

The Link Between Compliance and Consistency

Description

What separates *excellent* from *very good*? As I continue to study those people and organizations that are excellent, I find there are behaviors that separate the highest performers from all others. These behaviors address the elusive outcome that creates sustainable excellence: *consistency*. A fitting word to describe consistency is â??always.â?• It may not be possible to achieve *always* 100 percent of the time, nor is it necessary in every area. But there are many instances in which *always* is a must.
For example, no business can survive if accounting protocols are followed â??most of the time.â?• In healthcare itâ??s not good enough for the doctor to â??usuallyâ?• operate on the correct knee. In a solid relationship a person canâ??t be honest â??sometimes.â?• Great companies and high performers are *always* organizations and *always* people. They both put in the structure to make sure they have clarity around goals, skill building, and accountability. Itâ??s the only way to achieve *always*.
I am fortunate that Iâ??m able to observe as well as work with many organizations, communities, and companies. I keep learning more and more. While at times I may say to myself â??Why did it take me so long to see this?â?• I still get excited with each new learning. Some months back it hit me that individual and team performance is very dependent on clarity of goals, self-awareness, the opportunity and ability to a acquire the necessary skill for success, and the compliance to do so. While each is a must I have found the one that impacts consistency the most is compliance.
A while back I was presenting to a large group of over 900 people who were in a leadership role at the same organization. The CEO opened the day with a great state of the union talk. He took special time to point out people and departments that were doing a particularly fine job. After each instance he would then say, â??Letâ??s give them a nice hand!â?• This would be followed by applause. My seat gave me a perfect place to observe the CEO talk and the response. I noticed that some attendees were not applauding. I thought to myself â??The CEO just asked them to clap for a teammate and they did not.â?•
Now I donâ??t feel that a person should do something that is wrong no matter who requests it. However, this was not the case here. So, what was it that led a few out of the 900 to not applaud? I ruled out they did not hear for it was evident the group did. Was it a lack of self-awareness? Did they realize they were not clapping? My conclusion was those that were not clapping knew they were not clapping. Was it a lack of knowing how to clap? Could be, yet that seemed doubtful. I felt that it was a lack of understanding of how important the clapping was, and/or just a lack of compliance with the CEOâ??s request.
When I got on stage, I shared my observation that the CEO requested that some well deserving teammates receive an applause and the great majority *did* applaud. I then added that some did *not*

applaud. My message was if an organization cannot get 100 percent of the leaders to do something as easy as clapping when the CEO requests it, they will never achieve the high performance they are seeking. The difference between good and great is *always*.

We then had some fun. I went through the formula of clear goals, self-awareness, skills, and compliance. I started with â??The goal is 100 percent of people clapping when they are asked to.â?• Next, self-awareness was covered. We discussed being aware if you are clapping or not and I asked each table to make sure every person at the table was clapping when it was time. We then went to acquiring the skill. We covered *how* to clap. Compliance came next. At the count of three I asked everyone to clap and continue clapping until I signaled them to stop. When I hit three, everyone applauded, and we had fun.

I then reviewed that to be great each leader must role model *always* behavior. If you are not an *always* organization, please review these tips.

1. Make sure everyone knows the desired outcome expected from them and why the actions are important. A large part of not achieving an *always* organization is lack of clarity around expectations.
2. Give plenty of feedback to achieve the goal of self-awareness. It is important to make sure people are aware of what right looks like, what it is not, and how they are doing. Make sure both those meeting expectations and those who are not are aware of their performance level.
3. Emphasize skill building. This falls into two areas. The first is giving people the opportunity to learn the skill. The second is holding them accountable for achieving the needed skill level. While we all wish everyone would be successful if they just acquire the needed skills, some will not be. Unless those people are removed from their role the organization will never be great.
4. Insist on compliance. My experience is that *always* is most often achieved due to not accepting the lack of compliance. Remember this is based on knowing that a person knows the goal, has self-awareness, and has acquired the skill needed. Why are some not compliant? It could be they donâ??t understand why they need to be compliant, or they have not been recognized for being compliant. I feel the main reason is they have been allowed to get away with not being compliant, as in the applauding example above. If as a leader and/or an organization, you are not going to hold people accountable for a behavior itâ??s best to share that. It may seem crazy; however, rules set and not adhered to cause more harm than good. And yes, there need to be consequences for non-compliance.

In summary, I wish the formula of clear goals, self-awareness, skills, and compliance had been in my tool kit sooner. I have found it very helpful in my work. I hope you find it useful as well.

Hereâ??s to *alwaysâ??*and to the excellence it helps you achieve.

Date Created
February 22, 2021
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