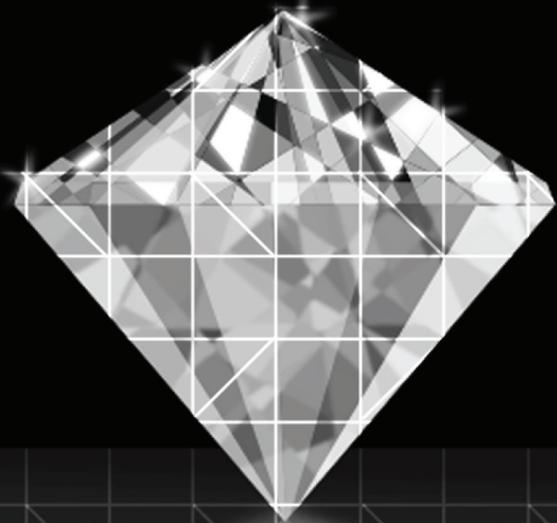


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By: SHAWN M. GALLOWAY, President  
ProAct Safety



## Policing for results leads to management by voodoo

**"M**y supervisors just can't wear two hats. Their job is to enforce the rules. Asking them to also coach for discretionary performance would be too confusing and put them in an awkward position."

This comment is an indicator of what I like to refer to as "19th century leadership." There are still individuals in upper management who believe the capabilities of those in front-line supervision are limited to policing for behavior. Consider how far we have come as a society in our organizational leadership capability since the first organizing of labor.

Multiple leadership styles are certainly appropriate, and required, depending on the situation. In an organization facing intentional, universal deviation of standardized policies and procedures, a command-and-control approach becomes occasionally necessary. Additionally, discipline, a tool of last resorts, becomes warranted when individuals continue to flagrantly disobey rules. This aforementioned leadership style will rarely be an effective path to sustainable performance and cultural excellence. Inspiration, delegation and coaching will increase in importance when the opportunity for further gains lie within efforts resulting from going above and beyond what it takes to remain employed.

If we seek performance excellence, we are striving for behaviors to occur without the prompting from a boss or other external motivation. Regrettably, even with an inspired work force, rules, policies and procedures are not always followed. Leaders who understand motivation and performance coaching acknowledge people behave for a reason. This insight distinguishes performance police from performance coaches. When observing or learning of a deviation, these enlightened individuals respond with an inquiry into the reason why the action occurred, rather than responding with a negative consequence. Without an understanding into performance rationale, leaders address only a symptom, not the cause. Thus, an interview begins to determine influences.

- Are perceptions inaccurate? If so, new information or experiences might be necessary for the beliefs to be modified.

- Have the expected, required or desirable behaviors yet to become habitual? Perhaps the employee needs additional, frequent nudging or reinforcement.

- Is there an obstacle or barrier to the desirable performance? Performance coaches look to minimize and remove the difficulty employees occasionally encounter when attempting to perform a task in a

desirable way.

Helping your leaders to evolve from policing to coaching facilitates an important realization. A focus exclusively on results leads to management by voodoo: measuring and managing only the result, rather than the progress toward it. I am a huge fan of Peter Drucker. His principle, "What gets measured gets managed," has provided many favorable gains, but we must remember this principle's limitation. Measuring the results doesn't ensure the performance used to achieve it is desirable or sustainable. Moreover, measurement of the results and not the performance occasionally results in manipulation and malicious compliance.

### Do we want individuals working toward performance excellence because they have to for fear of penalty?

Do we want individuals working toward performance excellence because they have to for fear of penalty? Or, do we seek inspired performance, organizational alignment and a culture so hungry for achieving success that new social expectations are created and reinforced from within? In my experience, coaching reaches and sustains this goal much quicker than threats and negative consequences.

*Shawn M. Galloway is the president of ProAct Safety, an international safety excellence consulting firm. As a professional speaker, consultant and safety culture/excellence adviser, he has assisted hundreds of organizations to achieve and sustain excellence in safety, culture and operational performance. Galloway is also the host of the weekly podcast series, "Safety Culture Excellence."*

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