

# FAST COMPANY.COM

Where ideas and people meet

Article location: <http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/paul-glover/surviving-workquakec/sticking-standards>

November 11, 2008

Tags: [Leadership](#), [Management](#), [change management](#), [human resource management](#)

2 Readers Recommended this Article

## Sticking to the Standards

By [Paul Glover](#)

I'm pretty hard core about things when it comes to the workplace. I believe the workforce is divided into three segments: **Core Employees** – 20% of the workforce who are hardwired to give 110%; **Temporary Employees**

– 60% of the workforce who have the potential to become Core Employees if properly trained and motivated; and **The Others** – 20% of the workforce who should have been fired yesterday. And, no, I don't believe The Others will be anything but The Others regardless of how much time, energy and resources a Company expends on them.

It would be better to take the time, energy and resources wasted on The Others (like that last raise The Others received just because it was company wide) and apply it to Core Employees who deserve it! My management philosophy is pretty simple, but effective:

Reward and Recognize those Employees who exceed expectations; train and motivate those Employees who have potential to exceed expectations and then give them a deadline to start exceeding expectations; and get rid of those Employees who do not have the potential or do not want to exceed expectations.

But when I advise my clients on how to implement this highly effective approach to improving performance in the workplace, the first obstacle is not the Employees but the fact that management either has not established standards and expectations or is not constantly enforcing them! Since I believe having good standards and high expectations and enforcing them are essential to maximizing profit, here are a few rules to start the process:

Ø **Develop standards and high expectations.** Include Core Employees in this process.

Ø **High expectations begin in the hiring process.** Do not hire those who lack the mindset for good work (think Nucor which established facilities in rural areas where they knew they would hire the farmer mentality – hard work all day every day).

Ø **Tell new Employees in orientation what the standards and expectations are and that they are expected to meet them.** Use clear language. Leave no doubt in their minds!

Ø **Constantly communicate to everyone in the workforce by your words and actions what the standards and expectations are.**

Ø **Accept no excuses for unacceptable behavior that violates your standards.** No way; no how! If you occasionally accept unacceptable behavior, in time you will routinely be accepting unacceptable behavior. Every exception weakens the standard and reduces profit.

Ø

**Periodically review the standards and expectations to determine if they still make sense for your Company.** Do not change them to accommodate the Temporary Employees or The Others! If the Core Employees have a problem with them review and adjust if necessary.

Ø **Enforce the standards by first disciplining and then terminating those who do not meet them.** The Core Employees will applaud you; the Temporary Employees will be motivated to become Core Employees or leave; and The Others will know their day is coming.

Ø

**Supervisors and Managers who do not enforce appropriate standards and have expectations for their Work Team are classified as The Others!**

**The Bottom Line is:** Does your Company have high standards and expectations? Does your Company communicate and enforce those standards and expectations?

---