to the work environment that would be missed if they were to leave? (e.g. Does s/he possess or believe in a special energy, spirit, or indescribable power?)**

This question was inspired by our study of the Ubuntu and the positive outcomes that can come from a selfless leader paving the way. One cannot create a leader with the genuine gold heartedness of Nelson Mandela. These are charismatic leaders who some fight are naturally born for, rather than guided into, a leadership position. This question is intended to gain a perspective of specialty, or rare, leadership skills and characteristics that the employee does or does not have. “You’ll find a lot of scientific data in this book to support our assertions about each of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. But keep in mind that leadership is also an art. And just as with any other art form, leadership is a means of person expression. To become a credible leader, you have to learn to express yourself in ways that are uniquely our own,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 52). This question provides perspectives that include the details of what makes the employee an individual and sets them apart.

- **Provide two areas of leadership that this employee has mastered that are ideal when in a leadership position.**

This question may at first appear vague, but “several hundred different values, traits, and characteristics were identified in response to the open-ended question about what [employees] looked for in a person they would be willing to follow,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 33). This question allows a slightly broader view of what qualities can be expected of someone in a leadership position. Information compiled from this question can be compared to see if they are compatible with the actions of the person receiving the feedback. Captain James Cook is an excellent example of an individual with numerous leadership qualities. He had talents in many different areas and, “Cook gradually opened up to matters well beyond his established talents as navigator and surveyor, even writing at times like a natural philosopher,” (Horwitz, 2002, p. 73). The humble leader, Cook, who is known for, “having absolute command over the ship and its crew,” (Horwitz, 2002, p. 24), applied all of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership during his explorations to make them as successful as possible.

- **What would be required and what improvements should be made before this employee moves up within the organization?**

This question identifies characteristics and areas that are in need of improvement. Even in a leadership position, there are “rites of passage” a new leader or aspiring leader must encounter before they gain a positive reputation. “The passage from one social position to another is identified with a territorial passage,” (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 192). Regardless of the individual’s role or position, they are likely to face at least one territorial rite of passage. Kouzes and Posner (2012) mention that their, “research clearly demonstrates that the experience of leadership is not something that happens only at the very top of an organization or that is confined to formal organizations at all. It’s experienced everywhere. In other words, Leadership is everyone’s business,” (p. 331). Therefore, no matter what position you are in, there are still obstacles to get passed before ultimate effective leadership is reached.

- **Explain how this individual enforces followers to carry out previously agreed upon standards and procedures, such as, taking out the garbage, stocking, cleaning, etc.**

This question was formulated to explore specific management techniques and approaches used by the leader to accomplish organizational goals while still maintaining a cordial relationship.

“Exemplary leaders understand that to create a climate of collaboration, they must determine what the group needs in order to do their work, and build the team around common purpose and mutual respect,” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 218). This question will identify how the employee delegates and manages simple standards and procedures.

I believe these questions will have a positive influence on the current work environment, our corporate image, and our team’s success.

□□Thank you for your consideration, and your time.□

Sincerely, □□

Rachel Bolt

Rachel Bolt

Store Manager, #255

References

- Horwitz, T. (2002). *Blue Latitudes: Boldly going where Captain Cook has gone before*. Henry Holt and Company, LLC. Retrieved from https://myasucourses.asu.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-1179952-dt-forum-rid-72462005_1/courses/2016SpringB-X-OGL360-24013-28008/BlueLatitudes_Cook_byHorwitz.pdf
- Kouzes, J., Posner, B (2012). *The Leadership Challenge*. (5th ed.) Retrieved from <http://118284313.reader.chegg.com/reader/book.php?id=cc0b6004d12d68288fe269f1cf3f8cad>
- Mauss, M. (1966). *The Gift*. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/stream/giftformsfunctio00maus#page/n9/mode/2up>
- The Odyssey of Homer: An illustrated synopsis, with excerpts from the text*. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://myasucourses.asu.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-13102268-dt-content-rid-72461956_1/courses/2016SpringB-X-OGL360-24013-28008/2Odyssey%20of%20Homer_Synopsis_withExcerpts_andIllustration_v3b.pdf
- Varty, B. (2013). *Boyd Varty: What I learned from Nelson Mandela*. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/boyd_varty_what_i_learned_from_nelson_mandela
- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Woolf, V. (1928). *A Room of one's own*. Retrieved from https://myasucourses.asu.edu/webapps/mdb-sa-bb_bb60_@X@EmbeddedFile.requestUrlStub@X@bbcswebdav/xid-72462102_1