

# COACHING TIP

From **Rex C. Houze**

## IMPROVING MORALE ON YOUR TEAM

Good team morale is one of the most important outcomes of a successful coach. Successful coaches take great pride in high morale and team spirit. They know when people work together as a team, their capacity for improving performance and results are dramatically expanded. They also know that high morale starts with them. Business leaders are, in essence, coaches. Their job is to bring out the best in their employees and help their team win. Getting and keeping the morale at a high level is one of the most important jobs of an effective leader.

Here are eight things you and your coaches can do to improve morale, performance, and results in your organization:

- 1. Know Your People.** It is difficult to motivate a stranger. The more you know about your people, the more effective you will be at improving morale. What are their unique abilities; likes and dislikes; wants and needs? Do you know their goals? If not, why not? Do you know about their families? What are their hobbies and interests? What's most important to them?
- 2. Keep People Informed.** Being in on things is one of the most powerful motivators for most people. When management fails to provide information the dangerous rumor-mill kicks in.
- 3. Make People Feel Important.** Let them know, in as many ways as possible, that their contributions are important to the success of the organization.
- 4. Listen to People.** One of the easiest ways to make people feel important and increase their contribution is to listen to them.
- 5. Keep Score.** Uncertainty contributes to low morale. If players don't know how to win on a daily basis, they will think there is no way to win, which leads to why try, which leads to low morale.
- 6. Always Celebrate Improvement.** Look for improvement, no matter how small, and reinforce it with positive recognition. What gets rewarded gets done.
- 7. Conduct Regular Coaching Sessions.** Focus on desired results and the behaviors needed to produce those results. Each coaching session needs to include the status of current results, the desired results, behaviors needed, by coach and player, to reach the results, and action steps that will be taken between coaching sessions.
- 8. Give Appropriate Feedback.** Give frequent feedback. The severest form of criticism is not to find fault but to ignore someone. Give positive feedback. Positive feedback encourages and builds up. Negative feedback destroys initiative and morale. Give specific feedback that reinforces the behavior you want repeated for success.

Look for the following warning signs of a need to improve morale in your organization:

In-fighting/friction/stress  
Excessive meetings  
Turnover/absenteeism  
Majoring on minors  
Safety issues  
Lack of teamwork

Turf protection  
Low Productivity/profitability  
Working at cross-purposes  
Quality issues  
Lack of new ideas/innovation  
Missed deadlines