

# Burning Bright: Who Are Your Next Star Employees



In the night sky, stars come in all shapes, colours, sizes and degrees of heat and light. Some stars burn bright for a short time and others burn on for a very long time. The same can be said for star employees in the workplace. Many employees have the ability to excel given the right opportunities and support. Some are meant to shine for a short time and others much longer. Identifying when someone is ready, willing and capable of shining requires a keen eye and understanding what you are looking for.

There is a combination of 4 factors that frequently enable a star performer: 1) ability, 2) effort, 3) attitude and 4) focus. When these combine with the timing and right opportunity a star performer can emerge.

- 1) Ability includes a combination of skills, knowledge, training, experience
- 2) Effort includes both a desire and willingness to put the time and energy in
- 3) Attitude includes a belief one can succeed with the determination to keep going past obstacles
- 4) Focus includes the clarity to see what needs to be done and a envision path ahead (sometimes a winding, changing and emerging one)

Understanding how to tap into and cultivate these factors in employees can help an organization identify and shape future star performers.

## **5 Traits of Star Performers**

How do you recognize a star? The 4 factors can be found by looking for a few of these traits:

1. **Desire to Contribute:** A star performer wants to contribute to the success of the project or organization. This employee may demonstrate initiative by offering ideas and/or to help other employees or teams. These stars will often step up or emerge as leaders but their leadership may be specific to need or activity as opposed to fully taking a leadership role.
2. **Returning Momentum:** Stars can certainly flicker. A star performer can achieve both successes and failures. Sometimes employees who burn brightly also burn cold. Do not let the results always be the determine factor for identifying a

- star performer. Most successful people have failed and then learned from their failures. A star performer will emerge as a star because he/she keeps going.
3. **Willing to Grow:** Historically growth and adaptability are necessary for survival. You can have a bright and fast burning star who rises quickly, has a success and then fades away. A star performer will be an employee who demonstrates adaptability and a desire to learn and grow on an ongoing basis.
  4. **Resourceful and Creative:** Stars are often creative in their resourcefulness; they do not let obstacles be impediments they let them be catalysts. Look for employee's who demonstrate an ability to identify and obtain the resources they need to get their work done.
  5. **Winning Outlook:** As with all people 'star' performers will have their ups and downs. A winning outlook does not always mean a happy outlook but often a determined one. Optimism and a positive attitude are very important traits for ultimate success and should be highly valued but these traits may not be visible every day. A winning outlook refers to the desire of the person to want to win, solve a problem, meet a need and believes he/she can find a way to win if he/she keeps going.

### **Burning Bright or Burning Long**

There are often two types of 'Star' employees. There are those who have a high impact in the short term and those who are stars over time. It is useful to keep your eyes open for both a fast rising star and also the slow burning star who takes a little longer to warm up. You may have a 'Star' in a great customer services representative or a "Star" in the backroom who creates an atmosphere that enables success in others. Understanding all the facets of what contributes to success in your organization will help you find many stars.

Within your organization identify the types of 'Star' performers you need and cultivate those with the ability and interest to take on the role. Take a look at your employees today, new employees, long serving employees, young employees and mature employees. See if you can spot a few stars who you can encourage, reward and provide the opportunity to contribute to the success of your organization.