



E. C. Davis & Associates

PO Box 13329

Charleston SC 29422

Phone 843-762-4269

Fax 843-762-7347

www.ecdavis.com

Managing "The Little Things"

by Ellen C. Davis

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MANAGING "THE LITTLE THINGS"

by Ellen C. Davis

E. C. Davis & Associates, Charleston, SC

Is your work team really "High Performing"? The following list provides some pointers for you to consider. The list can be used in team assessments and/or for developmental goal-setting.

ENERGY AT WORK:

1. When work slows up due to technical difficulties or whatever, team members readily identify and initiate new tasks to perform.

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2. Whenever a problem occurs, the team goes into high gear to initiate problem-solving and to speed resolution.

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3. Every individual arrives on time — no exceptions.

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4. People work diligently up until quitting time with no evidence of "easing toward the door" or starting prematurely to put away things and get all cleaned up so as to *BOLT* out the door at the earliest opportunity.

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5. People go *RIGHT* to work — no hanging around socializing until they get reminded to get busy.

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6. Absenteeism is rare — attendance for the team is at or above 98%.

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7. Team members' informal discussions over breaks, etc. are frequently work-focused. There is clear evidence that people are using even "schmoozing" time for discussing business improvement.

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8. People often make well thought out suggestions for line improvements. Their suggestions show evidence of mature thinking and a business-oriented evaluation.

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9. There is a "sense" of bustle and energy — a strong work pace.

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10. Team members pull one another back into the action if someone seems to be drifting off task — even if for just a little.

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11. There is a *TASK* focus, a sense of purpose, a clarity of actions every day. You never see floundering or waiting around.

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GOAL AWARENESS AND FOCUS:

12. *EACH* team member knows at virtually any time where the line stands against the work requirements for that day.

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13. *EACH* team member knows the production expectations for the week and knows what specific problems are being encountered in meeting those expectations.

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14. *EACH* team member knows the status of the operating equipment on the line — what's down and why, etc.

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15. When goals are being met, team members still focus discussion on improvement — they don't sit back and coast.

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16. Mistakes are addressed and confrontations are not avoided.

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17. Team members are constantly researching data, asking questions, and trying to learn — on their own initiative.

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18. Team coordinators/others are keeping the team's awareness high on the various areas by posting charts, updating reports, and information for people to read.

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19. Goals, problems, daily plans are visibly posted each day.

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HOUSEKEEPING:

20. Trash (papers, cups, etc.) is never allowed to be left about — on floors or sitting on top of equipment.

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21. Every person immediately — without being asked — uses extra time to wipe down machines or sweep up. Smudges and grime are diligently wiped away AS they occur.

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22. Dirt, etc., is not "swept under the rug" but is cleaned up completely. You don't see little "piles" of debris pushed in a corner. The *INSIDE* of cabinets stays neat.

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23. Mid-shift cleanliness is as evident as pre- and post-shift cleanliness.

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24. Cleaning supplies (brooms, etc.) are put away in cabinets and not left propped against columns or equipment.

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25. Aisleways are completely clear of debris or obstructions at all times. Our "front-door" is spotless as others approach the line.

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26. Machine oil leaks are repaired right away. No oil spots are evident on the floor or the equipment.

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27. Offices are tidy with tables, desks, and cabinets clear of loose papers, cups, dirty ashtrays, etc.

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28. Old/outdated/dirty/torn notices are removed from bulletin boards and walls.

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29. The team room is clear of "junk". Trash cans and ashtrays are empty and *CLEAN*. Chairs are orderly, no papers sitting around. Clean and dusted. Pleasing, well-lit environment.

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TEAM MEETINGS:

30. Every team meeting has an agenda which is prepared ahead of time with objectives, topics, timeframes, etc.

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31. Team members know the agenda ahead of time because it is posted well in advance in a convenient location.

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32. Team meetings always begin exactly on time and everyone is there and ready to go.

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33. The flipchart is used throughout the meeting with precharted agendas, and the recording of agreements, actions to be taken, etc.

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34. Time is managed effectively throughout the meeting and the group stays on track with its agenda.

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35. Action steps from meetings are charted and followed up on. They get implemented effectively.

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36. While interpersonal issues may come up occasionally, the focus remains clearly on *BUSINESS*.

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37. The team takes the time to critique each meeting and solid suggestions arise each time on ways to do things better.

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38. Meetings end on time with all topics having been sufficiently discussed.

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THE ROLE OF SUPERVISORS:

39. The supervisor knows the overall status of the team at all times.

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40. The supervisor addresses problems of tardiness, attendance, housekeeping, etc. when they occur with an individual — even the very first time. The supervisor is firm, consistent — and fair — in doing this.

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41. The supervisor is a visible part of the line operation, encouraging people to address problems, hearing reports, etc.

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42. The supervisor readily uses team member talents to solve problems and is quick to pull people in on discussions.

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43. The supervisor communicates very high standards to the team at all times and remains firm and positive regarding those standards.

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44. Supervisors address *ONE ANOTHER* readily when there is a conflict among themselves or their teams.

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45. Supervisors recognize that conflict is natural and okay. They therefore always go directly to one another with issues openly and honestly.

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46. The business goals of the line are not compromised in order to avoid or overlook mistakes or difficult or embarrassing issues.

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47. The supervisor always maintains a positive working relationship with maintenance and other key support departments.

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48. The supervisor doesn't "pass the buck". He/she never says, "Well, it wasn't *MY* idea to make you do this...Upper management said do it this way."

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49. The supervisor's job provides increased learning for him/her and new opportunities to "manage the business."

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50. The supervisor is an excited, energetic, enthusiastic cheerleader for the team.

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