

Andy Bounds

Don't be the Wicked Witch of the West



Remember the scene in *The Wizard of Oz* where the witch sends her winged monkeys to capture Dorothy?

You know the one – she says something like “Fly... fly my pretties.”

In effect, she's saying “Go and do this thing I want you to do, while I stay here in my castle doing lots of magic stuff” (OK, I admit it: their script's better than mine).

I was reminded of this scene recently. A team's leader said to me: “I want you to help my team be better at networking. They need to get out more. Meet more people. Get our name known in the marketplace. We need to be front-of-mind with our target market.”

So I asked him what networking he did, how he did it, and where he'd like them to do it.

His response: he said he didn't have time, which was why he wanted them to do it.

But that's the Wicked Witch Approach: “Fly... fly my pretties. Go and do this thing I want you to do, while I stay here in my castle doing lots of magic stuff.”

As leaders, we can of course delegate to others. And it's essential we do.

“Think of the last thing you asked your team to do that they didn't. Do you role model it enough?”

Now think of what you're going to ask them to do today. How will you role model that?”

But it's also essential to role model the behaviours we want to see in them (in other words, don't be hypocritical).

- Want your team to turn up to meetings on time? And have done the pre-work? Then you should – every meeting
- Want them to change their behaviours to reflect the new strategy? Then you should – as early and as visibly as possible
- Want them to engage with the training programme you've invested in? Then you should – brief them beforehand, attend it yourself (with your phone off), role model what you learn, keep doing so after the course
- Want them to stop emailing as much? Then you should send less... and don't email them to tell them you're doing so

The minute you don't – even if it's because you had lots of magic stuff to do in your castle – you give them the perfect excuse to stop.

And, as for their (or your) concern ‘I don't have time’... well, the good news is that time's never about time. It's about priority. There's always time – if something's important enough.

Talking of which, I'm now making time to sit by the phone, waiting for the Hollywood scriptwriter's call. I'm sure it's coming any day now...

Action point

Think of the last thing you asked your team to do that they didn't. Do you role model it enough?

Now think of what you're going to ask them to do today. How will you role model that?

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About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain's Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world's largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him ‘... more about effective communicating than a lady who'd taught two American Presidents’.

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