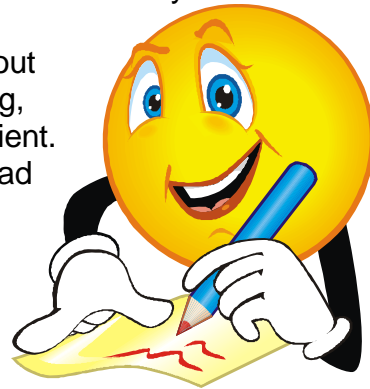


A Checkup for Leaders

One of the traits of good leaders is their ability to give assignments and have them carried out efficiently and effectively. This is not as easy as it might seem. Sometimes the simplest directive gets fouled up completely.

When this happens, wise leaders will check themselves first, before blaming others. Rob Reinalda, executive editor of *Leadership* magazine, offers a few points to consider if your associates have difficulty following your instructions. Reinalda's observations certainly have application to what we do in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home. Here they are:

1. **Clarity.** The situation is usually clear in your mind, but do others understand it? Did you offer a thorough explanation, including the expected end result and time frame in which the task was to be completed?
2. **Tone.** A request – rather than a command – is usually more effective in gaining cooperation. Do you communicate orders in a way that causes people to react negatively?
3. **Feedback.** Many associates are hesitant about admitting that they don't understand something, especially if their supervisor tends to be impatient. A good manager won't accept a nod of the head as agreement. Encourage your workers to question you, as well as the things they don't understand.
4. **Check in.** Don't micromanage, but do maintain some contact with your associates throughout the assignment. This is the best means to monitor their progress and the surest technique to prevent little problems from becoming big ones.
5. **Appreciation.** A little gratitude goes a long way. When was the last time you told your associates "thank you," or offered them a nugget of praise? Showing appreciation for good work is a powerful incentive for your staff that will motivate them to do the next job equally well.



Practice these five principles and see how much better your relationship with your associates – and their performance – improves.

– Beecher Hunter