

## Help Stellar Performers Keep Their Feet On Team Turf

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Posted 11/25/2011 02:13 PM ET

Are your top performers also high maintenance? Tips to maintain an upward trajectory while keeping their feet on the ground:

- **Make it personal.** How to get powerhouse players to think like team members? That's a question for leaders in sports and business alike. Duke management professor Sim Sitkin posed the issue to Mike Krzyzewski, the university's basketball coach. Coach K became the winningest men's basketball coach in NCAA Division I history with his 903rd victory this month.

In an interview for the journal *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Krzyzewski told Sitkin he sweats over his approach.

"He really deeply reflects about how he leads each individual and each team," Sitkin told IBD.

- **Insist on respect.** "(Superstars) can get a distorted sense of themselves," Sitkin said. "They need their leader and teammates to help ground them."

Coach K has two solid rules: Look each other in the eye when speaking, and always speak the truth.

It's never easy to tell winners they're stumbling. "But couple that honesty ... with a clear sense that you care about them," Sitkin said. "Then it's more likely to be heard."

- **Help them adapt.** "High-maintenance, high-performance employees will lose their jobs not because of their performance, but because of their behavior."

So says Kathi Graham-Leviss, author of "The Perfect Hire" and founder of XB Consulting.

The good news?

"They are coachable," she said.

- **Define their place.** What to do with an ace who prefers going it alone? "Finding their team roles is important," said Graham-Leviss.

Try offering learning experiences outside the company. When hotshots are asked to bring that new expertise back to the team, they often interact with the pack.

- **Pick your battles.** Is your top salesperson keeping irregular hours? Late turning in paperwork? Ask yourself if it really matters.

"You can be a prima donna, as long as you're hitting your numbers," said Jeb Blount, author of "People Follow You."

- **Get their attention.** A manager's common complaint? That superstar won't listen to suggestions.

Let Mr. and Ms. Talent talk first.

You'll earn their trust while learning what makes them tick.

- **Head off infighting.** "People will always resent the person who is No. 1," even if they don't want to be top dog, Blount said.

Helping each worker achieve personal goals defuses green-eyed envy. "As a leader, your job is to move the whole team," Blount said.