

Initiative and Finishiative: Keys to Success

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To be successful in the ice arena industry, managers must have both initiative and "finishiative." While these traits are not common, they can be developed and are essential to leading and directing any organization in the 2000s. Why is it that some organizations with fewer resources out-perform others with more staff and better facilities? Usually because the person at the top has both initiative and "finishiative" characteristics.

Initiative is a characteristic commonly evaluated on job appraisal forms and something that should be encouraged by all employers in the workplace. According to Webster's Dictionary, initiative is "the first step; the act of setting a process in motion; the ability or willingness to take the lead." In common terms, initiative is the ability to see opportunities and to take advantage of situations that come up daily in arenas.

Managers with initiative usually:

- o Energize people around them
- o Gain commitment from superiors, user groups and workers
- o Provide support and encouragement
- o Lead people to action

Managers in the ice arena industry with initiative seize opportunities to develop and market new programs and stay current with trends in their profession.

"Finishiative," on the other hand, is a term coined by Dr. N.H. Atthreya, an educator, author and lecturer on human potential. While it rhymes with initiative, the root word is "finish." Atthreya believes that we should add the word "finishiative" to our work vocabulary. His definition of the term is "the last step; the act of completing; the ability or willingness to take a thing to its logical conclusion in optimum time."

Managers with "finishiative" demonstrate the following characteristics:

- o Ability to sustain effort in spite of difficulty
- o High physical and psychic energy
- o Enjoyment of a challenging situation

Having initiative is not enough in today's world. It takes a lot of talent and determination to get projects or programs started, but it is far more difficult to carry them through to completion, to make them successful. The finished project is what counts - finished in a timely fashion, within budget and with attitudes and enthusiasm at the same level as they were at the start of the project. Many building improvement projects or programs are not fully completed because management fails to stay on task and fails to require workers to stay on task.

According to Atthreya, "finishiative" is easy to understand, but it is neither easy to achieve nor common. Many heads of organizations start projects but fail to provide the gentle encouragement to keep them on time. As a result, more staff and resources are committed than the projects require. Successful leaders approach time management and producing results as challenges, and they enjoy meeting those challenges. They enjoy getting things done. Others are willing to compromise original plans to accommodate workers' attitudes or schedule conflicts.

An arena management application

Where might initiative and "finishiative" make a difference in arena management? Let's take an example from running financially successful programs, such as hockey tournaments, figure skating competitions or learn-to-skate programs.

Initiative affects the planning and promotion of the program. Individuals and teams need to know about programs far enough in advance to fit dates into their schedules and to register for the programs. Brochures need to be designed and produced in advance. Address labels can be printed while brochures are in production so distribution can start as soon as the brochures are ready.

"Finishiative" for such programs involves follow-through, follow-up, acknowledgments, evaluation and documentation. The beneficial effects of these activities show up not just in how well the program runs, but, more importantly, in how much better the program will be the next time. Getting everyone's notes, evaluations and suggestions about the program while it's still fresh in their memories reduces the number of mistakes and the amount of time wasted the next time it's presented. It also prevents "reinventing the wheel" when new staff members are responsible for the program.

Employees enjoy working with managers and co-workers who have initiative and "finishiative." The workplace is always fresh, exciting and challenging. There is joy in getting things done; the pressures are compensated by the satisfaction of accomplishment and achievement. We suggest that all arena managers assess their initiative and "finishiative," work at improving each and give special consideration to selecting, promoting and compensating employees with these qualities. Our business will benefit.

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