



# THE TRUTH ABOUT

# GETTING THE BEST FROM PEOPLE

SECOND EDITION

“Ditch the  
carrot and  
the stick...”

Martha I. Finney

*Leadership Consultant and Creator of Career Landscapes Team-Building Workshop*

# Praise for the First Edition

"Finally, a no-nonsense primer for leaders on how to build... and keep... extraordinary talent. This book should be in the briefcase of every exec in the world and should be pulled out every day for a refresher on how to be a *real* leader."

—**Dan Walker**, Former Chief Talent Officer for Apple, Inc.

"A fun and easy-to-read blueprint on understanding and creating engagement within a team. No high falootin' business jargon here—Martha Finney tells it like it is. She helps supervisors and managers uncover the secrets of employee engagement through behavioral examples, successes at top companies, and her charming storytelling."

—**Kirsten Clark**, Director of Global Workforce Training and Development,  
Save the Children,

"Martha succeeds in reducing one of the business world's most sought-after but amorphous concepts—employee engagement—into 69 digestible truths."

—**Christopher Rice**, President and CEO, BlessingWhite

"A must-read for new supervisors and managers, with lots of essential lessons and tips."

—**Tom Mathews**, Executive Vice President, Human Resources, Time Warner Cable

"Easy-to-read stories and useful truths about leading. I wish I had this book when I first became a manager. I had to learn some of these truths the hard way!"

—**Scott Shute**, Head of Global Customer Operations, LinkedIn

"The book is outstanding! Very easy to read... great examples, great advice, and the corporate world would be a better place if just 50 percent of the managers would follow your advice!"

—**Peg Wynn**, Former SVP/HR, Adobe

"I started reading and found myself grabbing for a highlighter. I got to the following line 'Getting the best is about building a culture of trust, connection, growth, and service.' I had to drop a box around that one."

—**Tiane Mitchell Gordon**, Senior Vice President, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, AOL

"Finney has gifted us an important compendium of accessible and eminently actionable insights about employee engagement. Using 'The Truths' as a guide, generations of managers will find infinite opportunities to unleash, inspire, and leverage the inherent talent in their people. My advice? Seize it! It will enable you to dramatically affect the future of your team, your organization, and your own career."

—**Jane Creech**, Founder and Principal, Strategic Business Systems (Organization Consulting and Leadership Coaching), Former Senior Director, OD, eBay

"If you are looking for a great way to deliver Management 101, just distribute this book. It has everything that someone new to management needs to know. Savvy, and sassy, and smart, this is an easy but important read!"

—**Beverly Kaye**, Coauthor, *Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go*

"Just when I thought one truth was as good as it could get, the rest lived up to it! I loved the anecdotes and the final truth, 'You're still the boss.'"

—**Ed Martin**, Chief HR Office, Pandora Internet Radio

"The subject is important, pragmatic advice told in an entertaining way. Front-line managers need this for perspective. This book has some great 'keys' to bringing out the best in people!"

—**Jim Wiggett**, President and CEO, Jackson Hole Group

**THE TRUTH  
ABOUT**

**GETTING  
THE BEST FROM  
PEOPLE**

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Martha I. Finney

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All my thanks go to Colleen Cayes.  
This book is for you.



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As a people leader, your job is simple: You are the link between organizational mission-critical objectives and the effort your employees invest in achieving those objectives. And you just have to keep those two pieces working together smoothly. See? Easy.

Yeah, right. As a people leader, your job is to inspire your employees to bring their personal greatness to work every day and to invest their best in your business. And that's a *hard* job. It's an emotional roller coaster. You experience the exquisite highs of engagement and teamwork when everyone is pulling together. Your heart breaks when you have to make really tough decisions that negatively affect the personal lives and well-being of people you truly care about. And it can be absolutely frightening when you're dealing with hair-trigger personalities who really don't belong in a safe workplace.

But even more routinely—and just as challenging, if not more so—you have to deal with yourself and your beliefs about life, about people, and about motivation and trust. Every day. Even on the ho-hum days. And that's when we get down to some pretty simple principles. Although this book by no means trivializes all the behaviors and beliefs that go into bringing out the greatness in your employees, the material you'll discover in these pages is based on a few very accessible assumptions:

- **People leaders discover that leading is impossible when they forget that they're people first.** It may be paradoxical, but nothing makes a person come face to face with real—or perceived—limitations faster than a promotion into a managerial spot. On the outside, you may be projecting, “Can do!” (or at least hoping you are), but on the inside, you may be saying, “Uh oh, what have I gotten myself into?” Your first managerial assignment? Manage yourself into keeping in mind that you're not expected to be perfect. You're just expected to reach a little further for some brand new stretch goals.
- **Most people want to do good work in a job they love.** Marketing consultant (and former Senior Vice President of Marketing for Starbucks) Scott Bedbury speaks about what he calls the “Five Human Truths.” We need to be understood, feel special, feel as though we belong, feel that we're in control, and

know that we have the chance to reach our potential. Although these feelings may not necessarily be what we want from a cup of coffee, they're certainly what we want almost universally from the work we do. (But ask me at 4 in the morning when I'm cranking against deadlines, and I might have a different answer for you.)

■ **Great people leaders don't have to be clever, complicated, politically astute, or even especially wise.** But they do have to be kind, honest, focused, positive, and authentic. If your company is committed to supporting you as you cultivate a grounded, authentic, compelling leadership style, you will see first-hand that creating great employees isn't about being magically charismatic. It's about being you.

■ **There is no *u* in team, but there should be.** As a people leader, you're also a team member. Sometimes you're the coach; in fact, you might often think of yourself in the top leadership spot. But you're also the water carrier. It's been said that great leaders are servants. And if your team is working so well and independently that all they need is a regular infusion of refreshment, that's a great position for you to play.

Enjoy this book. When you learn that creating great employees can be fun and personally rewarding, the first great employee you'll create will be yourself.

