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**Defined Performance Solutions**

## **Monthly Highlights and Leadership Lesson**

### **November 2009**

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Dear Friends,

Defined Performance Solutions has opened for business. I hope that you will consider me when facing vexing business problems and allow me to begin a partnership with you. I have over 20 years of leadership experience in the areas of leadership and management, HR, organization development, and training.

I'll be sending these periodic newsletters hoping you will find their content interesting, thought-provoking and useful. If you like this newsletter, please forward it to colleagues and friends to help get the word out about Defined Performance Solutions.

This is the month of Thanksgiving. Give a sincere thanks to the people who have helped you in your past. Give more thanks to the people that put up with you every day, especially your family, friends, and staff. You would never be who you are nor have what you have without the favor and belief in you from other people. And give thanks to your God for all the good things that have come your lucky way.

Check out Defined Performance Solution's [website](#) and please give me a call at 706-726-6307 if I can be of service.

Sincerely,

Doug Fine

## Call Problems Problems

By Doug Fine



"Houston, we've had a problem."

When Apollo 13 Commander James Lovell said these words to his ground controllers, he was not aware that in 40 or so years, it would be almost verboten to say the word "problem" in a business setting. Big guy managers are often famous for saying, "If you are going to bring me a problem, bring me at least 3 solutions for it..." Big guy managers can actually avoid problems this way. Pretty clever.

Then there are the positive-thinkerites. They don't call problems problems, they are "opportunities to excel", or "challenges to be overcome." Now I'm all for reframing things at the appropriate time, and I'm all for learning from challenges, but things can get real difficult sometimes. Problems happen. Things go FUBAR in the night and no amount of saying "problem" in the correct way is going to stop the heart from beating faster, the stomach acid to start working overtime, the insomnia to rear its head. When it hits the fan, at that point is it an opportunity or a challenge? Neither. It's a problem. The last thing someone needs when presenting a problem to his/her boss is some corporate platitude about how we view problems around here. That person needs empathy and at that point, support, guidance, and yes, maybe even the boss's stab at a solution, or at least a partnership to develop some solutions.

Call problems problems. Cut out the corporate cuteness and jargon-mongering.

Years ago I was asked by my boss at the time to have a meeting to find "synergy" (jargon at its finest) with a person who was heading up clinical education. I was heading up all the other types: leadership, staff development, etc. at the same hospital. You could say we were supposed to be colleagues. Synergy would be all over the place when these two professionals put their minds to it.

We met in her office. My first mistake. She showed me an organization chart she'd prepared for our meeting. She had merged our two departments. She put herself on top and there was no sign of me on that chart anywhere. I guess she had freed up my future to pursue other "opportunities." At that point I had a problem. O.K. a challenge too. But a big problem first.

## The Monthly "Dougism"

Each newsletter I'd like to give you a little lesson from learning I have gained in my working life over 25 years in the military and business. I call them Dougisms, but most are not original. I've learned a lot from others and some of these come from the minds and mouths of good people that I have had the privilege of working with. I do put a little of my own thinking into them though.

***This month: "Coaches have favorites."***

This was on a large sign that the coach put up in the locker room for his swimming team at a high school in Evans, Georgia. It stood on its head the notion that everybody on his team needed to be treated equally. No, he had his favorites. And why did he favor some? I'll just take a guess:

- Some worked harder than others;
- Some brought home the first, second, and third place medals for the team;
- Some showed up early to the pool and stayed later, improving their times and stamina;
- Some had better attitudes and were a positive force for good and teamwork;



- Some had a larger heart than others, and though maybe not the "best," they did their best every day.

I'd like to suggest that you transfer this way of thinking into a business or organizational context. Bosses should be allowed to have favorites. It's perfectly OK to give more praise, perks, and attention to those on their team that demonstrate the qualities needed for their personal success and the success of the enterprise. Send your superstars to training, provide them more opportunities to advance and give them more critical assignments. Give them more say about how things should be done.

Set out for your team in a concrete way the exact attitudes, behaviors, and work standards that will win your "favorite" status. Favor those who follow your direction. Spend way less time on those who don't.

Hold firm against those on the team that sour and complain that everyone is not being treated equally. I have always liked the concept of equity over the concept of equality. Equity implies fairness, justice, impartiality, seeing people for how they are. That coaches have favorites in no way diminishes the concept and practice of "equal opportunity". Next month here I will share with you my thoughts about what "equal opportunity" and "diversity" means to me. But I'll give you a little teaser to keep you coming back:

***"Equal opportunity means giving everyone the opportunity to become unequal."***

"Dougism."

And it fits quite nicely with this month's: ***"Coaches have favorites."***

## **Business Blogs I Like**



There is so much great information on the Net for people to gain fantastic knowledge and support for their business and personal life. Years ago I once heard business guru Tom Peters say: "If you aren't surfing the Net at least 30 minutes a day, you don't know what is going on." I think that is even truer today. Keeping up with the changing world is a requirement for successful people. Many things that were believed and practiced even five years ago have become obsolete. "Ever-rising housing prices" come to my mind.

So I touch base with a few solid thinkers and bloggers in the course of my week. They have helped me to view the world a little differently and have taught me a lot. Here are a few I like. Find some that you like too.

[Nicholas Bate](#) - Nicholas is a British consultant, professor and author who provides generous coaching on business and personal development topics. I promise that he will inspire you to be your best and you will be changed by what I call Nicholas' "digital coaching." Nicholas lives in Oxford, England. He is a devoted Beatles fan. Read Nicholas long enough and he will bring out the book in you.

[Michael Wade](#) - Also known as the Execupundit, Michael is a modern day Renaissance Man who provides his readers with a wealth of business wisdom along with commentary, cultural and political viewpoints, and his own brand of humor. Michael lives in Phoenix, Arizona and is a practicing consultant.

[Jim Stroup](#) - Jim provides astute lessons on the big topic of "Managing Leadership." He too is an accomplished author, an American that resides and works in Istanbul, Turkey.

[Kurt Harden](#) - His blog, Cultural Offering, is an eclectic mix of hard-nosed business observations and advice, political and cultural commentary, humorous asides, family photos and salt of the earth wisdom. Kurt is another blogging Renaissance Man. A big AC/DC fan to boot. Kurt lives in Heath, Ohio.

[John Phillips](#) - John is an employment attorney who practices in Chattanooga, Tennessee. His blog focuses on employment law matters and unlike most attorneys, he has a heart to match his intelligence and wit. You will learn a lot of great things from John at The Word On Employment Law.

Most of these bloggers have a "Favorites" list all their own. One of the fun things about reading blogs is learning about who your favorite bloggers like to follow.

## Contact Doug

[Fill out an inquiry page.](#)

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