

Manage the manager

First of a two-part article

SO what exactly do you think you manage?

If that sounds a rather cynical question, it is asked for good reason. There are very few manager levels in an organisation that have not been the subject of multiple re-organisations and it is fair to say the ubiquitous middle manager became extinct some years back.

Nevertheless the title of manager seems to have survived and in some cases thriving, along with the role of director. That said there does appear to be a muddle as to what a manager really manages. Does the title merely reflect a titular upgrade to keep someone happy when in reality nothing about their job or responsibilities has changed?

I would suggest your key function is developing and growing your people and the four top line areas are:-

- Coaching
- Motivating
- Recruiting
- Accountability

I will expand on these four factors in the next article.

Ask yourself honestly. How much time do you allocate to those four factors? If it is less than 80 per cent of your time, you are not managing your people effectively.

So what are you spending your time on?

The principal activity the four factors above are designed to address is how do you grow, or how are you growing, your people and your business.

A lot of the activities you should be involved in fit into the four key areas.

Coaching includes evaluating your people and training them. Motivating includes compensation and incentive schemes, and ensuring support systems work.

Recruiting involves upgrading the skill set to attract, hire and retain talent.

Accountability means ensuring your team understands their responsibilities and are not making excuses.

You are working with them to ensure opportunities are identified, problems or issues

are anticipated and solutions are forthcoming.

So what other activities are you involved in which are taking you away from really growing your people and your business? You may be able to reduce your recruiting time if you are able to retain people instead of losing them, because people who are not coached and motivated have good reason to leave and in the current climate probably will.

Let me draw an analogy for you. The skill of the conductor who leads an orchestra lies in his ability to bring all the musicians together at the right time and in the right place, playing to their strengths to create an environment where the musicians play to the height of their capabilities inspired by a great leader. What you do not see quite rightly is the conductor running around trying to play the various instruments himself, albeit he be an accomplished musician on one or more instruments.

The major issue today is that managers are not managing their people effectively, preferring for example to do what they like doing, such as running sales accounts, instead of managing and planning the sales team.

Maybe the responsibility lies in senior management mistaking loading more work onto fewer individuals as productivity and less cost.

I would beg to differ. By now I hope you see the picture I am painting or some of the comments ring a bell or you get a feel for what I am suggesting, depending on whether you are a visual, auditory or kinaesthetic person.

As a manager, do you know which communication model each of your team has – just

COACHING



one of the soft skills you will need to coach effectively.

You probably are working hard and do not have enough time in the day.

The people in your team,

some of whom might be reading this, could well be looking at you and saying: "So when

are you going to start managing us properly?"

The manager of today is alive, although I am not convinced he is adept to the changes he has to make even more frequently than ever before.

Until a manager has a real

grasp on what makes him tick, realises that his priorities are not what he thinks they are, and then gets to grips with understanding what will make his team really tick, then you simply are not managing your people effectively – think about it.

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