

# The GSC Advantage

## Taking Initiative

Employee initiative can make a marked improvement in performance and productivity, especially when knowledgeable employees demonstrate it in partnership with their supervisors. While most supervisors welcome constructive ideas and suggestions from their people, some resent it, even fear it, because they do not know how to handle it.

Dr. Sorcher, the creator of a training program he calls Taking the Initiative, focuses on five skills-building situations that encourages employees to demonstrate their initiative. According to his research, the five areas in which employees have difficulty showing initiative are:

- \* asking for clarification, or help.
- \* presenting a new or better idea.
- \* anticipating or solving problems.
- \* participating in performance appraisal discussions.
- \* expressing concern to supervisors or co-workers about a situation.

It seems that if each employee were to be encouraged and supported to take the initiative, then we would have more effective and productive organizations.

Remember: When you maximize your potential, everyone wins. When you don't, we all lose.

Etienne Gibbs "[Encouraging Employee Initiative](#)"



# Helping Your Employees Help You

Any organization can unleash untapped innovation, creativity, and risk-taking in the workplace, simply by applying the following principles:

1. Provide interesting and challenging work. If employees are stuck doing the same tasks over and over again, they're going to find themselves in a rut. New challenges re-energize them and restore their enthusiasm. Having employees initiate changes and improvements in their jobs can get them excited about doing more.
2. Have a clear purpose and well-defined goals. All performance starts with clear goals. Everyone needs to know the organization's purpose, the team's goals, and how his or her work contributes to those goals. The process of taking the time to discuss goals helps gain buy-in and commitment on the part of everyone included.
3. Give employees responsibility for their actions. Many companies are throwing out the volumes of policies and procedures that limit employees and are replacing them with simpler, less restrictive versions. Why? Because they realize that employees who are trusted to do what is right are more likely to take responsibility for their actions.
4. Solicit employee suggestions. When employees know that their ideas are taken seriously and that they can make a difference, their creative juices will flow more freely, and they will take the initiative to offer innovative and imaginative ideas that can affect any aspect of the business. Getting more and better ideas will be a function of taking the initial submission seriously and implementing those ideas as much as possible.
5. Allow the freedom to fail and try again. It is important that employees--and managers--look at mistakes as learning opportunities. When employees know that mistakes won't lead to retribution, but will instead serve as a basis for learning and further experimentation, they are more willing to take initiative to offer additional suggestions and further improvements.

Bob Nelson “[Allowing Employees to Take Charge: Inspiring Innovation in Your Organization](#)”

