

# Crack the Whip when You Need to



**THE NEW-AGE** boss is expected to be the benevolent guide who will always back his team, hand-hold each member and push them to succeed by carefully eroding their faults. But there are times when he has to crack the whip. It may result in wrath and the boss's popularity may dip for a while, but to hold the team in steadfast discipline is a propelling factor. There are ways a boss can rein in errant team members without causing unnecessary damage, says Devina Sengupta

## 1 Be the Change

Many managers call their team for a meeting and turn up late, washing away the relevance of the issue that was to be discussed, says R Elango, HR head of Mphasis. The team tends to mimic the ways of the manager, and this shows in their attitude in meetings and the work coming out of it.

## 2 Leave out Ambiguity

"When setting targets and key result areas, the boss will have to be very clear on what he expects from each one of them so there is no place for ambiguity, which results in indiscipline," says Ronesh Puri, managing director of Delhi-based executive search firm, Executive Access.

## 3 Reward and Punish

A team head should know follow the reward and punish principle, says Elango. So if employees exceed the performance criteria but are disciplined in their approach towards work and others during team tasks, then they should not be rewarded. Similarly, to ensure a balanced approach, an employee who may be disciplined but is not a performer should not be rewarded.

## 4 Say it Loud and Clear

An employee may not know he or she is not following the rules, and will continue if not checked. The first step, says Puri, is to talk to them and explain clearly that such behaviour will not be tolerated. The manager should find a reason behind such behaviour and if it continues, send a warning letter stating the consequences could impact their appraisal. If the employee still takes it lightly, the boss should go ahead with giving him or her a poor rating during review and mention why.

## 5 Set Team Tasks

The manager should get employees to work in as many team tasks as possible. This brings in a sense of responsibility, and they will know their performance will impact others' grading as well. An indisciplined employee may not follow instructions to the team initially but will realise how his or her waywardness is leading to low scores, for which colleagues will hold them accountable. This often is a factor that pushes people to change their ways and work better.