



Whether your business is a one man operation or a corporation that is several hundred employees strong. **Getting the right support from those around you is critical to your success.** Your staff employees, co-workers, vendors and colleagues each play a critical role, in your success, failure, or the perception that your clients/customers will have of you and your business.

It's no secret that good help is hard to find and when you find it, it's hard to keep. Unless you can successfully create an environment that makes employees want to work for you, serve you, see you succeed and be a part of that success.

In other words, your employees have to believe in you and believe in the work that you do. Good managers understand this concept and know how to lead employees through day to day activities that continually drives towards the goal. However doing this well, goes much further than leadership by example.

To get the best from the people who make up an organization, it is first necessary to manage them in the most efficient and effective manner. Exactly what constitutes efficiency and effectiveness in this regard has been and continues to be a matter for debate. At one extreme, there is the view that employees are simply a resource, to be pressed for the maximum possible output.

At the other end of the spectrum, the view obtains that employees are first and foremost human beings and that the employer has a duty to care for their human aspirations and needs. Pragmatically, of course, most employers fit somewhere between these two extremes; exactly where depends on their own outlook and inclination.

The goal of every manager should be to maximize the results of every employee - effectively first and efficiently second. The reasons for this are simple...a manager impacts every employee, and not just the employee's work life, but the employee's whole family life, and further they also affect the business owner/company president/investor's livelihood.

Employees mistreated by their manager share their frustrations with family and friends. A good manager is measured by their accomplishments in gold and a poor manager is measured in opportunity dollars lost.

A poor manager leads to higher turnover, wasting training dollars and more work and stress for the company. For the sake of this discussion let's agree upon the following definition of a Manager.

A Manager is responsible to balance the complexities of getting today's work done today, with the resources and talents and materials available...directly or indirectly to satisfy a demand for which the company will receive a financial reward.

In looking at some of the complexities of getting today's work done today it is important to briefly discuss some of the challenges of selecting and hiring talent, as well as the impact managers have on employee turnover as a backdrop to addressing management challenges.

One of the facts every manager needs to own up to regarding their employees...either you hired them that way or you managed them to be that way...which is it? In truth, if they are not performing up to expectation, either answer identifies a concern and opportunity.

Another challenge in managing employees has to do with employee development versus training. Training is passing on technical knowledge, whereas, employee development takes a whole person approach to integrating the training with additional insights: impact of attitudes, behaviors and team relationships to effectively raise the bar of performance expectations.

The goal when you hire an employee is to get that person to do what you need them to do, the way you want them to do it and in the timeframe you want it done. Nothing too complex...that is all you want and expect...right? Well, unless they have the gifts to just know all that and do that...then they must be developed. So do you have an effective process to develop your employees?

The challenge is how do you know? Effective development programs will include developing values, attitudes, behaviors, learning and performance expectations, interpersonal and team skills and new competency learning, assuming they really want to know this stuff.

Many studies have shown that an important factor for commitment and retention is the effectiveness of immediate management. It is an important element of the work environment; research shows it highly correlated with commitment and retention scores, and employees cite poor management as a key reason for leaving a company.

Accordingly, there have been many books focused on manager effectiveness. One big seller was First; **Break all the Rules**, reporting on the Gallup Organization's findings and recommendations for better management of people.

More recently, Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans published a wonderfully concise paperback **How-to Guide for Effective Management**, Love'em or Lose 'em: **Getting Good People to Stay**.

It is easy to say that managers should view the care of their employees as their primary responsibility. They should communicate openly (with a lot of quality listening), set clear performance expectations, support performance, and give feedback and recognition.

They should take a personal interest in the needs and expectations of their people (ideally knowing what makes each person tick) and shape the “value proposition” that is just right. They should champion individual development, not for the little high potential, but for all. They should pay attention to their multi-rater feedback and work to become more effective, caring managers. They should be accountable for turnover and for employee retention/commitment.

Yet this is a bit much to ask of managers who are overworked, ill-trained, and pulled in many different directions. Studies show that managers spend less than 15% of their time with their direct reports. And managers are still typically selected based on performance or technical acumen, not people skills. Here is a major opportunity and a major challenge.

### **How I Manage Our Employees**

Do you create an environment that encourages people to improve, innovate, and create new opportunities? Or are your people afraid of making mistakes and taking risks? The challenge is to create a work culture that supports the exploration of new ways of "doing things" without fear of rejection or retribution.

Individuals also need to know that opportunities to improve their competencies are available and encouraged.

There is nothing very complicated about managing employees:

- Be clear about what you expect from people and measure their contributions
- Provide individuals with the materials and tools they need to perform their jobs
- Provide individuals opportunities to do what they do best, every day
- Ensure that people have a manager who cares about them
- Surround talented individuals with people who have a similar drive for quality
- Provide opportunities for individuals to learn and grow

Leaders who do these things are much more likely to be successful in keeping and managing their employees. Those who are unable to do these things are likely to continue to lose talent, and their goal to become a "leader of choice" will continue to elude them.

### **Conclusion**

Hire motivated employees with good attitudes...Manage them well...Develop them to their potential...Watch them perform...and Tell them how they are doing.

Good managers attract good employees, but keeping them as good employees requires a constant heart for balancing the company wants and the employee needs. A good manager makes money by doing the right people things right...everyday!

The key to effective management is to talk to employees as peers and not to talk down to them just because you hold a greater ranking title. Employees know who the boss is and they know that you've got the power.

Don't hide behind your title and management power to tell employees what to do. Learn to create opportunities that motivate employees to do what you need, without you having to tell them to do it.

If you do this well, you'll have happy employees that want to see you succeed because they know that as you succeed, so do they.

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#### About the Author

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