

# Manage for Progress

## WorkMatters

HELPING LEADERS THINK AND WORK SMARTER

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As any fan of *The Office* can attest, negative managerial behavior severely affects employees' work lives.

As a leader, your day-to-day actions create a ripple effect, directly facilitating or impeding your organization's ability to function.



*“So much of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to do work.”*

~ Peter Drucker

*How can you use your power to influence wisely and set the stage for high performance?*

The answer is simple and underrated -- **provide support for making progress.**

In *The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement, and Creativity at Work* (Harvard Business Press, 2011), Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer analyzed factors that affect performance. They asked managers to rank five factors that could influence motivation and emotions at work:

1. Recognition
2. Incentives
3. Interpersonal support
4. Clear goals
5. Support for making progress in the work

Managers incorrectly ranked “support for making progress” dead last, with most citing “recognition for good work” as the most important motivator.

What matters most is **forward momentum in meaningful work.**

Your ability to focus on progress is paramount. Video-game designers excel at this mission, hooking players on the steady pace of progress bars.

## Are you on Gayle's WorkMatters email list?

If not, **sign up at WorkMatters.com** to receive Gayle's monthly leadership tips and insights.

You'll be inspired to be the best leader you can be — to grow your business and yourself.

You'll also receive immediate access to Gayle's leadership webinar on Six Key Areas of Success for Leaders.



**Gayle Lantz** is Founder of WorkMatters, Inc., a leadership consulting firm that helps leaders think and work smarter.

Gayle's approach is described as engaging, substantive, fresh and results focused.

Through consulting, coaching and speaking services, she helps organizations achieve impressive results related to:

- Leadership development
- Career development
- Team development
- Business strategy
- Cultural change
- Employee selection & retention

Services are delivered in person and/or virtually and reach local, national and global markets.



## Facilitating Progress

When you focus on small wins and facilitate progress, your employees will find the energy and drive required to perform optimally.

Two key forces enable progress:

1. **Catalysts**—Events that directly advance project work, such as:
  - a. Clear goals
  - b. Autonomy
  - c. Resources, including time
  - d. Reviewing lessons from errors and success
  - e. Free flow of ideas
2. **Nourishers**—Interpersonal events that uplift workers, including:
  - a. Encouragement and support
  - b. Demonstrations of respect
  - c. Collegiality

## Dealing with Setbacks

Three events undermine people's inner work lives:

- **Setbacks**—The biggest downer, yet inevitable in any sort of meaningful work
- **Inhibitors**—Events that directly hinder project work
- **Toxins**—Interpersonal events that undermine the people doing the work

Negative events carry a greater impact than positive ones. We pay more attention to them, remember them, and spend more time thinking and talking about them.

That's why it's so important for managers and team leaders to counteract negative events with positive perceptions and comments. Research shows it takes three positive messages to balance a negative one.

## The Daily Progress Checklist

To better manage your people, use the Daily Progress Checklist (pages 3 and 4) to review today's plan and tomorrow's managerial actions. If daily seems unrealistic to you, try using it weekly.

- Focus first on the day's progress and setbacks.
- Next, think about specific events: the catalysts and nourishers that affected progress.
- Finally, prepare for action: What's the one step you can take to best facilitate progress?

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Make the process easier by accessing Gayle's new learning module –

### Productive Executive Retreats.



### Productive Executive Retreats



It's available through CEO Online – compliments of WorkMatters.

Simply go to this link to learn more:

[http://www.ceoonline.com.au/pages/work\\_matters.aspx](http://www.ceoonline.com.au/pages/work_matters.aspx)

Or contact Gayle at 205.879.8494 to discuss how she can help your next event run smoothly and get the best ROI.

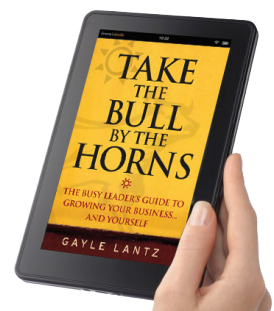
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<b>Progress</b>	<b>Setbacks</b>
Which 1 or 2 events today indicated either a small win or a possible breakthrough? (Describe briefly.)	Which 1 or 2 events today indicated either a small setback or a possible crisis? (Describe briefly.)
<b>Catalysts</b>	<b>Inhibitors</b>
Did the team have clear short- and long-term <i>goals</i> for meaningful work?	Was there any confusion regarding long- or short-term <i>goals</i> for meaningful work?
Did team members have sufficient <i>autonomy</i> to solve problems and take ownership of the project?	Were team members overly <i>constrained</i> in their ability to solve problems and feel ownership of the project?
Did they have all the <i>resources</i> they needed to move forward efficiently?	Did they lack any of the <i>resources</i> they needed to move forward effectively?
Did they have sufficient <i>time</i> to focus on meaningful work?	Did they lack sufficient <i>time</i> to focus on meaningful work?
Did I give or get them <i>help</i> when they needed or requested it? Did I encourage team members to help one another?	Did I or others fail to provide needed or requested <i>help</i> ?
Did I discuss <i>lessons</i> from today's successes and problems with my team?	Did I "punish" failure, or neglect to find <i>lessons</i> and/or opportunities in problems and successes?
Did I help <i>ideas flow</i> freely within the group?	Did I or others <i>cut off</i> the presentation or debate of ideas prematurely?

<b>Nourishers</b>	<b>Toxins</b>
Did I show <i>respect</i> to team members by recognizing their contributions to progress, attending to their ideas and treating them as trusted professionals?	Did I <i>disrespect</i> any team members by failing to recognize their contributions to progress, not attending to their ideas or not treating them as trusted professionals?
Did I <i>encourage</i> team members who faced difficult challenges?	Did I <i>discourage</i> a member of the team in any way?
Did I <i>support</i> team members who had a personal or professional problem?	Did I <i>neglect</i> a team member who had a personal or professional problem?
Is there a sense of personal and professional <i>affiliation</i> and camaraderie within the team?	Is there tension or <i>antagonism</i> among members of the team or between team members and me?
<b>Inner Work Life</b>	
Did I see any indications of the quality of my subordinates' inner work lives today?	
Perceptions of the work, team, management, firm?	
Emotions?	
Motivation?	
What specific events might have affected inner work life today?	
<b>Action Plan</b>	
What can I do tomorrow to strengthen the <i>catalysts</i> and <i>nourishers</i> identified and provide ones that are lacking?	What can I do tomorrow to start eliminating the <i>inhibitors</i> and <i>toxins</i> identified?

Source: T. Amabile & S. Kramer, *The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement, and Creativity at Work* (Harvard Business Press, 2011)

Progress triggers a positive inner work life. To boost yours, provide your people with catalysts and nourishers. Buffer them, as much as possible, from inhibitors and toxins. It will pay off for you, your team and your business!