

MANAGING PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCE

– FACT OR FICTION?



Managing people's performance is key to every manager's success. It is often the cause of their failure. Why? Something has gone badly wrong if managers cannot get the basics of people management right. **The answer lies in the five greatest mistakes that managers make.**

TECHNICIANS

Promoted into management on the basis that they are technically strong and personally effective, many managers have failed to change their mindsets and priorities.

With their focus still on personal achievement, they often operate as a super technician, oblivious to their team's needs. A primary need of any team is involvement, particularly in the definition of its objectives. **Managers need to involve their teams, and their people, in agreeing on objectives.** If they don't, they simply become managers in name only. The organisation would be better off with self-directed teams.

PUSH FOR RESULTS

Managers are achievement oriented and results driven; they have to be. In their push for results, however, they can fail to understand the motivation needs of others.

Pushing for results rapidly becomes pushing their people; pushing their people then becomes pushing their people harder. **If the best results are willingly given, then the satisfaction needs of individuals are critically important to a manager's success.**

Ignoring these needs, in the push for results, simply creates a used, or even abused, workforce. A workforce that withdraws its discretionary effort, seeks to do the least, not the most. Overlooking the needs of employees, in a push for results, ultimately has a bulldozer effect – increased resistance to increased managerial efforts.

SELF-MOTIVATED

Most managers are "self-motivated" individuals. That's how they became managers. They are not always motivators of others, or people who find it easy to praise and recognise the efforts of others. They often try to motivate by example, modelling hard work and long hours, but failing to engage the hearts and minds of their people. They become "burnt-out" solo performers; their people check out, and many eventually leave. **Failing to create a psychological contract, by recognising people's motivation needs, is often the first step towards managerial failure.**

NO ADDED VALUE

Managers should constantly add value to their people. (Why else would their people need a manager?). This means training and developing them, coaching and counselling them, and encouraging individual growth. Managers constantly miss opportunities to add value to their people in these areas. Failing to put effort into their own personal growth and development, they fail to see the connection between learning and results.

When people are learning, they become more engaged in their work. The stimulation of learning stimulates a desire for improved personal performance.

Managers, who understand this, invest time in growing their people, and look for every opportunity to do so. Managers, who cannot grasp this essential truth, struggle to perform. They suffer, their people suffer, and the whole organisation suffers.

FAIRNESS

It has been said that there is no such thing as a completely fair manager. After all, what is considered to be unfair treatment by one individual might be considered utterly fair by another. This is no excuse however for having favourites, "picking on" certain individuals, and deliberately "making points" through the different treatment of people.

No matter what a manager's feelings are towards certain individuals, personal bias and subjective views must be replaced by a fair, honest and objective treatment of them.

This is hard for managers to grasp. They fail to see that their whole credibility is at stake, if they fail to treat people fairly. A lack of credibility quickly turns to a lack of leadership, and the seeds of future failure have been sown.

How do your managers stack up against the five greatest mistakes?

- **Failing to incorporate employee ideas into their objectives**
- **Overlooking the needs of employees, in the push for results**
- **Missing opportunities to motivate and coach employees**
- **Withholding praise and recognition**
- **Not treating their people fairly**

The answer is the five greatest managerial behaviours:

INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE

The primary responsibility of any manager is involvement with his/her people. Involvement is vital to create a vision for the future, communicate that vision, formulate a plan to achieve it and then execute it.

The management of change is not achieved in isolation, and if people are going to commit to it they need to be involved every step of the way. Turning a vision into agreed team and individual objectives then becomes a natural part of the involvement process. Implementation of plans then becomes easy and natural, as does the achievement of success.

SATISFACTION MANAGEMENT

Satisfaction management is the key to unlocking the discretionary effort of employees. Discretionary effort is a key ingredient to high performance. Instead of a continuous push for results, the best managers invest in creating increased satisfaction for their people.

They bring measurement to satisfaction in the same way they do performance. They actively involve people in identifying their satisfaction needs and in exploring ways to meet them. They modify their leadership style to bring the best out of people. They have "emotional intelligence" and they use it.

COACH, COUNSELLOR AND FACILITATOR

Effective managers not only balance their task and people focus, they actively seek to grow the capabilities of their people. They know that if they do this, continuous improvement in both team and individual performance can be achieved in a dramatic way.

They see their primary roles as Coach, Counsellor and Facilitator to their people. They understand that without additional knowledge, fresh insights and the ability to solve their own problems, people cannot perform to their best ability.

They have learned that a significant learning input into their people produces significant output for their organization. They have learned to "conduct an orchestra," versus "play an instrument."

ENCOURAGEMENT, PRAISE AND RECOGNITION

If you want to de-motivate someone, just ignore him/her. Ignoring people devalues them, demeans them, and undermines their dignity as a human being. How often are employees de-motivated, not by cruel, but rather by uncaring managers?

Encouragement, praise and recognition create the high-octane gas that fills up people's emotional tanks. It needs to be genuine; it needs to be attached to achievement or progress; and it needs to be regular.

Blame and fear cultures are only replaced by learning cultures when genuine, positive reinforcement replaces continuous negative feedback, or a lack of any feedback. Managers need to be generous providers of the right feedback; they need the skills and the confidence to deliver it and the belief that it makes a difference.

HONEST, OPEN AND FAIR

Managers cannot always be perceived to be utterly honest, open and fair, but they can strive to be so in their dealings with others. **Culture and values need to be lived out, leadership needs to be modelled and not just talked about.**

Managers must be seen to be acting in the best interests of all. Difficult? Not really- if there is a genuine partnership relationship with their people. **If loyalty to their teams, and giving others the credit for success become the norm, then honesty, openness and fairness become a way of life.** So also does the mutual support that accompanies them, and which is needed in abundance if today's managers are to succeed in the hostile, challenging and uncertain business environment of the twenty-first century.

The five greatest managerial mistakes can break an organisation. The five greatest managerial behaviours can make it. These behaviours can be learned.

Using our programme, Managing People's Performance, we equip managers with these behaviours. Our programme turns the fiction of good people-management into a fact. A fact that will transform your organisation and its future success.