

THE HAPPY EMPLOYEE



101 WAYS
FOR MANAGERS TO
**ATTRACT, RETAIN,
& INSPIRE**
THE BEST AND
BRIGHTEST

JULIA McGOVERN
AND SUSAN SHELLY

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**101 WAYS FOR MANAGERS TO ATTRACT, RETAIN,
& INSPIRE THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST**

JULIA MCGOVERN AND SUSAN SHELLY



Avon, Massachusetts

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Published by Adams Business, an imprint of
Adams Media, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
57 Littlefield Street, Avon, MA 02322. U.S.A.
www.adamsmedia.com

ISBN-10: 1-59869-557-6
ISBN-13: 978-1-59869-557-1
eISBN: 978-1-44051-512-5

Printed in the United States of America.

J I H G F E D C B A

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
is available from the publisher.

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Part I

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND ATTRACT TOP TALENT

CHAPTER 1

Hiring the Right Staff Takes Time, and Good Managers Know Why

1 Hire Smart—And Prosper

Smart hiring is the key to successful managing, and the key to smart hiring is preparation. Smart hiring takes time, but every minute spent in preparation will yield positive and long-lasting financial and workplace results.

Poor hires take their toll on the following aspects of your business:

- The bottom line
- Workplace morale
- Productivity

Jessica, a manager responsible for hiring for a mid-sized marketing firm in San Francisco, learned the cost of a bad hire the hard way.

Hiring Too Quickly in Order to Fill a Spot Mary's experience in marketing was impressive, and Jessica had been excited about hiring her. Her excitement had quickly faded, however, as she realized how difficult it was to work with Mary. Mary was bright—very bright. She also was argumentative, stubborn, and resentful toward any feedback that she interpreted as being even remotely critical.

Now, with the company about to begin a huge new campaign, Mary was pulling her usual attitude, reacting

badly to Jessica's suggestions regarding the proposal she'd written, becoming incredibly defensive, and generally acting like a spoiled child. It was clear that her behavior was affecting other employees, and productivity had dropped department-wide.

While Jessica was frustrated with Mary, she also was angry with herself. She'd hired Mary quickly in order to fill a vacant position, thinking she was doing her employees a favor. She'd been wowed by Mary's resume, by what Jessica had interpreted as a healthy dose of self-confidence, and, let's face it, by the names of people Mary claimed to have known.

As a result, she was stuck with a difficult employee who was threatening to bring down her department. Several employees had already complained to Jessica about Mary, and Jessica had overheard other conversations that clearly indicated morale and productivity were sinking fast.

In addition, Jessica was stuck with having to explain to her boss what had gone wrong with her new hire, knowing that her mistake would cost the company thousands and thousands of dollars.

Learning from Jessica's Mistake

Jessica made the serious, and unfortunately common, mistake of rushing to fill a position. Mary looked good on paper, and Jessica didn't pick up on any signs of her difficult personality during the interviewing process.

In reality, however, most employee groups would prefer to have a job stay open than to acquire a teammate they don't trust, one with poor job skills, or a person who is just difficult to get along with.

When you consider that poor hiring practices among American businesses is thought to collectively cost more than \$400 billion a year through loss of productivity,

turnover, and other factors, the need for smart, cautious hiring becomes even more apparent.

With time, education, and practice, managers can learn to make smart hires. While some people are naturally better at hiring than others, smart hiring is a learned skill. Managers who make it a priority to improve their search and interview skills will reap the benefits of lower turnover, reduced personnel costs, and high-performing teams. The following qualities are most associated with job success:

- *A candidate's ability to successfully perform the tasks associated with the position:* Take into account prior experience, trainability, and behavioral characteristics that will enable the prospective hire to do well in a particular job.

- *Attitudes that inspire a candidate to rise above the expectations of the job:* Look for indications of a work ethic that will motivate the potential employee to excel.
- *Compatibility with your company's culture :* Make sure that culture is clearly laid out and that the candidate understands those traits that define the company.

2 Listen to the Experts

Perhaps you are not yet convinced that smart hiring is one of the most important job lessons you can learn. After all, you've just started reading this book. You don't even know if it's going to be good. So why, after just a few pages, should you be convinced that smart hiring is not only desirable but necessary for the success of your company— not to mention the preservation of your job as a manager?

In the course of researching and writing this book, we spent a lot of time considering the advice and wisdom of top-notch managers, former managers, and business consultants. If you are not yet completely convinced that smart hiring is, indeed, an essential task, perhaps the

advice and wisdom of some of these men and women will help to persuade you.

Peter F. Drucker

The late Peter Drucker, who died in 1995 at age ninety-five, has been called the world's most influential business guru and the father of modern management. Over the course of sixty-six years he wrote more than three dozen books, which have been translated into thirty languages. His take on hiring is not only that it's important but that it's also difficult because it involves making decisions about people.

The toughest decisions in organizations are people decisions—hiring, promoting, firing, etc. The ability to make good decisions regarding people represents one of the last reliable sources of competitive advantage since very few organizations are good at it.

William H. Gates

Bill Gates, the cofounder and chairman of the world's largest software company, looks for employees with not only smarts but also passion for their work. Gates is very tuned in to the Microsoft culture, and he makes it clear that employees need to fit the company culture in order to be successful there.

Hiring smart people has been the single most important thing we've done as a company from the very beginning. Paul Allen and I started out hiring our friends, but always with an eye to people who had a lot of passion for what they were doing and who were very, very bright. Our recruiting department works very hard to find the right people for our culture here. We also offer our employees a way to share in the company's long-term success and we encourage people to look around the company for new challenges. When you have smart people working for you, you want to keep them stimulated and engaged.

Jack Welch

The former CEO of General Electric Corporation, Jack Welch is known as one of the greatest recruiters of all times. He was personally involved with recruiting, training, and mentoring more than 300 of GE's top executives. Knowing

how important it is to find the right person for the job, he planned for ten years for a successor to his position, from which he retired in 2001.

All we can do is bet on the people whom we pick, so my job is picking the right people.

Helen Handfield-Jones

Helen Handfield-Jones, who has worked extensively to research how companies can find and hire the best employees, coauthored *The War for Talent*, which was published in 2001. She advises companies around the world on how to attract, hire, and keep top players.

Having the right talent gives you a greater advantage than ever before. It's gotten increasingly difficult to recruit, so we've seen companies get more aggressive.

Roger E. Herman

The late Roger Herman was the founder of the Herman Group, a firm that specializes in forecasting future trends and working with clients to best accommodate and utilize those trends. He wrote eleven books, including *How to Become an Employer of Choice* and *Impending Crisis:*

Too Many Jobs, Too Few People, and more than 1,000 articles before his death in 2006.

The presence of top-flight employees and management will attract similar applicants to the organization.

Are you convinced yet? One after another, these experts have told you that the right employees are key to making and keeping a business successful and profitable. Effective managers agree that you can't build, or run, a great company without capable, engaged employees. Whether you're managing a restaurant, a bank, or a software manufacturing company, your employees can be your greatest asset—or your worst nightmare.

It's vitally important to act deliberately, make good decisions, and use sound judgment when recruiting and hiring employees. Just ask the experts.

3 Consider the Best-Fit Factor

A software company named a team of eight employees to work on a special project. The project was to be completed in four months, and the team members would be expected to work as many hours as required to complete it within that time frame.

All eight employees were enthusiastic about their mission, even though they knew it would require many extra hours. They were committed to the project and to Jack, the manager who had assigned them to it.

Work was progressing ahead of schedule, and team members had established a productive and enjoyable working rapport when, four weeks into the project, disaster struck. One of the employees, Roger, lost control of his car while traveling along a dark, curvy road and was critically injured. His injuries were severe and would require several surgeries and months of recuperation and rehabilitation.

The other team members were devastated, as was Jack. It was not feasible to move another employee onto the team at that time, so Jack decided to bring in someone new to fill Roger's spot.

Looking to keep the team—and the project—on track, Jack put out feelers looking for a good, and available, candidate to take Roger's place.

A friend from another company recommended that Jack consider Sarah, who was looking to get back to work after having left her former job to stay at home with her baby. Sarah, as Jack's friend reported, was extremely bright and articulate, as well as being a tireless worker.

What the friend didn't report, though, was that Sarah's coworkers at her previous job had breathed a big sigh of relief when she left and hoped she would never come back. Let's just say that Sarah had a bit of a problem getting along with other people.

Jack called in Sarah for an interview and was impressed with her composure and her energy. Obviously well prepared for the interview, Sarah wowed Jack with her answers to his questions. She was absolutely charming and, as a graduate of an Ivy League university with a record of volunteerism and civic participation as long as her arm, had an impressive resume, to say the least.

Thinking he'd found the perfect candidate, Jack hired Sarah. A week later, he introduced her to the other seven team members.

While Sarah may have appeared to be a dream candidate, it very soon became clear that she was anything but. It would have been difficult for anyone to come in and take over for Roger, who had a special connection to the rest of the team, but Sarah turned out to be a worst-case scenario.

She was arrogant, aloof, disparaging of the work that had already been completed, and unsympathetic to Roger's plight. She complained about the long hours she was forced to be away from her daughter, despite having been told in no uncertain terms what would be expected of her. Not only could she not work effectively with the other members of the team, she dragged down their overall performance because so much of their energy was consumed trying to deal with her difficult manner. The project began to falter, and all the fun of working as a team to achieve a goal was gone.

**What Jack Could—and Should—Have Done Differently
While Jack made the same mistake that Jessica did by**

hiring too quickly in order to fill a position, his decision was especially consequential because it threatened to derail an important project in which other team members were heavily invested.

In hiring Sarah, Jack made the following mistakes:

- He relied on intuition and general impressions instead of using a highly structured approach to gather specific data on which to base his hiring decision.
- He did not consider whether Sarah would fit into the company's culture.
- He did not involve the other team members by consulting with them on what characteristics they thought were important in a new hire.
- He did not consider the personal dynamics that might be present between Sarah and the rest of the team.

As many managers have before, Jack decided when he first saw Sarah that he liked her, and he spent the rest of the interview time selectively listening and watching for data to confirm his initial opinion. Sarah's smart, ready answers, the glowing recommendation she had received, and her impressive resume provided the confirmation he was looking for.

A whole host of factors can contribute to decisions we make based on first impressions. Obviously, we can be affected by a candidate's looks and age. But managers also form impressions based on what they've read or heard about a candidate. Often, we don't even realize that certain expectations have formed in our minds prior to meeting the person. We might have a preset idea of how a Harvard graduate will present. If the person before us doesn't match that expectation, it can hamper our ability to interview effectively.

Information contained in a resume can predispose an interviewer to liking or disliking a candidate. For instance, does the person come from a section of the country where you once enjoyed living because of the friendly, welcoming people? It's important to be aware of our internal biases and make sure we don't allow them to influence our hiring decisions.

The Importance of Considering Company Culture Again, acting in haste to fill a position, Jack neglected to consider whether or not Sarah would fit the company's culture. Every company has a corporate culture, regardless of whether it's defined, that sets expectations and guides employees on how to behave. Some companies such as Disney, GE, and Ritz Carlton have cultures that are rich in tradition and clearly affect daily operations. Employees can freely describe these cultures, and the companies celebrate their cultures and use them to teach new employees what is expected of them in the areas of customer service, quality, productivity, and teamwork.

A company's culture needs daily reinforcement from management, especially when it comes to hiring. Disney, GE, and Ritz Carlton are all outstanding at recruiting employees who will fit their cultures, and they make the priority of corporate culture clear to prospective employees.

Not everyone works for a company that reveres and promotes its culture. But every company has a corporate culture, and your job as a manager is to identify those behaviors that make up the culture. You need to know how your department fits with this culture and how to hire employees who will fit into the culture.

What Do Employees Want in a Coworker?

While Jack was hurrying to find someone to replace Roger on the ongoing software project, he neglected to consider the other team members, who were still upset over Roger's accident and stressed out by the extra work they'd taken on.

This team of seven workers could have told Jack the qualities they wanted in Roger's replacement, and they would not have been what Sarah brought to the table. This would have saved Jack, and the members of the project team, a lot of grief. Remember that when you hire a warm body, it doesn't always get a warm reception from other workers. Employee complaints about a poorly performing coworker can exceed by far the complaints about working a person short. When the warm body doesn't work out, you, as a manager, are stuck with two problems: You need to get rid of the bad hire, and you have to go back to the drawing board to find a qualified candidate.

By hiring Sarah, Jack not only risked derailing the project his team was working on, he also risked losing their respect and the favorable working relationship they enjoyed.

4 Think Through Your Hiring Options

In the day-to-day operations of a business, identifying and hiring new employees can be a real drag. The process requires time and resources, and it can disrupt other work. Still, when you consider the importance of hiring smart, and the possible consequences of not doing so, it's clear that the process really should be awarded priority status.

So, instead of trotting out the same old hiring process and doing it the way it's always been done, take a little time to think through your options and perhaps come up with a better way.

For a variety of reasons, many managers choose to go it alone when it comes to hiring. They will perform the entire process, from analyzing the position to making the job offer, on their own.

Those attitudes, it should be said right up front, are not constructive. You should always involve others when it comes to hiring new employees. And a primary source of hiring help should be the employees you already have.

Smart managers understand that getting employees involved with hiring serves several purposes, including these:

- Invests them in the hiring process
- Puts everyone on the same page regarding job responsibilities and expectations
- Makes them more supportive of the new hire
- Increases willingness to help orient the new hire

The level and degree of employee participation in the hiring process can vary. Some managers might choose to involve employees at every level, while others limit involvement. Generally, the higher the level of the position, the more people should be involved with the hiring decision. Any position that interfaces with many aspects of the organization, such as a human resources director, can benefit from a group hiring process.

While you may not choose to involve employees in every step of the hiring continuum, they should always have some level of input in selecting new team members. That input can occur at any point across the continuum of hiring.



Where Employee Input Is Necessary At a minimum, a manager needs staff input

At a minimum, a manager needs staff input for the first two steps on the hiring continuum, conducting a position analysis and identifying competencies. That's because nobody knows a position better than a coworker, and no one is more qualified to identify the competencies that an employee will need to possess in order to be successful in the position.

Even if in the past you held the position yourself, you should still consult with staff members. Over time, processes change, new technology is installed, and expectations are altered. You might also consider getting input from people in departments with which the new employee will interact on a regular basis.

Gathering input necessary for these first two steps doesn't have to be formal. You'll just need employees to answer a few questions, such as these:

- What are the essential skills a person must have to do this job?
- What behaviors are important for the person's success?
- What problems will the new employee face on a daily basis?
- Could you describe the ideal person for this job?

In a department where many people perform similar work, such as RNs on a nursing unit or employees in a large billing office, you might want a more formal process for developing a job analysis and determining competencies. Invite several employees to a meeting to help you analyze the position, develop the competencies, and evaluate the job environment. These processes can be completed in advance, so that when a position opens, you're ready to recruit. Some companies, in fact, require that these steps be taken for every position in the company.

Involving Employees in the Interview Process Many organizations these days are promoting peer interviewing, a technique that's been used successfully by companies such as Amazon .com, IBM, and Motorola. The process gives members of a work group input into who gets to join their team—something that clearly would have benefited Jack and his team in the previous section.

Large and small companies have reported benefits gained from peer interviewing, especially in employee retention.

Heed this word of caution about peer interviewing, however: It can be tricky to pull off because you've got to get the timing right and make sure everyone understands his or her role in the process.

Peer interviews can be accomplished as a group activity or conducted one on one. It's important, though, that every peer interviewer have time with every candidate. If interviews are to be conducted separately, don't overburden the candidate by setting up six or eight interviews for the same day—four probably should be the maximum.

To avoid having interviewers repeat the same questions, each one should be assigned an area on which he or she will concentrate. One might explore how well the candidate fits the company's culture, while others would concentrate on experience, skill competencies, leadership qualities, the prospect's enthusiasm about the company, and so forth.

You can even assign specific questions for each interviewer. This technique is particularly helpful if you're conducting a group interview, during which interviewers sometimes tend to lose focus.

As the manager, it's your job to ensure all involved are prepared to interview. Each participant must understand his or her role and be well versed and up to date on the legal aspects of interviewing.

Certain key positions might require a formal search committee. Search committees often work with outside recruiters who conduct national searches for candidates. Because of the expense, organizations typically use search firms only for key positions, such as president or vice president. The search firm writes position specifications, identifies candidates, and guides the interview processes.

Regardless of the extent to which you involve employees, you, as the hiring manager, must make sure that everyone understands how the selection process will work and has the same expectations regarding interviewing and hiring.

This will keep everyone on the same page and help employees to be productive, invested, and happy.

5 Set a Realistic Time Frame

You've already read two examples in this chapter about managers who rushed to fill vacant positions and were left to clean up major messes as a result. Hopefully, you've already caught on to the point of this tip: Take your time when hiring employees.

As a manager, it's natural that you want to fill your open position. You may be on the receiving end of a considerable amount of pressure from other employees to do so. An open position, after all, can result in more work for employees, decreased quality, and compromised customer service. Nobody wants those things to occur.

On the other hand, nobody benefits from a bad hire, and rushing to fill a position can easily result in just that. Because a new hire is a major investment, you should approach the process the same way that you'd negotiate buying a million-dollar piece of equipment—with great care and forethought. To end up with a Smart Hire, you'll need to follow the seven-step Smart Hire process. The steps of this process, which are listed below, will be covered in detail in later chapters of this book.

THE SEVEN-STEP SMART HIRING PROCES

Step 1: Know the job for which you're recruiting.

Step 2: Advertise for candidates.

Step 3: Interview candidates.

Step 4: Select the best.

Step 5: Negotiate the offer.

Step 6: Coordinate references, background checks, and physicals; leave time for prospective employee to give notice at current job.

Step 7: Initiate orientation and training.

Okay, you say, that's pretty straightforward. But how long does the process take? What's a reasonable time to have a position remain open while you advertise and interview and negotiate?

According to a report by the Saratoga Institute, the average time to fill a position is fifty-two days. The key word here, of course, is *average*. Some jobs can be filled almost immediately, while others take as long as six months. Much of how long it will take you to replace an employee depends on how prepared you are to rehire when a job opens and the type of job market you'll be working with.

Keeping the Hiring Time As Short As Possible You'll have a real leg up on replacing an employee if you've been keeping up with the jobs and employees you supervise. Hopefully, you have an up-to-date job description for each position and have reviewed the education and experience requirements in the not-too-distant past.

While there is no written-in-stone timetable when it comes to bringing a new employee on board, you can keep the hiring time to a minimum with the following suggestions:

- Maintain close ties with your human resources department on an ongoing basis so when an opening occurs, you have a good rapport with the HR people you'll need to rely on. Make it known that you'd like to have the position filled as quickly as possible, and be ready to demonstrate your own commitment by being

flexible to interview schedules. Have the information that the HR department will need in order to advertise the position, including a brief description and education and experience requirements. Be ready to recommend specialty journals and Web sites on which the ad should be listed.

- Get your team on board if you're going to be setting up peer interviews or involving them (as hopefully you will be) in other parts of the hiring process. Let them know they may have to be flexible with their time in order to be involved.
- Let the HR department help you by prescreening resumes. This can be a time-consuming, tiresome job that someone other than you is perfectly capable of handling. When you receive a batch of possible interview candidates, make it no longer than twenty-four hours until you've identified the ones you want to interview.
- Plan to spend at least an hour with each candidate, at least two to three hours for a management position. Plan your interviews accordingly, and remember that interviews will eat up a lot of time. Try to schedule them close together to keep the process moving along and providing the added benefit of helping you to keep the candidates fresh in your mind.
- Once you identify the best candidate and make an offer, allow a minimum of twenty-four hours before you need a response. Be careful, though, of someone who needs a week to get back to you. He or she may be using your offer as leverage for a better deal elsewhere.
- The candidate you select will need to give notice when resigning from his or her current position. Staff positions typically offer two weeks notice and management personnel a month. Make sure the candidate uses this

time to complete his or her pre-employment physical and any other tasks that can be completed. A candidate who's left a current job without giving any notice should raise a red flag, as he or she could be a difficult employee.

- If your organization has a position review committee made up of senior managers who meet periodically to authorize recruitment of new or replacement positions, be prepared. Know when the group meets, who participates, and what paperwork is expected. If you don't get everything in on time and completely, your request will be put aside until the next meeting, meaning that weeks could be lost.

You're busy, and hiring employees is by no means your only responsibility. It can be tempting to shove this job aside until you've completed other tasks or projects, but, in the interest of your relationship with your employees, it's not a good idea. Your employees are looking to you to fill the position as quickly as possible. Keep them informed concerning your efforts and progress, and involve them when possible in the hiring process.

Be realistic with yourself and your employees. If you've learned anything from this chapter, it should be that smart hiring takes time—sometimes a lot of time. Keep your employees on board, and, if need be, explain to them your rationale for not rushing into a decision. When all is said and done, and there's a great, new employee on board, they'll appreciate it.

6 Learn from Past Hiring Mistakes

Hopefully, after reading most of this first chapter, you've learned a little about what to do—and what not to do—when hiring staff. Let's review some of the mistakes that have

been covered in the previous tips and consider how to avoid repeating those mistakes.

Jessica's Mistake When Hiring Mary

Jessica hired Mary because she was in a rush to fill a vacant position. Her employees, however, were anything but pleased with Jessica once they started working with Mary, who was nearly impossible to like and not very interested in getting along with other members of the team.

What Jessica should have learned, and what is important for you to remember, is that it's better to keep a position empty until you're sure you've got the right person to fill it than to attempt to appease employees by hiring someone.

Remember that it costs 150 percent of a yearly salary to recruit, hire, and train an employee, making a rush job a very costly mistake.

How to Avoid Making the Same Mistake As mentioned earlier in this chapter, you often can avoid rushing to fill a position by doing your homework ahead of time. Having a "perfect candidate" profile on hand for each position you oversee will help you to identify the qualifications and traits you're seeking. Keeping a file of possible applicants for each job also gives you a big jump when it comes time to fill a position. In addition, you should have detailed job descriptions for every position within your department in order to minimize time before you can begin to advertise a position.

Jack's Mistake When Hiring Sarah

Jack, too, was in a hurry to hire someone to replace Roger. Jack hired Sarah, who had been recommended by a friend at another company. What Jack forgot to consider was whether

Sarah had the traits to mesh with the culture of his company, which, clearly, she did not. By not taking this into consideration, Jack unwittingly may have jeopardized the careers of the other team members.

How to Avoid Making the Same Mistake Involve other team members in the hiring decision. Sarah was brought on board in the midst of a major project, but she was incapable of fitting in with the other team members. If they had been asked to be involved in the hiring process, they would have sent Sarah packing and hired someone with whom they could work effectively.

Nobody's Perfect, But We All Can Try Harder We all make mistakes, and we will continue to make them. The point is, once you've made a mistake, you need to wear it for a while. Spend some time thinking about what you did and what you should have done instead. Ask for input from your peers and employees, who will respect you for admitting you were wrong and asking for their opinions.

Make some notes on what occurred, and look at them when it's time to hire again. It's important to understand what has occurred and how, so that you can avoid making a similar mistake in the future. Finally, try not to let a mistake affect your morale or self-confidence, and don't let it discourage you from acting decisively in the future. Mistakes happen. Some of them are more costly than others, but hardly any are irrevocable.

CHAPTER 2

The Challenge of Today's Job Market

7 Get a Grip on the Job Market

Just in case you haven't heard by now, the U.S. labor market is expected to face some rocky times. Forecasts concerning the American workforce range from cloudy to what some futurists are calling "the perfect labor storm." Here's what's going on.

The U.S. economy has been growing steadily in the new millennium, despite the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, wars, and record-breaking gasoline prices. Furthermore, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that the economy will continue to grow, although at a slower rate, through 2014, creating a steady need for greater numbers of qualified workers.

Government data, however, indicates that employers will find it difficult to hire the workers they need, and there will be severe worker shortages for the next generation, and perhaps beyond. Three primary reasons are cited for those predictions:

- *The aging of Baby Boomers (defined as those born between 1946 and 1964)*: The thing about the boomers is that there are so many of them—the sheer numbers are amazing. BLS statistics tell us that the number of workers who are fifty-five and older will increase by 49 percent between 2004 and 2014. That's almost five times the 10 percent growth predicted for the labor force

in general. What that means, of course, is that a whole lot of Baby Boomers are expected to retire within a short period of time, leaving a lot of job openings.

- *Decreasing numbers of younger workers:* While the fifty-five-and-over crowd is claiming more than its share of the work force, youths and prime-age workers (youths are considered to be those between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four and prime-age workers between twenty-five and fifty-four) will be losing numbers. So we'll have more jobs but fewer workers.
- Statistics indicate a 25 percent increase in the need for workers, and a 15 percent decrease in the number of workers who will be available.
- *Leveling out of productivity enhancements:* American workers have been pushed during recent years to work harder, longer, and more productively. While there's always room for improvement, it is generally agreed that employees are about maxed out as far as what they can accomplish. That means that more workers will have to be hired as additional tasks arise.

Prepare Now for Changing Times

One thing is certain. Managers who sit around waiting for these worker shortages to occur without doing anything to prepare for them will find themselves at a serious disadvantage in the future. You—and certainly your company's human resources department—should be doing everything possible to ensure that your company will be ready to facing these approaching challenges. Let's have a look at the types of preparations you can begin doing now:

- *Conduct manpower studies to clarify the age demographics of your staff.* Get an idea of how long

employees plan to work; many people no longer consider sixty-five the optimum retirement age.

- *Identify the workers who are critical to your operation.* Pinpoint the skills that are critical to the success of your business, and identify the workers who possess those skills. Work extra hard to keep those employees happy.
- *Model potential retirement scenarios.* If the three top people on an important employee team happen to all be the same age, what would happen if they retired within a few months of each other? Would you be prepared to keep that team moving ahead productively?
- *Elevate retention strategies.* Many companies come up with great incentives with which to retain management, but they overlook their vital cores of employees.
- *Make sure that every manager in your company is on board.* Understanding worker challenges of the future is important for every person in your company who is involved with the hiring process. Human resources metrics should be on every manager's scorecard.
- *Study the turnover data.* It's easy to get complacent about turnover when it's manageable on a company-wide basis. Without careful monitoring, though, you could face situations where important groups of employees leave the company within short time periods, leaving you with a worker deficit.
- *Keep an eye on immigration politics.* Some of the economic growth of the early 2000s is attributed to a steady supply of unskilled foreign labor. As you know, however, immigration is a political hot button, and no doubt it will continue to be.
- Companies that rely on unskilled workers, such as those in the service sector, retail, or facilities support, should be making contingency plans.

Where Worker Shortages Are Expected to Occur
While industries that depend on unskilled labor are keeping a close eye on immigration policies, those that need educated, specialized workers are also feeling pressured.

Right now there are shortages of key jobs, including nurses and, in some areas doctors; math, science, and special education teachers; and engineers. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts that by 2012, the United States will experience a deficit of ten million skilled workers.

Employers are already feeling pressured, not only because of a dwindling field of candidates but also because of the quality of the candidates. Despite a push to improve education levels in U.S. schools, basic writing, grammar, and spelling skills are declining.

Even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which has traditionally shied away from involvement in school reform issues at the state and local levels, has taken a stand for improving American education. The chamber is keeping track of school performances of students in every state in order to help businesses decide where to set up operations, and it is cooperating with other organizations to greatly increase the number of students graduating from college with degrees in engineering, mathematics, and science.

The key for employers, then, is not only to attract top-notch employees but to retain them as well. Surveys show that, in addition to salary and benefits, workers are concerned with job flexibility, the caliber of their coworkers, and whether or not their efforts are recognized. Older workers respond to phased retirement options, which allow them to stay on the job longer but gradually decrease the number of hours they work.

8 Understand the Needs of Employees

As a manager, you probably often catch yourself thinking that it is just impossible to make—much less keep—everyone happy. It's no surprise that you would feel that way, given that it's not unheard of for four different generations to be working together in one company.

Those generations, labeled the Matures, the Baby Boomers, the Xers, and the Millennials, all have different needs and expectations. Each group has its own set of values and motivations. Effective managers will learn what makes each generation tick and how to address the concerns of each in a manner that each generation can relate to.

Let's look a bit more closely at some of the characteristics of each generation.

The Greatest Generation

The Matures comprise the oldest generation, which has become known as the Greatest Generation due to retired news anchor and bestselling author Tom Brokaw's book of that name. Born between 1909 and 1945, this generation was shaped by two world wars, with the country's worst economic depression in between. The Matures have retained the values of security and thriftiness and carried them through the decades. This generation, led by men such as George Bush Sr., Jimmy Carter, and Billy Graham, values loyalty and follows the rules. Those values are exhibited by employees from the Mature generation, along with traits such as:

- Strong work ethic

- Respect for the importance of productivity and timeliness
- Belief that seniority should be the basis for promotions

Most members of this group, if they are still working, are at the end of their careers. They may reduce their hours in preparation to retire altogether.

The Baby Boomers

While many of the Matures are starting to slow down and ease back on the time they spend on the job, the Baby Boomers are at the height of their power. Born between 1946 and 1964, these members of the “Me Generation” are running the major institutions of the country. Say Baby Boomer, and influences like Bill Gates, Bill Clinton, and Oprah Winfrey come to mind.

The Baby Boomers are known in the workplace for characteristics that include the following:

- Ability to challenge the rules
- An excellent work ethic and willingness to work long hours
- Value on interaction with other workers through meetings and
- “face time”

Baby Boomers can be a volatile substance when mixed with younger generations, who tend to view them as workaholics who value long hours over productivity and creativity. The Boomers’ mix of respect and mistrust for technology can alienate younger workers, who have never known life without the Internet.

Generation X

The Xers, born between 1965 and 1978, are the smallest generation. Shaped by the events of Watergate, the Gulf War, and the fall of the Berlin Wall, Gen Xers are marred by

skepticism. As the first generation to live with widespread divorce and to be told that they may not be able to achieve the American dream of a better life than their parents have had, the members of Generation X have developed distinct characteristics, including these:

- Value on independence and self-sufficiency; don't expect the government or a company to take care of them in old age
- Emphasis on output and productivity rather than super-long work hours
- Less emphasis on teamwork; would just as soon work on their own
- Little regard for corporate protocol and hierarchy
- Loyal to individuals, not companies
- Fully embrace technology

Generation Xers, who are just beginning to move up into management positions, are expected to manage much differently than the current generation of managers.

The Millennials

Born between 1979 and 1988, the Millennials, sometimes referred to as Generation Y, are just beginning to enter the workforce. This generation is shaped by the Oklahoma City bombing, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the Internet. With parents who have worked tirelessly to protect and enhance their children's self-esteem, the Millennials are an overly protected generation.

Born into a world of computers, laptops, cell phones, and space travel, they are fully adapted to technology. Raised in the tech-boom era of the 1990s, many members of this generation have been given much, without anything expected of them in return.

Although their presence in the workforce is new and still limited, some traits they possess have already been identified. Millennials tend to behave as follows: •

Frequently seek and expect positive reinforcement for their work • Look for mentors who can work closely with them • Have difficulty accepting suggestions and criticism Some managers view the Millennials as being needy, while others see them as merely eager workers.

You can see, then, how employees of different ages and upbringing bring different needs to the workplace. As a manager, it's important to recognize and be responsive to the traits and characteristics of each group, while maintaining a productive work environment.

9 Work with What You've Got

A new manager typically takes the time to get to know employees. What sorts of skills do they possess? What are their strengths and weaknesses? How do the members click as a team? What are the dynamics between individuals? In time, however, it's easy to become a little complacent about keeping up with the day-to-day goings on within the team.

If your team works well and is effective, you may assume that nothing will change, even when factors for change are present. Or you might acknowledge that there are problems but find ways to work around them instead of solving them.

Good managers keep up with what's going on with a team and are constantly aware of issues that can affect the manner in which team members interact and work together. Some of those factors include the following: • *Age*: Is there a wide range, or is everyone pretty close?

- *Diversity*: Are there a lot of differences, or is everyone of a similar background?
- *Turnover*: Is there a core group that remains while the new hires come and go?

- *Attitude:* How do team members treat another? Are there “in groups” and “out groups?” Do some work harder and achieve more than others?

All of these factors, and others, influence workers and help to define a team. The important thing for a manager to do is to be aware of the dynamics of the team and the role of each employee. Skilled managers not only recognize what’s going on among team members, they can work to keep potentially damaging situations from harming the team. Let’s have a look at two smart managers who did exactly that.

When a Team Becomes Too Close

It’s great to have a friendly atmosphere among your team, but there are times when members can be too close. Kelly, the director of a respiratory therapy department in a small community hospital, experienced this firsthand.

Her fifteen-member department was competent, tenured, and very close. In fact, the team experienced seven years without a single turnover— practically unheard of in a hospital setting. Then one therapist retired, and another relocated due to a spouse’s job change. Kelly hired five new therapists over the next three years, none of whom stayed longer than twelve months. Kelly assumed the new hires were the problem; it was an easy assumption, with her tenured staff complaining constantly about their new coworkers.

Kelly tried hiring novices, experienced therapists, and those in the middle, but every one of them drew complaints from the veteran staff members. In an “ah-ha moment,” Kelly finally realized that the staff was simply refusing to let any of the new employees into their close-knit group.

Understanding that the office dynamic had to change, Kelly actively involved her team in the search for new

employees. By sharing the turnover rate, current age demographics, and job market trends, Kelly showed the staff that change was necessary to avoid constantly training new employees. By evaluating her team and helping them to see the big picture, Kelly got the best of both worlds. She had a wealth of suggestions coming from her tenured employees, including welcome breakfasts and “buddy” programs to make everyone feel welcome. Kelly also managed to preserve the team’s unity and closeness, one of its best qualities.

Turning Negatives into Positives Gene also was in a difficult position. Hired to

Gene also was in a difficult position. Hired to manage a billing department for a mid-sized financial services company, Gene ran a department with the distinction of claiming the worst turnover and highest error rates in the company. Gene’s challenge was to cut the turnover rate in half and bring the error rate down to industry standards. After studying exit interviews compiled by human resources, Gene noticed the following trends:

- The majority of those who left were well educated and relatively hard working.

- Most employees who left complained about their initial training.
- Most who left did so to take a better job.

After assessing the situation, Gene realized that these recent college graduates were using his department to gain financial experience that would land them better positions. He considered hiring less-educated employees who might stay longer, but then he realized that he could use the current situation to his advantage.

Gene set up comprehensive training and orientation programs, which not only resulted in fewer errors but

greatly improved employee morale. Previously, employees had been left to flounder and teach themselves, which they did, but at a high price. In addition, he convinced the senior management team of the company to recruit from among his best staff for positions within the company. While his department's turnover remained high, the turnover benefited the company overall.

The lesson from Kelly and Gene is that sometimes you have to experiment a bit before you find a solution that works. Also, you need to work with the team you've got, allowing team members to emphasize strengths and de-emphasize weaknesses.

10 Develop Tools to Attract Applicants in Tight Fields We've all heard about shortages of nurses, lab technicians, urban teachers, automobile mechanics, and ministers. So if you're a manager who needs those workers, or workers in other jobs for which the market is very tight, how are you going to attract them to your company, hire them, and get them to stay?

You're going to have to develop special tools or incentives to encourage workers. In addition, you may have to change your expectations and be a little flexible regarding whom you hire and the circumstances under which you hire. If the best auto mechanic who replied to your ad has special circumstances that would require him to start work at six in

the morning and leave at two in the afternoon, you might just want to consider opening up the shop earlier than you're used to.

Make Prospective Employees Want to Buy into the Job Carlos Ponce was hired in 1998 to recruit and hire teachers for Chicago's school system—a tough assignment, to be sure. Ponce went in with a three-fold strategy that yielded results.

Number one, he set his sights high, recruiting teachers from top colleges such as Harvard and Columbia. Secondly, he targeted potential employees whom he identified as being passionate and willing to work under adverse conditions because they believed in what they were doing and wanted to make a difference.

The third strategy was to sell the position as not just a job but a call to battle against inequity and social injustice. Ponce was, as he put it, giving prospective employees the opportunity to “change one little corner of the world.”

Ponce didn't attract prospective teachers looking to make the highest salaries and work in well-to-do, suburban settings, but that wasn't what he was looking for. He asked for, and attracted, teachers who felt a calling.

It's Not Only about the Salary

A competitive salary is important, but sometimes it's not enough to attract the employees you need. In some fields, and nursing is a classic example, employers need to go the extra mile to find the employees they need.

Several years ago, the Northern California Region of Kaiser Permanente, the largest not-for-profit health-care agency in the country, took the industry lead by instituting programs that greatly improved working conditions and benefits for

nurses. Salaries were increased, retirement health benefits guaranteed, a pension established, work conditions improved with increased staffing, and other measures taken.

Your company can have the greatest hiring incentives ever, but if potential workers don't know about them, your list of applicants will come up short. Make sure that hard-to-fill positions are properly and sufficiently advertised in a manner that will attract attention.

As a result, the region was able to hire 71 percent more nurses and reduce the rate at which they left by 47 percent during the first year. Clearly, Kaiser Permanente offered candidates what they were looking for, and the company reaped great benefits from doing so.

Think Outside of the Box

When looking to attract and hire hard-to-find employees, you have to consider not only what you're looking for, but what they are looking for, as well. Every person who applies for a job brings with them their own needs and circumstances. When working to hire for hard-to-fill positions, you should consider the circumstances of applicants and what might serve as incentives to get them on board.

An increasing number of workers are members of the "sandwich generation," those caring both for children and aging parents. Being able to work flexible hours, telecommute, or job share may serve as huge incentives to this group.

Workers with young children have particular needs, as do aging workers. Finding special incentives that meet particular needs of applicants will provide you with the tools necessary to identify and hire hard-to-find employees.

11 Plan for Future Needs While Filling the Jobs of Today Hiring is an ongoing process. Jack, the CEO of a small engineering company, once said he felt his job was to always be on the lookout for great talent who would be an asset to his company. Whenever he meets someone impressive at a conference or professional meeting, he gets a business card, makes a few notes of his own, and files it away for future reference. Jack also tries to keep in touch with the promising employee to see how his or her career is progressing. Whenever he has a job to fill, his first stop is that file to check if there might be any potential candidates.

Jack is proactive, rather than reactive, which is a great trait in a manager. He's not left scrambling every time he needs to hire a new worker, and he normally doesn't have long gaps between the time that an employee leaves and another one is hired.

Using Conferences to Your Advantage

Conferences, meetings, and professional societies are great ways to identify potential candidates, as well as terrific places to promote your company. Instead of merely

attending conferences, challenge yourself and your staff to take advantage of any opportunities to make a presentation at a conference or professional society, as this can have the following advantages:

- Help others learn about your firm.
- Highlight your company's successes.
- Build a reputation for your organization as an employer of choice.
- Provide your staff with an opportunity to highlight personal achievements.

Making a Name for Your Company

A sure-fire way to attract enough potential employees is to establish a good reputation; one that makes people want to work for you. There are several moves you can make to help boost your company's image:

- Place informational ads in professional journals.
- Sponsor conferences or events.
- Provide giveaways for conference participants.

The key is to get your company's name out there in a positive way, so that people want to work for you. These strategies require time and commitment, especially if you manage an area where it's hard to find staff, but they can really pay off in the long run. Don't be afraid to involve your human resources department or upper-level management. Attracting staff is—or at least it should be—everybody's job.

The Hidden Resource

The best resources for identifying and recruiting job candidates often are right in front of you. Your own employees can be great sources of referrals. When Diane, the manager of the public relations department of a mid-sized company, needed to hire several new employees, she looked to her current staff for referrals. But for one reason or another, some were hesitant to recommend people that they knew.

To combat that hesitation, Diane initiated a referral bonus program. If the person an employee referred applied and was hired for a job, the employee received a bonus.

Bonuses like these range from company to company, varying from a \$50 token of appreciation to \$10,000 at a company where talent is scarce. Some employers balk at the thought of handing out these bonuses, but they work to the employer's advantage in several ways:

- Most employees are careful with their referrals. They don't want to recommend an employee who would potentially reflect poorly on themselves.
- It's often less expensive for an employer to pay a bonus to an existing employee than to pay to advertise for job openings.
- Employees hired through an employee referral program are likely to succeed because their education tends to be similar to that of existing employees and they tend to have similar work ethics, helping them blend with the team culture.

It's easy to become complacent about your employee situation when day-to-day operations are proceeding smoothly, but it's not a good idea. Staying on top of the hiring situation is beneficial to both you and your employees.

CHAPTER 3

Conducting a Job Analysis

12 Look Before You Leap

The key to finding the potential employee to best fill a position lies in the interview. By effectively using the interview period, you, your team, and your new employee will all benefit. Remember that preparation is essential; being prepared during interviews is going to save time and money down the road. It's also important to remember that the interview isn't just for you to learn about a potential employee. It's also the chance for a candidate to learn about a potential job.

Being Up Front During the Interview

It's important while interviewing to allow candidates to ask questions about the position and to tell them what the job will entail. Employees who are misled during an interview are far more likely to be unhappy in their jobs. Their performance will slip, and before long, they'll be looking for a way out.

Avoiding This Mistake

This situation can be easily avoided, although it takes work on both ends of an interview. The following suggestions will help:

- Know the job you're hiring for.
- Study the skills, abilities, and qualifications needed to be successful at the job.

- Use your interview time to determine if the qualifications of the employee match those needed for the job.

In other words, go into an interview with an accurate description of the job and a clear expectation of the candidate best suited to fill the position. Conducting an assessment of your own company beforehand could help. Think about the goals of your company and what qualities are common to successful employees. Remember to think about the people already on your team, and consider what kind of person will fit in. This will not only help you find the right candidate, it will also prevent any potential employees from being misled about the company.

Encourage the candidates you interview to ask questions about the position. If they feel comfortable, you'll be able to get them to ask what's really on their minds. Tackling these questions during the interview is a sure-fire way to make sure there's no confusion on their first day. Explaining the job description accurately is essential, and it's also easy. It requires a bit of work on the part of the interviewer, who needs to maintain familiarity with the position, but will save time and money in the end.

13 Know the Job You Are Recruiting For

It's a scenario to be avoided at all costs, and yet it happens far too often.

A candidate is brought in for an interview, and on the surface, she seems great. She gives you all the right answers to your questions and seems sincere about them. You don't know all the details of what the job entails, but you get the feeling that the candidate would blend in well with the rest of the team because she talks about being a

team player. She and the position you're seeking to fill seem to be a good match, and you offer her the job. She accepts, begins two weeks later, and your prediction comes true. Your new employee has a great attitude, and she gets along well with the rest of the team. Unfortunately, she's completely unqualified to perform the job she's been hired for.

Research the Job Before You Start the Interview

The problem, as you may have gathered, is that the manager interviewing the candidate did not have a full understanding of what the position entailed. As a result, he didn't ask pointed questions about the candidate's past experience because he didn't understand what kind of experience he should be looking for. He was unprepared to evaluate her responses to questions regarding past experience, so he glossed over those questions, focusing instead on finding out if the candidate was a team player and other, general types of information.

The most important questions to ask during a job interview are those about previous experience. You need to know what the candidate has done that's prepared her for this job. Taking the time to thoroughly research the job you're looking to fill can be time-consuming, but as you've already learned, hiring the wrong person is costly in time, dollars, and employee morale.

This type of story is not unusual. The trend in business today is to have flat organizations with fewer managers. Frequently, managers have multiple areas reporting to them. In time, a good manager gets to know each of the areas, but if a job becomes vacant before he's mastered the learning, the interview may not be fully productive.

Avoiding the "Nice Guy" Trap

To help assure that you hire a really qualified candidate for a position and not merely a nice guy (or woman) who appears on the surface to be a good fit, keep in mind the following recommendations:

- *Talk to staff members with similar positions.* Because they do the job every day, they'll be able to tell you what skills and traits are needed to perform well.
- *Allow other team members to have a role in the interview process.* Give them a very specific role: to ask questions that will pinpoint whether or not the candidate has the skills to do the job.
- *Get in touch with a manager at another organization that has a similar position.* He or she can provide insight on what they look for in an employee.

You're Not the Lone Ranger

Take another look at the suggestions above. They point out loudly and clearly that, when it comes to hiring, it's better to involve others than to go it alone. Those most qualified to help you are those who already know the job—or a similar job—that you're hiring for.

If Linda has been working in the marketing department for years, why wouldn't you rely on her knowledge of what a position in the marketing department entails? You've got a wealth of information at your disposal. To ignore it is not smart management.

You've already read that involving others in the interviewing process is a good idea because it allows different viewpoints and areas of expertise to become involved and ask questions that a lone interviewer may overlook.

Seeking help from another organization isn't a bad idea, either; in fact, it's just the opposite. Most people (yes, even

those outside of your organization) are willing to help others learn. Take a lesson from Grace, who was hired to manage a marketing and public relations department. Part of her responsibility was to oversee the planning function, a two-person department.

During the interview, however, there was practically no mention of that area of her responsibility. That department, declared the vice president, ran itself, so Grace shouldn't be concerned about it. She would have plenty of time down the road to immerse herself in the planning function and find out how it worked.

Well . . . Grace had been at the job for only two weeks when, much to her horror, both members of the planning staff were recruited to another firm—in the middle of a strategic planning process, no less. It couldn't get much worse for Grace, who suddenly found herself under pressure to quickly hire new planning people. The problem was that she couldn't complete the job analysis because she didn't know what the job entailed.

Grace quickly realized that starting the interview process would leave her vulnerable to passing over good candidates since she wasn't sure what she was looking for. Finally, at the suggestion of a trusted friend, Grace called a nearby firm with a large planning department. Since her company didn't directly compete with this one, she was invited to visit their planning department, where she learned a lot about jobs very similar to those for which she was about to begin hiring.

The Moral of the Story

Because Grace wasn't afraid to reach out and ask for help, she was able to learn what she needed to fill the open positions in her own planning department. The end result

was that Grace hired two qualified, capable individuals, and the planning function continued to run smoothly.

14 Develop a Perfect-Employee Profile

It's true that no one is perfect, and nothing highlights this fact of life like the interview process. Every candidate, no matter how great he or she might appear, is missing something—some quality or attribute that you would really like for him or her to possess. No one person is likely to possess all the qualities you're seeking. All you can hope to do is find the best person for the job. That's not always the no-brainer it might at first appear to be, but there are ways to make it easier.

To start out, you'll need to develop a position specification, which outlines the behaviors a person must demonstrate in a particular job. It encompasses three important areas to consider:

- Experience and technical requirements
- Behaviors and competencies necessary for success
- Ability to blend with company culture

Each of these areas is important, but they need to be looked at as a package when you're evaluating a candidate. Research has shown that the relationship between the three dimensions determines where a person will fall on the spectrum from an ideal candidate to a poor candidate. The goal is to hire a person who is strong in all three components.

Understanding the Position Specification

Let's have a closer look at each of the three areas mentioned above:

- *Experience and technical requirements:* This should summarize education, training, and experience needed to perform well.
- There's always a danger of setting these requirements too high and risking excluding some qualified candidates, so make sure to set realistic expectations. On the other hand, requirements set too low may discourage qualified candidates from applying out of fear that they won't receive challenging work and proper compensation.
- *Behaviors and competencies required for success:* These are the skills and work habits necessary to perform well in a position.
- These skills are acquired throughout life, and they transfer from job to job. They often define how a person approaches work. You can identify and define critical competencies by studying high performers in the same position and noting the behaviors that make high performers stand out. Some behaviors to watch for include high standards of quality, a positive approach to work, and the ability to initiate projects or keep them moving ahead.
- *Ability to blend with company culture:* It is helpful to identify candidates who will fit into the culture of your organization by seeking those with similar values and attitudes. An employee whose work style is radically different from the rest of the team is likely to fail. Time after time, managers report they had an employee who had all the education and work experience required to do the job. Because that person couldn't fit in, however, he or she failed. It's sometimes difficult to identify exactly why an employee is failing because of the subtlety with

which he or she exhibits critical behaviors. Organizations value different qualities and place emphasis on various behaviors such as teamwork, risk taking, and chain of command.

Hiring for Long-Term Job Success

Ideally, you'll interview candidates who are strong in all three areas.

They'll have the desired experience and technical skills, the behavioral qualities and competencies you're looking for, and they will fit in well with company culture. It's important to have a clear understanding, however, of how to prioritize those three components.

Often, managers place the highest priority on technical requirements and experience. Research, however, demonstrates those are the least important factors when predicting success on the job. The most important factor for success is exhibiting the desired behaviors and competencies.

A reasonably intelligent person often can learn the skills necessary to perform a job. Company culture can be cultivated and learned. Behaviors such as indifference toward high quality or lack of motivation to keep a project on track, however, are indicative of a problem employee.

Obviously, the goal is to find the individual who matches all three elements. But if that's not possible, choosing the candidate with the highest match on behaviors/competencies will increase your chances of getting a great hire.

Once you've formulated a position specification, don't hesitate to share it with your employees. Better yet—get them to help you write it. Staff members who perform the job every day will be able to provide insight on hiring a successful candidate.

With a carefully thought-out employee profile, you and your team will understand the qualities you're seeking in job candidates and ensure that the interviewing and hiring processes will proceed smoothly.

15 Assess the Likely Pool of Prospective Candidates

A job has opened up, and the position specifications have been written. Now what? It's time to take a long, hard look at the job market. Understanding the job market for the positions you oversee is vital when it comes to hiring because it can help you to gauge how long it might take to fill a position. You'll need to consider the following factors:

- Proximity and number of available candidates
- Reputation of your company as a good—or not so good—place to work
- Pay and benefits for the open job

These factors will have a lot to do with determining how long you can expect it will take to fill the open position. Maybe you're lucky to be located in an area where there are plenty of candidates. Or maybe you aren't.

It also depends on the reputation of your company. If word has gotten around that it's not a great place to work, or candidates can receive higher pay and better benefits elsewhere, you might be in for the long haul.

Making Your Own Luck

If the perfect candidate doesn't sail through your doors on the very first try, ace the interview, and proceed to excel in

the position, there are ways to make your own luck when searching for an employee.

Consider setting up a training program within your organization. This will allow you to hire employees with more general skills who can be trained to specific tasks. You might also think about partnering with a local college or university and creating an internship program. The point is to establish and maintain a pool of possible candidates who are ready to go when a job opens. Following are more suggestions for assessing the likely pool of candidates:

- Talk to your employees. They may have friends from college or previous employment who would be great candidates for your company.
- Talk to friends at companies with similar positions. Maybe they're downsizing or know of qualified applicants they had to turn away.
- Use your company's Web site. A "join our team" function that allows prospective candidates to submit applications at any time creates an ongoing pool of applicants and helps you to keep track of available talent.
- Maintain contact with those interested in working for you — even if you don't have a job opening at the time. When a position does become available, let them know and query them on their interest.
- Get to know some temporary employment firms in your area that can supply workers quickly, should you need them. Make sure the firms work with employees who possess the skills you require.
- Generate positive publicity about the company. If people want to work for you, finding them will be easy.

Keeping It Real

Finding good and qualified candidates doesn't have to be a nightmare, but you'll need to be realistic in understanding the job market and assessing the supply of candidates in your area. Here are a few tips:

- Establish a realistic time frame. Consider your geographic area, and determine how large the applicant pool is likely to be in relationship to where your company is located.
- Consider the popularity of the available job. Is it one for which there are likely to be a lot of qualified candidates, or does it require an advanced degree in an obscure subject? If so, expect the applicant pool to shrink considerably.
- Be prepared to wait it out. Though recruiting and hiring may not be your favorite aspects of your job, they are clearly necessary ones. Think how happy you and your employees will be when you do land a great addition to the team.

CHAPTER 4

Finding the Best Candidates

16 Determine Which Form of Advertising Works Best

Finding the best candidates for a job in your company is not always an easy task. A common mistake managers make is to assume that the best way to recruit staff is to place a print ad in the newspaper or a journal. The technological advances of the last decade have dramatically changed the face of advertising. In fact, in 2006, more money was spent for the first time advertising jobs online than in the classified sections of newspapers.

Online recruitment is so huge now that it accounts for 25 percent of all Internet advertising. Here are some highly regarded recruitment sites:

- Monster.com
- CareerBuilder.com
- Workopolis.com (for Canada)
- Craigslist.com

Getting Creative with Advertising

The Internet is the obvious place of choice for recruiting, but there are plenty of other resources. Let's look at some more methods of getting the word out concerning job openings within your company:

- Advertise open positions on your company's internal server, or, for that matter, on a bulletin board. Posting jobs internally is a great way to motivate staff and discover hidden talents in your own organization.
- Know your target audience, and know the journals it reads. A print ad in a well-read journal can be an extremely effective recruitment tactic. Plus, journals often add a free or discounted online ad when a print one is purchased.
- Use local resources. Smaller companies have been known to use school newsletters and church bulletins.
- If it becomes necessary to hire a large number of people at the same time, such as in the event of a new store opening, it may be effective to use a direct mail campaign. To mail letters to private homes, companies need to purchase mailing lists from an organization that compiles them.
- Go to colleges. Meet with the career-development offices of colleges in your region to tap the pool of recent graduates, or establish internship opportunities to attract students who may remain after graduation.
- Host an open house. If you want to attract a lot of people in a short period of time, this is an effective means of doing so. You need to make sure the event is well advertised, and be prepared to interview on the spot.
- Talk to people. It may be old-fashioned, but word of mouth still works. Tell as many people in the community as possible about your hiring needs.

The Big Picture

The key to advertising is to creatively exhaust all of your resources while getting as much bang for your advertising

buck as possible.

You can sink huge dollars into advertising, but it won't be effective if you're not reaching the right people.

Large firms normally have advertising or marketing departments that handle job advertisements, or the human resources staff may do so. If your company doesn't have someone available in that capacity, it may be worthwhile to hire a consultant to get your job advertising on track and ensure that you're getting your money's worth.

Different types of jobs call for different ways of advertising. It may be wise to seek expert advice on how to best spend your available advertising dollars.

17 Know When to Hire a Search Firm

If your recruitment and hiring processes need a boost, you might consider hiring a search firm. Search firms—also known as headhunters—are expensive, so it's important to know something about how they operate and the best way to find a good one. Typically, search firms are used to recruit middle- to senior-level management positions. Reputable search firms never accept payment from a job seeker; they work exclusively for the companies that pay their fees. There are two types of search firms: retained and contingency.

Retained Firms

A retained firm gets paid whether or not it produces an acceptable candidate for a particular job. These firms are similar to consultants.

A member of the firm will work with you, or another representative of your company, to create specifications for the position available and then find candidates who closely

match those specifications. A good search firm working on a retainer basis will develop a relationship with the company that has hired it. Some things to consider about retained search firms include these:

- Retained firms familiarize themselves with company culture and key stakeholders. This increases their chances of finding candidates who will be a good fit with the organization.
- The fee for a retained search firm typically is between 25 and 33 percent of the first year's salary of the open position.
- Retained firms are typically used to fill senior management positions.
- While the process is time consuming, retained search firms do a thorough job and have been known to produce great results.

Contingency Firms

Unlike a retained firm, a contingency search firm only gets paid if it fills a position. Companies may work with more than one firm at a time to identify candidates for the same position. Here are some things to know if you're considering using a contingency search firm:

- It's okay to give the same job assignment to more than one contingency firm; the cost will be the same. The first firm to place a candidate gets the fee.
- The average fee for a contingency firm is about 20 percent of the first year's salary.
- Contingency firms are known for speed and for identifying candidates who otherwise may not have come to the hiring company's attention.

To Spend or Not to Spend

Hiring a search firm—either retained or contingency—is expensive, but in many cases, it's also well worth the cost. The only job of a search firm is to find a candidate for a hiring company. Without the stresses of running a department while trying to fill an open position, the search firm can bring a clear focus to the hiring process. Search firms also have excellent resources to identify candidates.

If your company does decide to hire a search firm, you need to be willing to back off and turn over the hiring process to the firm. Even if you identify a prospective candidate through another source, you should refer him or her to the search firm. Interfering with the work of the firm can compromise the process and end up costing your company time and money.

Different search firms specialize in different industries, so take your time to find a good match. An auditing firm, for instance, shouldn't work with a search firm that specializes in filling positions for the apparel industry.

18 Make Technology Work for You

Advertising a position in the classified section of your area newspaper is fine, but by no means is it the only vehicle you should employ. Online recruiting is becoming more and more popular, particularly with young workers who have grown up with the Internet and are far more in tune with electronic information than print.

So how does an employer go about getting a position listed online, and on which sites should a job be listed? Let's have a look at what's available and how one site differs from another.

Different Vehicles for Advertising Your Job Openings

There are both free online job boards and for-fee sites. Which one to use depends largely on what type of position you'll be advertising.

High-level positions normally are better listed on for-fee job sites or with recruiters. For lower and mid-level jobs, however, free online posting services are fine.

Free—Or Almost Free—Services

Basically, there are two types of online posting services. The first is the job board, such as Craigslist (www.craigslist.org), and the other is the search engine, such as Oodle (www.oodle.com), which gathers information from other sites, based on location, necessary qualifications, and other factors.

Craigslist is an established resource for listing jobs (among other things) and has become a go-to resource for many job seekers. You can post for free in most areas although there's a fee for listings in some major cities. Craigslist posts about 1.5 million new jobs every month. Because jobs are listed geographically and by job category, however, job hunters only have to sort through the categories that interest them. Rules are in place regarding the placement of job ads, so be sure to check the terms of use on the Craigslist Web site before you post.

Oodle is another valuable site for both employers and job seekers. Oodle searches the biggest online job sites, including Monster, America's Job Bank, Career Builder, and others, as well as smaller online classified listings, and gathers them to be viewed in one place.

Monster and Other Comprehensive Listing Sites

There are a number of big job boards that have become hugely popular with both those looking to hire and to be

hired. They include the following:

- Monster.com
- Careerbuilder.com
- Hotjobs.com
- Job.com
- Headhunter.com
- Careers.Yahoo.com

These are just a few of those available. Many states have their own online job sites for state jobs, and there are regional sites and career-specialty sites. An employer pays to advertise a job on these sites, listing job criteria such as necessary education, career level, and location.

Potential employees review the sites and then submit resumes for review to prospective employers. Online job fairs, at which numerous employers and prospective employees are linked, also are becoming increasingly popular.

While advertising jobs online can seem complicated and perhaps intimidating, it's really quite simple once you get accustomed to the idea and the process. In this age of technology, don't be left behind by failing to take advantage of an opportunity.

19 Team Up with HR

It's a known fact that management and human resources do not always see eye to eye. A manager once described the human resources staff of his company as "speed bumps along the road to progress." He saw the HR staff as a separate entity from his team—one that constantly introduced rules and regulations that kept him from getting his job done. This particular manager viewed human

resources as a bureaucracy, full of red tape that impeded his progress.

The reality is that sometimes, a human resources department must act as a speed bump or even a roadblock. That's because human resources sometimes needs to prevent a manager from doing something that could hurt the company.

Recently, however, many human resource departments have shifted from being rule keepers to partners. The face of human resources is changing from being the office "watch dog" to an open partner. You may find that partner to be a tremendous benefit in helping you to identify candidates for a job in your department.

The Key to a Good Relationship with HR

Human resources and management should be partners, not enemies. To establish and maintain a good relationship with your HR staff, consider these tips:

- Get to know the members of human resources who are assigned to your area. It's important to become familiar with those you'll be working with before you need their services.
- Discuss your department's needs and goals with the HR staff. Don't be afraid to bring up potential obstacles you might face. HR is there to help you. Ask for input on problems.
- Know how the department operates. Does your HR department have one member who serves as a generalist, or are there several liaisons, such as a recruiter, employee-relations specialist, and a labor-relations expert? Be sure to know all of the services your HR department offers.

Keep in mind that HR managers have become less transactional and more strategic, which is to the advantage of the department manager. Invite your HR liaisons to your department and give them a chance to see how things are done. Seeing your operation firsthand gives HR reps a much better idea what they're looking for in a candidate.

Working Through Unresolved Issues

Despite the trend toward kinder and gentler HR departments, tensions between them and management remain. There's a perception among managers that HR will side with staff members during a dispute. This can result in resentment and a lack of trust between management and HR. If this is the case in your office, it's important to try to resolve issues causing tension. A human resources department fills a variety of needs within a company, and it should be fully utilized.

Developing and maintaining a good relationship with HR will only make your job easier when it comes to staffing needs, including recruiting and training. HR representatives also can provide guidance on performance evaluation and issues, and of course, can mediate disputes.

20 Know When to End the Search

Of course, getting the right employee to fill a job is vital to building a strong team and keeping your department strong and productive.

Sometimes, though, managers delay hiring because their standards are so high that no candidate can meet them.

Probably no candidate will possess every single characteristic that you would, ideally, like them to have. The trick here is to find good candidates and hire them while

they're available, thereby locking them into the job and filling the vacancies that may be holding back your team.

So how long is long enough to search for the perfect candidate?

What's Going On in the Job Market

If the position you're advertising is in a particularly tight job market, chances are you won't have the luxury of screening dozens of employees vying for the job. If you're getting only three or four resumes a week, you're better off bringing in candidates who look at least reasonably viable and beginning the interview process, especially if the job needs to be filled within a particular time frame.

Waiting until you've accumulated a couple dozen resumes before you start interviewing isn't a good idea in a tight job market, where another employer who gets a jump on you in the process is likely to hire a good employee (although perhaps not a perfect employee) right out from under you.

What's Going On With Your Team?

After you consider what's happening with the job market, or perhaps even before, take a good look at what's happening with your team. Are employees discouraged and demoralized because they've been working for the past six Saturdays to pick up the slack left by unfilled positions? Are projects getting behind or perhaps being left sitting due to a lack of workers? Are customers beginning to complain about the service they're getting?

If unfilled job openings are causing a problem for you and the rest of your team, it's time to get the job filled. Don't compromise on quality, but keep the needs of team members in mind.

Stick to Your Timetable for Hiring

While number 5 in Chapter 1 outlined the importance of allocating an adequate amount of time for the hiring process, don't allocate more time than you need.

If your hiring timetable calls for a six-week process, but you find a great candidate in three weeks, there is no reason to wait for three extra weeks before making an offer. If you have an unfilled position that's holding back the rest of your team, you certainly don't want that position open a minute longer than necessary.

Try to be realistic when you set your hiring time frame, and then know when it's time to end the search. You can't get on with interviewing and hiring until you've selected the applicable candidates.

CHAPTER 5

Getting Ready to Interview Job Candidates 21 Make Sure You Ask the Right Questions

So you're satisfied that you've identified some good prospective employees, and you're ready to begin interviewing. Before you pick up the phone to set up a time with the first candidate, however, take some time to prepare for what lies ahead.

You can interview a job candidate for hours without learning what you need to know about her. You might discover that she's an exceptionally pleasant person; that she recently moved from Houston, where she had lived for six years; and perhaps even that she has read the same business book that is lying on your desk. None of that information, however, will reveal whether or not the candidate will be a good fit for the job you're looking to fill or has the qualities you're seeking.

Asking Smart Questions to Learn More about Candidates Before you begin interviewing, you've got to know what kind of questions to ask. The next tip will discuss the legal implications of what you ask—and don't ask—and you should pay close attention to those. That aside, however, you need to have an understanding of how to ask questions that solicit usable, applicable information that will tell you a lot about the candidate in a short period of time.

To that end, you'll want to pretty much stay away from questions with yes-or-no answers, which don't really provide

much information. Your job is to get the candidate to open up and talk, giving you important insights into how she deals with people and handles problems, and what she hopes for in the future. Here are some questions to consider:

- What parts of your present job do you feel that you've done particularly well? Why?

- What parts of the job have been difficult? Why?
- Could you describe some particular problems you've encountered with supervisors, coworkers, customers, or suppliers, and how you've handled them?
- Could you tell me the aspect of your work history of which you're most proud?
- What aspects of a job are most important to you?
- What benefits do you feel that you bring to this company?
- What are your expectations of the company?
- What are you looking for in your next job?
- What knowledge or experience would you hope to gain from this position?
- What about this particular position made you decide to apply for it?

How a candidate answers these types of questions will give you an idea of her aspirations, her reasons for wanting the job, her strengths and weaknesses, and what about her work experiences she values.

22 Know the Legal Implications

As managers, you all know there are questions you simply cannot ask during an interview. It's important to know all of them to avoid putting yourself and your company at risk. Take a couple of minutes to check off whether the following questions are legal or illegal and see how well versed you are on the legal implications of conducting an interview:

	LEGAL	ILLEGAL
1. How old are you?	☐	☐
2. In what year did you graduate high school?	☐	☐
3. Are you over the age of eighteen?	☐	☐
4. How many years have you worked in this field?	☐	☐
5. Have you ever been arrested?	☐	☐
6. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?	☐	☐
7. Do you have experience using Microsoft products?	☐	☐
8. Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?	☐	☐
9. Do you have children, and if you do, what child-care arrangements do you have?	☐	☐
10. Are you authorized to work in the United States?	☐	☐
11. Would you be willing and able to work overtime if necessary?	☐	☐
12. What do you consider an acceptable number of absences in a year?	☐	☐
13. Do you plan to have children?	☐	☐
14. Do you rent or own your home?	☐	☐
15. Have you ever taken family leave?	☐	☐

	LEGAL	ILLEGAL
16. Do you have any handicaps?	☐	☐
17. Do you own a car?	☐	☐
18. This job requires driving. Do you have a valid driver's license?	☐	☐
19. Are you married, single, divorced, or widowed?	☐	☐
20. Where were you born?	☐	☐
21. What church do you belong to?	☐	☐
22. For what religious holidays will you need time off to celebrate?	☐	☐
23. Can you work Saturdays?	☐	☐
24. What was your maiden name?	☐	☐
25. What hobbies do you enjoy?	☐	☐
26. Do you belong to any work-related professional organizations?	☐	☐
27. Are you currently using any medication?	☐	☐
28. What languages can you speak?	☐	☐
29. How much does your spouse make?	☐	☐
30. Have you ever been in rehab for drugs or alcohol-related problems?	☐	☐

The questions that you can legally ask a job applicant are these: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 18, 23, and 28. The rest are illegal, with the exception of 16, 25, and 26. These three questions are both legal and illegal. To get away with asking them, you'll need to walk a pretty fine line. You can't ask someone probing questions about any physical handicaps

unless these will keep them from doing the job. As for asking about hobbies and work-related professional organizations, you can, but you can't make any candidates provide a complete list of all their activities.

Remembering the Overall Rules

In general, you may not ask candidates questions about age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, marital status, national origin, parental status, race, religion, sexual orientation, source of income, or veteran status. Managers should be aware that asking illegal or improper questions in an interview may lead to discrimination or wrongful-discharge lawsuits.

As a manager, you need to know the rules. You shouldn't, however, get so caught up in worrying about what's legal and what isn't that you lose the focus of the interview. Concentrate on learning about the candidate's ability to do the job. Ask questions that relate to how well he or she will perform. For the most part, illegal questions such as those listed in the quiz above are unrelated to performance.

Avoiding Legal Problems

Many candidates are familiar with illegal questions, but they often answer them, fearing they'll be penalized if they don't. If a candidate answers an illegal question, don't assume that means you're safe from legal action. The best policy is to stick to questions about a candidate's job experience, skills, and education in order to avoid problems.

23 Set the Interview Stage

A successful interview requires a mutual respect between the candidate and the manager. Before beginning an

interview, you should have an interview guide completed, and you should understand the process of your interview. Will it be conducted one-on-one, just you and the candidate, or will it be done as a group interview? You'll need to plan because different types of interviews call for different preparations.

There are some key tasks to complete when preparing for a panel or group interview. In order to ensure that the panel runs smoothly, appoint a panel leader. That person has the responsibility of starting and ending the interview, keeping it focused, and making sure the candidate is as comfortable as possible. Assign each member of the panel specific questions to ask, but allow everyone to ask follow-up questions. Have the panel leader keep the questions flowing in an organized manner. The panel leader should keep the rest of the group from overwhelming the candidate with rapid-fire questions.

Conducting the Interview

Managers should always be polite and respectful to candidates. If a candidate feels comfortable, the interview will run more smoothly. Here are some tips that can help both you and the candidate during the interview:

- Before the interview, set aside thirty minutes to review the candidate's resume and jot down questions specific to his or her background and experience.

- Find a quiet, private place to conduct the interview. If you don't have an office, borrow one. You want to avoid distractions.
- Be aware of time. Not only should you start on time, you should know how you're going to manage your time

during the interview so you don't miss any important questions.

- Keep a clock in your line of vision in order to know how much time you have left. Candidates tend to get uncomfortable if they see an interviewer checking a watch.

Little Things Count a Lot

The most important thing you can do while conducting an interview is to give the candidate your undivided attention. You would be appalled, for instance, if a candidate took a phone call during an interview. With that in mind, you shouldn't consider taking a call, either.

Watch out for other interruptions. Make it clear to the rest of your staff that you're conducting an interview. People popping in with questions or faxes will severely damage the flow of the questioning.

The Bottom Line

Interviewing is not an easy procedure, and a score of nervous, self-conscious candidates is not going to make it any easier. In order to make the candidate feel comfortable, treat him with respect. The following are a few final pointers to ease the process:

- Treat every interview as a new beginning. Avoid the temptation to compare interviews until you've finished them.

- Assume every candidate is your ideal candidate, and use the interview time to try and woo each one to your company.
- Let the candidate shine. The better he feels about the interview, the more likely he'll be to accept the job, if offered.

24 Be Prepared to Sell the Company

Candidates should leave interviews feeling good about themselves and the company. Look at it this way. You most likely will end up offering someone you've interviewed a job. One of those candidates will become your employee, and you want all employees to respond positively to the company. It's up to you, as an interviewer, to sell the company to potential employees. Some key selling points include these:

- Anything the company is doing to expand business
- How the company helps the local community
- How well the company treats employees

Traditionally, at the end of the interview, most managers ask the candidate if he or she had any questions. The candidate usually asks one softball question, such as "Can you describe your management style?" or a question about benefits. Now, in an effort to differentiate themselves from other candidates, many potential employees arrive at their interviews prepared with lists of questions and topics about which they want to hear more.

By doing so, the candidate shows that he or she has an interest in the company and has taken the time to conduct research. At the very least, most candidates review the company's Web site before coming in for an interview. Typically, the company Web site provides a tremendous amount of information about the company's history, products, and services.

In today's world of easy access to information, however, you need to be prepared to deal with candidates who do Google research on your company and come equipped with a vast knowledge of your company's successes and problems. A manager can prepare for this by doing the following:

- Be familiar with your company's Web site and annual report.

- Know the company's mission and how your department supports the mission.
- Be cognizant of finances and savvy about stock.
- Do Google research on your company and yourself, and be familiar with coverage.
- Be able to handle both good and bad press. Mention any recent awards or successes, and ask someone from the public relations department how you should address negative issues in the event that a prospective employee should ask about them.

Candidates with Questions

Some candidates will focus on the company as a whole, while others will be more inclined to ask about the specific area to which they are applying. Expect questions about promotions, turnover, people who formerly held the position, company culture, and the work style of the team. While not all of your answers may be ideal, it's important to be truthful. With a little careful planning, you can address the issues at hand while presenting a positive picture. For instance, if a candidate is aware the position you are hiring for has had frequent turnover and expresses concern, you could respond by acknowledging the high turnover and then presenting the steps you are planning to take, such as training programs, to ensure the next candidate is more successful.

Concluding the Interview

At the end of the interview, provide each candidate with a packet of information about the company and the job for which he or she is applying. You can ask the human resources and public relations departments for help in

putting the information together. A typical packet should include these things:

- Job description

- Most recent company newsletter
 - Any recent press about company awards or achievements
 - The company's mission, vision, and values
 - Company code of conduct
- Present all the information in a positive light in order to ensure that the candidate leaves with a favorable impression of the company and the job.

CHAPTER 6

Conducting the Interview the Right Way

25 Set the Candidate at Ease

Nearly every job candidate is nervous when arriving for an interview. Some are just better at hiding their nervousness. One of the jobs of an interviewer is to set the candidate at ease so she'll have the opportunity to shine. You want the candidate to be at her best so she'll open up and give you a chance to learn who she is and the strengths she possesses.

An easy trick to help a candidate relax is to ask a simple question unrelated to the job. Try something, "How was the traffic?" or "Did you have any trouble getting here?" Offer the interviewee a cup of coffee, but keep the small talk to a minimum. Once you've asked a few easy questions and sense that she's relaxed a little bit, it's time to get down to business.

Beginning the Interview

To begin, explain to the candidate the structure of the interview. If your human resources department has already done this, you don't need to repeat it. But if the candidate has not been prescreened, take some time to tell her about the job. Some candidates will encourage you to talk in order to gain more information regarding the position. A savvy interviewee will sometimes use this information to tailor her answers based on what you've said. This sometimes can produce truthful responses to questions, but beware of the interviewee who retools her experience to make herself

appear to be a closer match to the employee you're seeking.

To start the flow of the interview and settle the candidate's nerves, it helps to explain how the interview will proceed. This doesn't need to take long. It can, in fact, be done in five sentences. Try saying, "I am going to be asking you a series of questions about your background and experiences. Then I will tell you a little about the job. Then I will give you the opportunity to ask me any questions. Throughout the interview I will be taking notes. This helps me remember what you have said."

You've Settled the Candidate, Now Settle Yourself

Putting the candidate at ease is important, but the interview process is work for you, too. The following are some easy guidelines you can use to cut down on your stress during the interview process:

- You should talk about 20 percent of the time. The remaining 80 percent should be time for the candidate to speak.
- Remember to take good notes. Jot down words or phrases about things regarding the candidate that stand out for you.
- Use your notes to compare candidates later. Label all the pages to avoid mixing up the potential employees.

After you've asked your questions, leave a few minutes to explain the job in order to avoid confusion later. Tell the candidate the duties of the position. Tell her about the department, the other members of the team, and the structure of the department. Also include information about the company, but be positive and use your sales skills.

A Two-Way Street

In addition to leaving yourself time to describe the job, reserve a minimum of ten minutes for the interviewee to ask some questions. During that time, try to evaluate whether or not the candidate has come in with prepared questions. The way that a candidate handles the question period can be very telling. Are the questions perfunctory, or well thought out? Did she take the time to research your company? Does one or more of her questions deal with topics addressed during the interview, demonstrating the candidate's ability to process information?

If an interview goes well, the candidate's questions should lead to a deeper level of conversation. Take time to answer all of her questions, and use those questions to expand a two-way dialogue.

26 Know When to Cut Bait

Interviews can last anywhere from thirty minutes to a full day, depending on the position you are recruiting for and the process you are following. Sometimes, at some point of the interview, it becomes clear that the candidate is not suitable and, for whatever reasons, cannot be considered for the job. When this happens, it's important to have a plan of how you'll handle the situation.

Find the Why

The first step is to identify why you don't want to hire this candidate.

Is it because he doesn't meet the minimum standards for the job?

Perhaps you've already interviewed more qualified candidates. Or perhaps it's a "fit" issue. Whatever the reason, once you've identified it, continue with the interview

until you have some subjective data to support your position. Even when you know you're not going to hire someone, remember that the interview is a marketing tool. This candidate got dressed up, took off work, and spent an hour researching your company. You surely don't want him leaving with a bad impression about the company because he feels like he was rushed out. Keep every candidate for at least twenty to thirty minutes.

Ending an Interview Gracefully

Even when you know your current candidate is not viable, it's important to be respectful and not make him feel uncomfortable or inferior. It's also important, however, not to say anything that could lead him to believe he'll be called back for another interview or hired for the job. Keep the following tips in mind for ending an interview gracefully:

- At the conclusion of the interview, thank the candidate for coming, and assure him that he'll be contacted once a decision has been reached.
- If a candidate asks for feedback or wants to know if he's a viable candidate, be evasive. Try telling him that it's too early to tell.
- Let him know you'll be reviewing all the candidates when the interviews are completed and will determine at that time who will continue in the process.
- When the candidate has left, document the reasons that you don't consider him to be a good candidate.

There are times that you encounter a candidate who doesn't fit the position you're interviewing for, but you have a feeling that she'd be a good fit for another position within the company. If there's a concrete reason you can't hire her (lack of a master's degree or

not enough experience), be truthful and tell her. Then you can ask if she'd like to be considered for another position in the company and pave the way for her getting an interview.

Know When to Cut Bait

Sometimes there's no way to hide the fact that the interviewee is not suited to the job, and going through the motions of the interview becomes insulting to everyone. If an interview gets to the point where it's clearly an exercise in futility and there's no point in continuing, end it. Be polite but honest. You might say, "You know, it's clear to me that this isn't the job for you, and I think you've realized that as well."

I'm sure we've both got better things to do than continue with this interview."

Thank the candidate for coming in, wish him well, and see him out the door. Not every candidate is a winner, and not every interview can be a home run. Do be sure to document what transpired.

27 Recognize and Control Personal Biases

Typically, a manager makes up his mind about a candidate very early in the interview and spends the rest of the time selectively listening for information that will support his opinion. This tendency has resulted in the rejection of many qualified candidates and in the hiring of some pretty poor candidates.

At one time or another, people have probably made assumptions about you based on how you looked, sounded, or dressed. Now ask yourself whether you have done the

same thing. It's probable that you've made instant judgments about a candidate based on how she was dressed, what she looked like, how she spoke, or where she lived.

A Realistic View of the Situation

As a manager about to conduct an interview with a prospective employee, you need to learn to suspend initial judgment. This requires that you actively listen to each candidate. The structured interview guide is an important tool that can help to reduce bias. It helps you to focus on important skills and behaviors, and to ask the right questions.

The Halo Effect

The tendency to attribute positive traits to someone with whom you have something in common is called the halo effect. A mutual interest or shared background can cause you to overlook deficits and focus only on the positive.

The Horn Effect

The opposite of the halo effect is the horn effect. It is our tendency to unfairly judge someone who is different or because of an already established personal bias. It happens to interviewers when they place too much emphasis on a negative trait. Let's say a manager believes that body piercing or tattoos are unacceptable in the office. Because of this bias, she doesn't really hear any of a pierced or tattooed candidate's excellent responses to her questions or give enough credit for the job skills the candidate possesses. That's the horn effect.

Keep in Mind

There are some key factors to keep in mind about biases to help you make sure you don't unfairly misjudge a candidate or end up being rude to someone. Remember these final tips at your next interview:

- Be cognizant about other cultures. Some people are taught to boast about their successes.
- Recognize your views. Know your likes and dislikes when it comes to people, and be aware of how they might affect your perceptions of a job candidate.
- Be aware of the halo effect. Don't forget the horn effect, either.
- Differentiate between what a person says and how he says it.

28 Use Techniques That Encourage Applicants to Talk

Part of your job as an interviewer is to help candidates relax so you can get an idea of their real personalities. A survey by Power Hiring, Inc., a training and consulting firm in Tustin, California, suggests that most managers don't do this very well. Eighty-nine percent of managers say they make the hire/no hire decision within twenty minutes of meeting a person.

Now, about Those Chatty Candidates

You should make it a point to spend at least thirty minutes going over a candidate's most significant achievements before deciding whether or not you'd hire the person. You may have to exhibit superior communication skills if the candidate won't open up and remains closemouthed. But

what about the flip side? What if you have a candidate who won't shut up?

A survey by Korn Ferry International, a global provider of executive research, reports that the number-one mistake candidates make during interviews is talking too much. When this happens, you need to step in and be directive in order to steer the interview back on track.

Here are some simple methods of taking control of the conversation:

- A candidate is rambling and has wandered far from the question you asked. Direct her back to a very specific area by saying something like, "You lost me here. I really want to focus on how you contributed to cost-saving strategies. Could you be more specific?"
- A candidate is providing so much detail while answering your questions that you know you're looking at a three-hour interview, at least. Wait for him to take a breath and then jump in and tell him that while you find the conversation interesting and would like to spend more time discussing that particular topic, in the interest of time, you've got to move on.
- Every once in a while a candidate just won't be redirected. You've probably seen this trait in certain political candidates during debates. Regardless of the question, the person will begin by responding to it but then switch to the sound bite of her choice. If this happens, simply hold up your hand in the international sign for "Stop," and say something like, "Maybe my question wasn't clear. What I really would like to know is about your experience with customer service."

The Silent Type

Some candidates talk too much, while others don't talk enough. There are several reasons why a candidate might not talk in an interview, including these:

- Shyness
- Discomfort speaking around superiors
- Lack of familiarity with interview process
- Cultural belief that it is wrong to boast about achievements or address an authority figure in an assertive way

The best way to deal with an interview subject who doesn't talk is for you to be quiet, as well. Ask your question, and then wait patiently and silently. Give the candidate time to formulate an answer, while resisting the urge to keep talking in order to fill the silence. Most candidates will, in time, become more comfortable and provide more ready answers.

And Finally, Remember . . .

Managers need to ask behavior-based questions in order to obtain important information about those they interview. Such a question might be, "Could you tell me about a time when you disagreed with someone else at work?" A quiet person, or one who isn't comfortable talking about such issues, might reply that he never experienced such a situation.

What you need to do at this point is to simply restate what she's said in an inquisitive manner. You might say, "Really? You've never disagreed with a coworker about any topic? Take a minute more to think about that." Count to ten and wait. Chances are that she will come up with an example. Quiet candidates are likely to respond with brief answers. To prompt a person to provide more information, ask follow-up

questions, and remember to give the candidate time to find the words to answer.

29 Fine-Tune Your Radar

If hiring has been a part of your job for any length of time, chances are that you've run into some candidates who had gone above and beyond the call of duty in preparing for the interview.

These types of candidates have not only researched the company to get an idea of how it operates and what it stands for, they've memorized the names of every principal and the dates they came on board. They've anticipated the interview questions and practiced their answers in front of the mirror—or a spouse.

So, How Do Those Candidates Get So Prepared?

Preparing for a job interview isn't all that difficult because there are plenty of resources available to help candidates do so. That's not to say that being prepared for an interview is a bad thing. A candidate who strolls in for an interview completely unprepared would hardly be considered a serious applicant.

These overly prepared candidates, however, can be worrisome because they tend to tell you what they know (or assume they know) you want to hear, and not actually what they think, feel, or intend.

Overly prepared candidates can appear to be very impressive, and maybe they'd be just as impressive in the workplace as they are at the interview. Could it be, however, that someone who prepares so hard for an interview might be more interested in *getting* the job than in *doing* the job?

Bryan Johanson of the Adler Group, an Irvine, California-based organization that helps companies locate and hire top

talent, suggested in an online article called “Unmasking the Well-Prepared Candidate,” that those with the most talent don’t spend their time preparing for job interviews.

Generally, he said, great workers haven’t had all that many job interviews because their employers work to keep them happy and in place. Johanson even suggested that you ask a candidate who seems overly prepared how many job interviews he’s had in the past two months and how many books on preparing for job interviews he’s read.

It’s important to fine-tune your radar and be on the lookout for the overly prepared candidate, remembering that while prepared is good, overly prepared should perhaps raise some questions.

30 Get to Know the Candidate

Your job during the interview process is to get to know the candidate—to get a feel not only for her qualifications and skills but for her attitudes and outlooks, as well.

If you’ve ever worked with, or perhaps hired, someone who is miserable—who always sees the glass as half empty instead of half full, who constantly complains of not feeling well, of being overworked, of being unhappy—you know what a downer that can be for the entire team.

An unhappy person can become a team project, at the expense of the work of it should be doing. Of course, no one is going to be happy and upbeat and bubbling with enthusiasm all the time. A chronically miserable person, however, unless she has the most talent and best work abilities you’ve ever encountered, is probably not a wise hire.

You Can’t Get to Know Someone Without Listening

Remember the 80/20 rule, which states that, during an interview, you should listen about 80 percent of the time and talk about 20 percent of the time? The interview isn't about you, so even if you have something interesting to say in response to a candidate's answer to a question, it's best to save it for another time.

If, for example, you had the same problem getting to learn a particular software program as the candidate revealed she did while answering one of your questions, it's best not to get off track by bringing it up. While knowing that you experienced the same difficulty may make her feel better, you risk interrupting the flow of the interview.

While you're listening, remember to jot down any information the candidate offers that seems like it would be important or that you think you might not remember. Also jot down your general impressions of the candidate to review later.

Unless you're interviewing for a top-level, super-important position, you don't have hours and hours, or even days, to get to know the candidate. You'll need to establish rapport, ask good questions that generate good answers, and listen carefully to what the candidate has to say, while making notes for future reference.

31 Leave Yourself Some Wiggle Room

You've asked your questions, listened carefully to the candidate's answers, taken good notes, clarified points on which you were unclear, and set the candidate at ease. It's time to bring the interview to a close—a closing that should be as carefully scripted as the opening. The end of an interview should give a candidate one final chance to sell himself. A good interviewer will ask a final question, such as, "We have talked about a lot of things today, and I feel I've had a good opportunity to know you. Is there anything we

didn't cover that you think I should know in order to help me make my decision?" A final question such as this one may result in important information about a candidate that will impact your final decision.

Second Interviews

If you will be conducting another round of interviews, it's important to let candidates know when and how they will be contacted. If a candidate isn't going to be asked back for a second interview, don't mention that you plan to conduct them. Just end the interview. If you have a candidate you like, tell him everything he needs to know regarding the second round. Here are some tips for the second round of interviews:

- It's okay to coach your final candidates so they're fully prepared.
- It's okay to ask a candidate about whom you're serious how he feels about the position. You could say something like, "Based on what we discussed today, is this position something that interests you?"
- Let a promising candidate know you're interested, but don't make any guarantees. Let him know that there are several final candidates.
- Make sure the candidate is okay with the time frame for the second interview, especially if you suspect he has a hot job search in progress.

What Not to Do

It happens to almost all of us at one point or another. You're sure that the candidate you've just finished interviewing is perfect for the job, and you're incredibly tempted to make an offer then and there. Avoid the temptation! Even if you're

absolutely convinced that you want to hire this particular applicant, you should end the interview and let him know you'll be getting back to him very soon. Even if you only wait an hour or so, it's a good idea to give yourself some time to assess the situation. Take time to review your notes on all the applicants once more before making a decision.

CHAPTER 7

Selecting the Best Candidate 32 Make a List and Check It Twice

After interviewing numerous candidates, you may find that you can't remember who said what, or what each candidate's qualifications were. To avoid this situation, take good notes during each interview.

Make Sure to Compare Apples to Apples

To be able to fairly compare candidates, you need to have asked each candidate pretty much the same questions. Sure, your questions probably varied a little from interview to interview, and quite possibly you followed up with different questions, depending on the answers of the candidates. Basically, though, you'll compare answers to questions that were repeated to each person interviewed.

You Have to Write It Down

You've already read several times how important note-taking is during the interview process. It's at this point of the hiring process that, if you didn't take good notes, you will surely wish that you had.

Notes don't have to be elaborate, but they should be written in a format that you can understand, even a week or two after you initially talk to a candidate. You should come up with a rating system that will allow you to judge every candidate using the same criteria and based on the same questions.

You might, for instance, make a chart that lists each category you'll consider: education, necessary skills,

training, supervisory experience, ability to work as part of a team, motivation, time management skills, customer service, interpersonal skills, and so forth. As you interview candidates, you rate each one in each of the assigned categories. The section of your chart rating interpersonal skills might look something like this: Interpersonal skills: Candidate expressed ideas clearly and interacted successfully with other parties.

- Very successful
- Successful
- Somewhat successful
- Not successful

Notes: —————
—————
—————

Each category you're considering would have its own place on the chart, similar to the above.

It's recommended that you fill out the chart initially while interviewing each candidate, and then review it soon after the interview is completed. This gives you a chance to think about your responses and cement your thoughts regarding each candidate. Don't assume that you'll remember everything someone has said, much less every answer a dozen different candidates have given.

Streamlining the Interviewing Process

Keeping good notes is also beneficial when candidates are interviewed on separate occasions by more than one person. Perhaps your interview questions are based on one set of criteria and those of the human resources staff on another set. Peer interviews might entail a completely different set of questions.

Having notes from each interview allows everyone involved to sit down and compare them in order to identify candidates who scored high on each occasion.

Life is fast, and we're all busy. Keeping track of whom you interview, what you ask, and what they answer is vital. Don't forget to include dates and times of interviews, and keep all your notes for at least a year after making a hire, just in case questions arise down the road.

33 Get Ready Before You Pick Up the Phone The time you've been waiting for has arrived—you're ready to make an offer. All that's left to do is to pick up the phone and deliver the good news.

Or is it? While some companies make job offers informally, others have strict policies that must be followed. If you're getting ready to make your first hire, be sure to check out any specifics. A small company at which partners jointly decide on new hires may act very informally when it comes to inviting a candidate to join the team, while a large company may require managers to secure permission from the human resources department before making a call to a prospective employee.

It's Not Official Until It's Official

Typically, a job offer is made over the phone and followed up with a letter. Some managers e-mail candidates, but a phone call and letter combination is still the preferred method of notification.

Before you pick up the phone, think about what you'll say and the terms you'll lay out for the prospective employee. Congratulate the candidate on being your first choice, and extend a verbal offer. Tell her you will send out a letter

within twenty-four hours (or whatever time frame is reasonable for you) spelling out the details of the offer, and indicate when you need to have a commitment from her about whether or not she will take the job.

Many candidates have reacted enthusiastically to a phone call saying they were hired, only to back out of the arrangement later on, so it's important that you set a date by which a firm decision has to be communicated.

What to Include in the Offer of Employment The written offer of employment is important for several reasons. First, it will lay out the terms of employment. Second, it's probably the first written document from you that the candidate has seen, thereby establishing expectations for what is to come.

The letter should include information such as that below. Again, your company may have a standard hiring letter that you're required to use, so if you're not sure, check with the human resources department. Typically, such a letter includes these elements:

- Your name, title, and contact information
- The title of the position for which the person is being hired
- The department within which the position is located
- Salary amount and how it's paid (such as biweekly or monthly)
- Work hours

- A starting date
 - Instructions for when the employee arrives on the first day
 - Transportation/parking information
 - Information regarding necessary health screenings, drug testing, and so on
 - Information regarding background checks or necessary clearances
 - Any special considerations, such as moving expenses
 - Information regarding the employee orientation program
 - Date when the offer expires (deadline for the employee to accept or reject the offer)
- It's important that the letter

be thorough and cover all areas necessary, but it shouldn't be so formal that it could be interpreted as a contract. Don't for instance, get into how the new employee will be evaluated or other specific terms of employment. That type of information could come back to haunt you in the event that the employee doesn't work out and files a lawsuit after termination.

Dealing with Those Candidates Who Weren't Hired
While most managers look forward to delivering good news to the successful candidate, they generally don't feel so great about having to notify the unsuccessful candidates. Still, it's your job, and it has to be done.

Wait until the candidate of choice has accepted your offer, and then notify the others, either by letter or phone. Be courteous, and relate the information as soon as you can. This allows those candidates to move on with their job searches. Even though you're not delivering good news, the unsuccessful candidates will appreciate your courtesy. Remember that you may someday want to contact one or more of them about future jobs, so you want to leave them on good terms.

34 Learn How to Negotiate

You've done the interviews and found the perfect candidate. The hard part is over, but you still need to make an offer. So how do you approach this? Do you make a firm best offer? Or do you go in a little low in order to leave some room for negotiations? If you've done a lot of interviews, you may be able to spot the person who needs to negotiate. Some folks are never happy unless they feel they've bargained for a little more. Others, though, are not comfortable negotiating,

and they will either accept or reject the offer without attempting to bargain.

The Negotiating Type

Sometimes, a manager who has conducted countless interviews will develop a sixth sense about spotting negotiators. Not everyone, however, is seasoned enough to pick them out. If you can't tell the born negotiators through simple interaction, look for these traits to help identify them:

- Communicative, with a healthy ego
- Comfortable describing his or her strengths
- Will tell you why you should hire him or her
- Knows what he or she is worth in the market

These characteristics also speak volumes about dealing with a negotiator. A candidate who possesses these traits will be insulted if you make an offer too low.

The Essentials of Negotiation

So, you've decided to negotiate. Many times, the choice to begin negotiations is a problem in and of itself. There is no exact science to how much you should reduce your offer, but a cushion of about five percent is safe. Keep in mind that if you're hiring a position that is hard to fill, you might not want to drop too low. If you suspect a candidate has multiple offers from other organizations, you're better off making your best offer right off the bat.

Sometimes, even after the job offer is made and accepted, the negotiation continues. Just when you've completed purging all your applicant files and planning your new-hire orientation, there's a twist: The employee calls to report that the organization she is leaving has matched—or even exceeded—your offer. Now you're forced to use psychology and business sense. Is this candidate serious about working for you, or was interviewing with you just a ploy to get more money out of her current employer? How much do you

really want this person? If you make an even higher offer, will you be paying too much? Will it create internal inequities? You need to trust your instincts to decide if you want to play the counteroffer game.

Add Some Sugar

In some cases, your first offer won't be enough, and you'll have to sweeten the deal in order to entice a candidate to your organization. There are different options that can provide just the right amount of sweetener.

Some Sweetening Options

Allowing companies to get creative with bonuses isn't saying that traditional methods don't work. A sign-on bonus is always appreciated, but the amount needs to be determined by the level of the position. Relocation expenses, car allowances, cell phone plans, and tuition reimbursement are all methods that work.

At the executive level, you may need to up the ante a bit. For those positions, a company may consider throwing in a country club membership or a corporate credit card. Enhanced benefits like extra vacation and additional life insurance normally are good ideas, as well.

Finally, some nonmonetary options are worth considering. You might try guaranteeing training and educational opportunities, or offering a flexible schedule, the ability to cross-train, or reimbursement for continuing education units. And you can always get creative. Think of what will best suit the person you're looking to hire, and tailor an incentive to meet her needs.

35 Be Up Front about Your Expectations As you read in number 33, your offering letter should indicate a date by which the successful candidate must let you know whether or not he accepts the position offered. But how do you determine what that date should be? Most people want time to think about the offer and talk about it with their families. So they promise to get back to you within a day or two. Naturally, you are anxious and want to know you have your candidate locked in, but you'll need to give him some time. Don't rush him or demand an immediate response.

Pressuring a candidate could make him feel uneasy about joining your organization. Still, you can't wait forever. Exactly how long should you sit tight? Sixty-two percent of recruiters said in a national survey that a week is long enough. If you find yourself waiting longer than that, the person you're waiting for may have another offer. The best thing you can do is set a reasonable time frame and let the candidate know when you want an answer.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

You don't want to waste time going around in circles, but you don't want to lose a qualified employee over small things, either. Try to understand why a candidate may be having difficulty committing. To ease the concerns and convince the candidate your organization is the place to be, try the following:

- Invite the candidate back to meet with the team.

- Consider adding a sweetener to the deal.
- Add a sign-on bonus if a letter of acceptance is signed in a specific time period.

Once the candidate accepts your offer, you'll need to move ahead with details concerning physicals, background checks, orientations, and training.

On Notice

Remember that nearly everyone who resigns from a position must give her current employer notice. For most employers, the period of notice is somewhere between two and four weeks, but be prepared to make exceptions if there are special circumstances. Be wary of an employee who claims he or she doesn't have to give notice. Chances are you'll find yourself being given the same lack of professional treatment.

There are exceptions to the notice rule. In the case of some sales staff, employers actually prefer to have the employee leave immediately. This can happen if an employee has access to a highly competitive client list.

While you want to be understanding and reasonable regarding a new employee's start date and terms of employment, remember that it's a two-way street. If the candidate is serious about coming to work for you, he'll

make every effort to accommodate your wishes while managing his own circumstances.

36 Prepare the Candidate for What Lies Ahead The time between when a candidate accepts your offer and when he or she actually starts working can be anywhere from two to six weeks, depending on your human resources department and its requirements. Large firms, hospitals, and government agencies, for example, all have complex prehire requirements. During this phase, you will want to keep some limited contact with your new hire.

Maintaining a Distance

You don't want to get so close to the new hire before she comes on board that you appear to be overanxious or overbearing. If the new employee comes into the office to fill out paperwork, keep your distance. You can stop by and see if she has any questions, but don't mention her first assignment or talk about the job. Let her assimilate into the company and take in the culture before you start giving out assignments. Consider sending a note welcoming her to the company and letting her know you're available to discuss any questions or concerns, and then back off.

Keep in mind that your new hire is probably a little nervous. Reassuring your prospective employee is one thing, but pestering is something to be avoided.

Preparing the New Employee for Company Requirements While you don't want to overburden a new employee before her job begins, neither do you want to leave her in the dark about what to expect when she does. Offer assistance with any forms that need to be filled out. Explain what background checks are necessary and how the information will be required. Discuss any concerns she may have about checks or screenings.

If a physical examination is necessary, can it be performed by her personal physician or a doctor approved by the company? How might the physical affect her terms of employment? Will it affect the benefits she receives?

Anyone coming into a new job is apt to have a lot of questions and possibly some anxieties about the new circumstances. Take the necessary time to inform her and ease her mind of concerns so that, when she does begin work, she'll be calm and ready to get started.

Part II

RETAINING YOUR BEST AND BRIGHTEST EMPLOYEES

CHAPTER 8

Keeping Employees Is Crucial, and You've Got to Start Out Right

37 Use Proven Steps to Assure Retention

Retention is the best way to benefit financially from employees you've recruited, hired, and trained. Identifying, interviewing, and hiring the right employees are critical steps, but retaining those employees is every bit as important. Satisfied employees provide tremendous advantages to the companies they work for.

Top research firms, including Hewitt Associates, Towers Perrin, Gallup, Watson Wyatt, and Development Dimensions International (DDI), have conducted studies that indicate there is a strong link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. That is, happy employees result in happy customers.

Happy employees also have the capacity to boost a company's bottom line, resulting in happy management and shareholders. One has to look no further than *Fortune* magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For" list to recognize the connection between pleased employees and financially successful companies.

So how do you, as a manager, go about assuring that the employees you hire will stick around? The key to ensuring low turnover (and increased profits for your organization) is to keep employees engaged and interested in their jobs and

to create some incentives for them to want to stay. Here are a few ideas:

- Be sure that employees understand there are paths for advancement within the company, and steer them toward those paths through training programs or by other means.
- Know what other companies are paying employees in similar jobs, and make sure your company's salaries and benefits are competitive.
- Pay attention to the needs of employees—both on the job and off. Provide counseling opportunities or other resources to help workers solve problems at work and at home.
- Careful hiring can reduce turnover rate. It's a good idea to review hiring techniques every time you're faced with bringing on a new employee.

Employees who are interested in their work, engaged, and challenged on a regular basis most often report that they are highly satisfied. Let's take a look at a few of the businesses from *Fortune* magazine's list. Why are employees in those places so satisfied that hardly any voluntarily leave?

Alcon Laboratories

Alcon Labs, based in Fort Worth, Texas, hires about 6,000 workers in the United States. They enjoy perks such as 100 percent tuition reimbursement, a low-cost, twenty-four-hour fitness center, and six annual excellence awards of \$8,000 each.

Cisco Systems

With 26,644 U.S. employees, top management at the San Jose, California-based firm takes a hands-on approach with

its staff. CEO John Chambers holds monthly breakfasts at which employees are encouraged to fire away with hard questions. He also meets with groups of newly hired employees to introduce himself and learn their expectations.

S. C. Johnson

Based in Racine, Wisconsin, and employing about 3,400 U.S. employees, this consumer-products company offered profit sharing to every employee in 2006 that increased their pay by 19 percent.

Mayo Clinic

Eighty-nine percent of employees report they are proud to work at the Rochester, Minnesota-based hospital, which uses a team approach in treating patients. Doctors and other staff work together to ensure the best patient care, keeping employees interested and committed to their work.

As you can see, employee satisfaction stems from a variety of reasons. Many workers value the ability to work flexible schedules that allow them to be home when their children are.

Employee satisfaction, of course, must be balanced with the needs of the company. Finding and using methods of keeping workers happy, however, is well worth your time and effort.

38 Understand the Negative Impact of High Turnover

High rates of employee turnover affect every member of an organization— and not for the better. Everyone, from the

owner to the hourly worker, suffers when there's a revolving employee door.

Businesses with high employee turnover tend to become static; it's hard for an owner to grow a business when he's constantly dealing with employee issues. Owners find themselves on a treadmill, running in place instead of moving their companies forward. This, of course, is frustrating for everyone.

Employee turnover has been troubling employers for years. The days of an employee joining a company and retiring with a gold watch thirty or forty years later are long gone. An average worker in America will experience three to five different careers and ten to twelve different jobs during a career, according to Careers in Transition, LLC, a career counseling firm based in Albany, New York.

The fact is that many employees are always looking for the next position. While that may be beneficial to them, it can wreak havoc within a company. Particularly when the economy is on an upswing, employees tend to be looking for bigger and better employment.

The Effect of Turnover on Other Employees

High rates of turnover can be disastrous to the morale of employees who stay behind. Remaining employees often have to pick up additional responsibilities for the person who's left, which can result in decreased productivity, burnout, and resentment.

Also, employees who watch coworker after coworker vacate the premises may start to question why they're sticking around.

Loss of Experience and Knowledge

When a long-time employee leaves a company, he or she takes along valuable knowledge about the job and company that has accumulated over time. New employees come into a company with little knowledge of how the company works or the work they'll be expected to perform. Seasoned employees, however, are likely to have figured out the ins and outs of how the company operates.

When they leave, they take that information with them to their new positions, leaving you to break in someone new. Also, seasoned employees usually are helpful in acclimating new employees to the job, which is a big help to managers. The loss of a long-time employee is expensive to a company, both in time and dollars.

Customer Satisfaction Can Also Be Affected

You've already learned that, when employees are satisfied, customers tend to be satisfied as well. Employee dissatisfaction caused by high turnover rate can be poisonous to a service-oriented business that depends on retaining customers and attracting new ones. Unhappy employees dealing with customers rarely leaves you with satisfied and happy customers.

As you can see, high employee turnover rates affect everyone—customers, other employees, management, and employers. While it's not feasible to think that your company will never lose an employee, keeping turnover to a minimum is in everyone's best interests.

39 Calculate the Cost of High Turnover

In addition to negatively impacting employee morale and customer satisfaction, high employee turnover—already a

high cost to pay— also results in big dollars lost. While there definitely are instances in which letting an employee go is the smartest thing an employer can do, losing a productive employee who's been an asset to the team is always difficult—and expensive. Let's take a look at the costs involved with employee turnover.

The Employee Who Leaves Before He Leaves

Once an employee has made the decision to leave, the high-cost-of-turnover meter has started running. Costs encountered during this period and after the employee leaves can include the following:

- Loss of productivity between the time the employee announces his resignation and actually leaves the company
- Cost of knowledge, skills, and contacts that will be lost when the employee leaves
- Cost of an exit interview to figure out why the employee's leaving, what work he will leave undone, and how to best complete that work
- Possible cost of customers who will leave either with the employee or afterward because service has been negatively impacted by his absence
- Increased cost for unemployment insurance (if employee is terminated)

These costs can add up to more than half of an employee's annual salary. And we haven't even started to look at the cost of replacing him.

The Cost of Replacing an Employee Who Leaves

Once an employee announces that he's leaving, his manager needs to shift her attention to staffing and figure out if and how to replace him. Costs associated with replacing an employee can be extraordinary, totaling from 30 to 150 percent of the salary of the now-vacant position. Whether the employee being replaced is a senior-level executive, middle manager, or entry-level staffer, you can expect to encounter high costs.

The first part of this book offered a lot of information about recruiting, advertising for, interviewing, and hiring new employees. All of those processes take time and cost big bucks. Costs include advertising, time spent conducting or participating in interviews, administrative costs, and payment for overtime or temporary workers to pick up the slack of the employee who's left.

If the employee leaving is a manager or valued salesperson, the replacement can cost even more: between 200 and 250 percent. The cost of employee turnover, both in dollars and other terms, is high. Smart managers work hard to hire smart and then retain their best and brightest employees.

40 Know the Signs of Impending Turnover

Every now and then, the resignation of an employee will take you completely by surprise and you'll be floored, speechless, completely at a loss for words. Most of the time, however, a savvy manager will have noticed signs of impending turnover and not be shocked by the resignation notice.

The first step to being able to recognize the signs of a resignation-about-to-happen is to understand what

motivates employees to look for new jobs. The Society for Human Resource Management cites these three reasons as primary factors:

- Fifty-three percent are looking for better compensation and benefits.
- Thirty-five percent are not satisfied with their chances for advancement.
- Thirty-two percent are simply ready for new experiences.

Other reasons include the perception that the employer doesn't value employees' contributions to the company or care about employees, as well as a lack of teamwork. Knowing why employees seek other jobs can help you to look for and recognize signs that a resignation may be looming.

Common Signs of Disengagement and Pending Turnover

As employees become disengaged from their work, they often send out signals. Some of the signs might be subtle, while others will be more noticeable. A good manager will be aware early on of signs that an employee is unhappy and preparing to move on. Those signs and signals include the following:

- Lack of interest in assignments and projects
- Unwillingness to do anything more than what is expected or necessary
- Leaving early or arriving late to work
- Complaining to other employees about job situation
- Increased absences or the need to take time off during the workday

- Computer use or phone calls that are not consistent with work
- Acting secretive or uncomfortable around coworkers and managers
- Noticeable decrease in productivity

Being aware of these signals can help you to predict which employees might be thinking of leaving and to address the situation before it becomes a major problem. Not every employee is salvageable, and there may even be instances in which you would welcome a resignation. When you consider the cost of turnover, however, it's usually best to do what you can to avoid it.

41 Good On-Boarding Strategies to Increase Retention

Once you've invested days of time and thousands of dollars in finding and hiring an employee, your goal should be to get the person on board and at peak productivity in the shortest time possible.

Employees during their few weeks on the job typically are eager to get started. They're anxious to learn what it takes to get them up to speed, to meet their new coworkers and bosses, and to become accepted as part of the team.

The process of accomplishing those things is called on-boarding. On-boarding also creates an opportunity for you, as a manager, to get to know the new employee and develop a sense of her likes and dislikes, of how she best communicates and works.

Does she, for instance, prefer to sit down once a week for progress meetings or to communicate progress through

daily e-mails? At the same time, you're able to make clear your expectations for the new worker.

A good on-boarding program covers three major areas:

- *The company:* The new hire will learn about the company's mission and culture and get an overview of products and services. She'll learn about the history of the company and who are the key players. She'll get an overview of clients and be versed on the company's goals and aspirations.
- *Personal concerns:* What does the new employee need to know about benefits, payroll, key policies, safety issues, and so forth? This can be a time to get forms filled out and signed and answer any questions she might have. Remember that every company operates differently, making it necessary to review matters such as lunch hours, flexibility in work schedules, and so forth.
- *The department:* Take time to introduce the new employee to her coworkers. You might arrange for lunch to be brought in to provide an opportunity for conversation and camaraderie. Review the responsibilities of each department member, and discuss how the team best works together, current projects, and the new hire's role in the department.

Some Dos and Don'ts of an On-Boarding Program

Here are a few tips on things to include and avoid in your on-boarding process:

- Do make the program interesting and interactive.
- Do include speakers, including members of the senior management team.
- Do make sure the program is well organized and conducted professionally.

- Do present the right amount of information for the allotted time.
- Do allow the on-boarding process to convey pride and excitement about the company.
- Do share policies in order to educate, not threaten.
- Do give the new hire a good feel for the company's heritage and background.
- Do stress employee accountability.
- Do make sure the new employee is oriented to the office and knows how to find what she'll need.
- Do make new employees feel welcome and honored to be a part of the company.
- Do follow up with on-boarding in the first days and weeks of the employee's tenure.
- Don't offer an on-boarding program that's disorganized, sloppy, or poorly presented.
- Don't pass off a new hire on a human resources representative or another employee for "training."
- Don't expect a new employee to sit and read manuals or watch slide presentations.

Just as first impressions are important during the interview process, they also are important when a new employee comes to work for the first time. Being prepared and prepping employees in advance about their new coworker will go a long way to easing the new worker's transition and creating a greater comfort level among the entire team.

42 Balance the Welcome with the Work

You've just read how important it is to provide an extraordinary welcome to new employees. Along with that welcome, though, should come expectations and a clear statement of the job the new employee is to undertake.

If the orientation program has been done properly, employees will be anxious to get started in their new positions, meet their new coworkers, and learn more about the company. As a manager, you can help ease the transition for your new employee and get him up and running in record time.

Consider the following strategies to not only make the new member of your team feel comfortable within the organization, but to help ensure his success as an employee.

- *Offer a welcoming breakfast or lunch, and strongly encourage or make it mandatory for all other members of your department to attend.* It doesn't have to be anything fancy, but a gathering like this provides an occasion for the new employee to meet his work mates in a casual, nonthreatening environment. Help the people in your department get to know the new employee by having him tell a little bit about himself. If the employee is reluctant to talk about himself, you might provide a little information for his coworkers. Encourage your other employees to be welcoming.
- *Provide a job-specific orientation plan.* Depending on the job, the amount of time covered can be anywhere from a week to a year. Short plans, say those covering a week or two, should be broken down into hour-long segments and include details about what the new hire must learn and who will teach him. Orientation plans that cover bigger chunks of time should be developed on a calendar and show learning periods. You, or someone else who will be working closely with the new employee, should go over

the calendar with him so that he gets an idea of the breadth and scope of the training.

- *Choose the right person to walk the new employee through the orientation program.* The last thing you want to do is to pair up a brand-new employee with a present employee who isn't happy with her job or the company. The person you choose needs to be a good communicator, must have the time to train and orient the new employee, and should exemplify the values of the organization.
- *Make your expectations clearly known, quickly and up front.* Don't assume that a new employee knows how the department operates because every job, company, and department are different. Spell out all of the new employee's required tasks, the goals of the department, and who are the key customers you're trying to reach. Review the job description, and don't overlook housekeeping tasks.

Having a good orientation plan in place will not only help to ensure that your new employee feels comfortable and able to acclimate to the department, it will also cut down on the amount of time necessary to get him up to speed so that he can be an effective member of your team.

43 Nip Potential Problems in the Bud

Managers sometimes tend to treat new employees gently in an effort to make them feel welcome and at home in the department. Some managers may be tempted to overlook what seem to be minor problems, such as the employee's frequently being a little late or being a little sloppy with a report.

What you need to understand is that letting “little” things go by unmentioned simply reinforces the behavior, and, in some cases, encourages the employee to escalate those behaviors.

It won't take an employee long to figure out that if nobody appeared to notice that she came in five minutes late twice in one week, maybe a few extra minutes at lunch will slide by unnoticed, as well. If there are no consequences for a sloppily prepared report, it may seem logical to assume that an employer does not have very high expectations.

You should make it a point to provide regular feedback on a variety of topics to new employees. Sit down with every new hire as often as you're able—every day, if possible—to see if she has any questions or concerns, and share any concerns that you might have about her job performance.

Remember that most employees are open to suggestions when they first start a job. Most new employees will appreciate advice and feedback and will accept it as support, not criticism, because they are anxious to learn the job.

By not correcting problems, or even identifying potential problems as they occur, you risk setting behaviors into place that will be difficult to address and change down the road.

It's very important that the new employee fully understands how your department operates and all the rules that apply. It's also important that you convey the philosophies and values that help determine how your department runs. If customer service is the number-one priority of the department, for instance, and is considered to be more important than any other issue, make sure your new employee fully understands that so that she's able to buy into the culture.

Hopefully, you and your new employee will quickly develop a good working relationship, and problems will be

minimal. If problems do occur, however, address them quickly. If they continue, you should document them in case disciplinary action or even terminating the employment becomes necessary at a later time.

44 Use the Orientation Period Wisely

Whether the orientation period for your new employee is one week or six months, it's important to use the time wisely and effectively. Employees normally are cooperative and willing to learn as much as they can during the first weeks and months of employment, giving you a chance to encourage good work habits and make sure the new hire understands the ins and outs of your department and the company in general.

Remember that good on-boarding begins even before the new employee's first day of work. The rest of the staff should be made aware in advance that a new person has been hired and what her job responsibilities will be. The new hire's work area should be cleaned up and organized, and all pertinent manuals and guides should be available. Remember to make arrangements for your new employee's parking, if necessary, and address any security considerations, such as name tags, keys, and swipe cards.

Working Toward a Successful First Day

The employee's first day of work is crucial. Don't ever make the mistake of showing a new hire to his office and leaving him alone to read over a policy manual or fill out forms. Even in the busiest office, someone should take time to personally welcome the new employee, show him around, and make him feel at home. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Fill in the new employee on the plans for the day and coming days. Knowing what to expect will help alleviate

anxiety and put the new hire at ease.

- Take time to go over contracts, benefits packets, and any other pertinent paperwork. You also could ask someone from human resources to join you or to take over applicable areas of instruction.
- Explain the conditions of employment, including information regarding a probationary period, employee reviews, and performance evaluations.
- Show the new hire an organizational chart for your department, and explain the basic responsibilities of each position.
- If you're not having a welcoming breakfast or lunch on the first day, at least make sure the new employee has company for lunch—either you or some coworkers.
- Be sure to go over company and/or department policies and procedures regarding topics such as e-mail and phone use, chain of command, confidentiality, use of office resources, vacation time, sick leave, hours worked, and time cards.

After the First Day

In the weeks to come, continue to pay attention to the needs of your new hire. It's easy to assume that everything is going well if you don't hear or see anything to the contrary. But as a good manager, you know that it's dangerous to assume anything, especially when it concerns your employees.

Ask the person who was assigned to help orient the new employee during the first few days to stay in touch with you and the new hire. The new worker is sure to have dozens of questions during the first few weeks, and it's helpful to have a designated "buddy" to answer them and assist in other

ways. The new hire may feel more comfortable approaching a coworker with mundane questions than a manager. Be sure to make yourself available, though, in the event that there's a question the coworker is unsure how to answer, and encourage the seasoned employee to keep you informed about how things are going.

Also in those first weeks and months, keep an eye on the new employee's work to make sure he is advancing at an acceptable rate and not developing any bad habits. Pay attention to the work of the rest of the employees, as well, and make sure they're modeling good work behaviors for the new hire.

Knowing When to Say "When"

There are cases in which, no matter how hard you work to bring an employee on board successfully, it just doesn't work. The new hire just isn't a good fit within your department, and everybody knows it.

If you see that there are problems and things simply aren't working out, you may need to let the employee go. As much as you want it to work, you've got to realize that the situation is not likely to improve, especially if the new hire is exhibiting discipline problems. Remember that a new worker normally exhibits his most positive behaviors and attitudes. One that exhibits discipline problems early on is likely only to get worse as time passes.

CHAPTER 9

To Be a Leader, You've Got to Be Willing to Lead

45 The Type of Leadership Necessary for Your Team Let's face it. There's no one-size-fits-all formula for leading a team. As convenient as it would be to be able to tuck leadership into neat categories, it's simply not possible.

Theories Abounding

Not even leadership theories are straightforward. Every few years, a new trend in leadership emerges, and business leaders jump on the bandwagon. A new training program comes along and all of a sudden, everyone is crazed, obsessed with the program, and throwing around buzzwords. No wonder it's confusing for managers to lead.

Before you throw up your hands in frustration and skip to the next chapter, consider some definitions of leadership. In his book *The Leader of the Future*, Peter Drucker says, "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers."

Likewise, Warren Bennis, a professor of business administration and founding member of the Leadership Institute of Southern California at the University of Southern California, has said, "Leadership is the function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking action to realize your

own leadership potential.” Fairly simple in content, these definitions speak volumes.

What It Means to You

In order for a manager to lead, he or she must have personal insight, as well as insight into the team and organization. Every team is different and therefore requires a different leadership style. In order for a manager to identify what is necessary, he or she needs to evaluate the group. The following are some questions to ask yourself when evaluating leadership style:

- How much experience does the team have?

- Is it a new group?
- Do team members know their jobs?
- Is the team motivated for higher performance?
- What style of leadership is the team used to?
- What is the organization’s culture?

When you have the answers to these questions, you can begin cultivating the leadership style that will be of greatest advantage to you and your team.

Sorting It Out

The following chart covers four types of leadership styles, provides a basic description for each, and gives circumstances in which they’ll be effective.

Style	AUTOCRATIC
Description	Manager retains power and decision-making authority. Does not consult with employees, but rather provides direction. Motivation provided through a series of rewards and punishment.
When Effective	Good for managing untrained employees and those who need direction. Required in emergencies, when an autocratic leader must take charge. Often the best response to an employee’s

	challenge of leadership. Frequently used as transitional style for teams that have been badly managed and are performing poorly.
When Ineffective	Not a good management style when the team is highly motivated and well functioning or when employees know their jobs and don't need much supervision or direction. Generation X tends to resent this style.

Style	BUREAUCRATIC
Description	A rule-centered, procedure-oriented approach to management. Relies on hierarchy; when questioned, managers feel comfortable calling on support from above.
When Effective	Required for jobs that are highly regulated, where employees have no options on how to approach their work and must follow prescribed procedures.
When Ineffective	Will lead to demoralized workers in jobs requiring creativity or in which the manager needs the employee to exercise judgment.

Style	DEMOCRATIC OR PARTICIPATIVE
Description	Manager shares decision—making by seeking employee input—communicates the vision, informs employees about issues that affect them, keeps a dialogue going with staff—but retains final authority to make decisions.
When Effective	In situations where manager trusts that employees are capable and interested and has time to seek input. Complex decisions benefit from the input of others. Generally, employees like to have input into what affects them and respond positively when asked.
When Ineffective	When there is not enough time to get input, employees are not interested, or situation is so insignificant that additional input is not required. Regulatory or safety restrictions may also prohibit alternatives.

Style	LAISSEZ-FAIRE
Description	Sometimes called the “hands-off” style, employees are given full rein to solve problems and are responsible for directing their work with minimal supervision.
When Effective	Good for dealing with highly skilled and experienced teams; motivated, trustworthy employees; and those who take pride in their work.
When Ineffective	A poor choice if manager is not prepared to accept the recommendation of the team, or when employees do not have sufficient experience or interest to make decisions.

Although these styles are popular, they might not work for all organizations. The important thing to keep in mind when evaluating leadership training is that you need to do what works for you and your team. Don't be afraid to be creative and mix aspects of different styles.

46 Know Your Leadership Style

It's essential to understand yourself when leading a team. You'll need to know your style and how to adapt it to make it work best. Understanding your leadership style is important to keep a team organized and successful. To understand your leadership style, you'll need to look to what influences it.

Primary Style

Leadership styles are influenced by beliefs, values, preferences, and culture. However, most managers develop a primary style of management. The style evolves over time and is influenced, at its core, by the manager's basic personality.

Early Influences

The earliest influence on a leadership style is a person's upbringing. People base preferences on childhood experience. There are, however, several key aspects of family life that influence leadership: • Family dynamic for work and chores • Who was in charge and how they made decisions • Responsibility, whether to give direction or to trust in another's ability Another early influence on leadership style can be the supervisors you worked for early in your career. People tend to model what they experience. It is always better when the early manager is a good leader.

The actual style is less significant. The issue is whether the style appropriately fit the situation.

Current Influences

There are things influencing your leadership style right now. One of them is the culture of the company you work for. Some organizations value participation and input from managers and employees alike. Others want a firm, autocratic style of management. To be successful, you need to fit into what's normal for your employees and your organization.

Arguably the most significant influences of a leadership style are the requirements of the job and the people who do the job. Resist the temptation to do what is most comfortable for you at the expense of your employees. Doing so could lower morale and leave your employees thinking you're not responsive to their needs.

Help from the Experts

Management gurus Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard created a leadership model to help managers with the age-old problem of deciding what works best. In simple terms, the situational leadership model advocates flexibility. Managers need to adjust their leadership style to coincide with the needs of the follower or the employee.

Hersey and Blanchard challenge leaders to evaluate the readiness and willingness of their followers to perform required tasks. If a follower is qualified to complete the task and motivated to tackle it without being badgered, a laissez-faire style will work. Similarly, if the followers are unable or unwilling to complete a task, an autocratic style might be considered.

What It All Means

To be an effective leader, you need to know your leadership style. In addition to knowing enough about yourself to understand how you lead, you need to know how to adapt your style. It might not be right for the people on your team. Or maybe the people in sales get it, but accounting is lost. Flexibility goes hand in hand with leadership.

47 Never Give Them Reason to Question Your Integrity The thing about being a leader is that you can never stop being a leader. To be an effective leader you must be a good role model—day in, and day out. You must also have earned the trust of the members of your team in order for them to be willing to let you lead.

Warren Bennis, widely regarded as a pioneer of the contemporary field of leadership studies, cites four qualities that establish and foster trust in a leader: • Consistency • Empathy

• Integrity • Vision

Competence, caring, fairness, honesty, and candor are other leadership qualities that inspire workers to emulate their leaders.

Never Let Team Members Give Up on the Dream A manager must realize that trust is a huge commodity, one of the most valuable things you can possess. Once you've earned the trust of your employees, the

burden of maintaining it lies on your shoulders. To let them down is to risk having your team members give up on the dream you and they share of building something good and succeeding together.

There certainly are no shortages of examples of business or corporate scandals that take down managers while rocking the faith of employees. What began at Enron as inflated profits in 2001 turned out to be a financial reporting scandal of mammoth proportions, destroying the top management, as well as the trust and retirement funds of many employees.

You don't have to look to the national level, either. How many times during the past several years have you read in your local paper about bankers embezzling funds, lawyers bilking clients, and mortgage lenders offering deals to customers who clearly couldn't afford them? It seems that corruption is rampant and good leaders hard to find. What leaders sometimes forget is that when they go down, they risk taking their teams down with them. Employees don't expect bosses to be perfect, but they do expect them to possess the characteristics listed above. They expect them to be fair, honorable, and honest.

The Need for Integrity and Professionalism Within the Office A manager's integrity within the office covers many bases. It means that you've got to be up front and honest with employees. It means that you can't exhibit favoritism toward any employees or talk about an employee to other employees. You need to understand that, as a boss, you wear a big sign around your neck that says—you guessed it—BOSS. And as long as your employees are around, you can't remove the sign.

If you tell someone you're going to do something—do it. Or at least try as hard as you can to do it, and report back on your efforts.

Sure, managers are human. We come to work some days feeling tired, or upset over a disagreement with our spouse, or worried about an impending diagnosis from the doctor. We juggle appointments, and car repairs, and child-care issues, and financial concerns, just as our employees do. And sometimes we get upset with *our* bosses, just as our employees get upset with us.

While it may be tempting to confide in an employee, be aware that it is dangerous territory. If the employee decides to share your confidence, you have no one to blame but yourself. The safest confidants are those outside of the company. If you must talk to someone within your organization, make sure it's someone of equal management level or higher.

What you need to remember, though, is never to complain about your superiors in front of members of your team. As management, you are part of the larger “they” that makes decisions and sets policy. To complain to your employees about a decision or policy that “they” made separates you from “they,” which undermines your authority and professionalism. Even if you weren't involved with a decision or policy that affects your team, and regardless of what you think about it, you need to take ownership of the decision. “We” made the decision, not “they.” If your employees don't like it, they will at least respect you for not backing down from it.

The Need for Integrity Doesn't Stop at the Office Door Do you ever go out for a drink with the gang on Friday afternoon? Are you invited to weddings or holiday parties at employees' homes? As you know,

there are different styles of managing. While some managers draw a distinct line between work and social time, others are fine with spending time with employees outside of work.

The thing to keep in mind, though, is that to be effective as a boss, you can't throw off your BOSS sign when you leave the office. If you choose to socialize with members of your team, you need to set a standard for behavior. And be familiar with your company's policies regarding fraternizing between management and employees.

48 Set High Expectations for Your Team When employees describe an excellent place to work, they talk about great teamwork, a place where everyone pitches in to get the job done, all team members work hard, and the manager is fair.

You will rarely hear employees exclaiming over a workplace of low expectations in which employees try to avoid work and produce low-quality results. People want to work for winning organizations. Employee satisfaction is higher at successful companies because at successful companies, people work hard and share in the rewards.

The fact is that employees want to work for managers who hold their staffs accountable. Employees intuitively know that they should give 100 percent to their jobs. In fact, when companies expect employees to give 100 percent, they are more motivated to exceed that expectation. That only happens, though, when the manager holds everyone to the same standard. If some staff members are allowed to slack

off, high performers will begin to resent it, and over time will contribute less.

Aim High, and Your Employees Will Too—But Invest Them in the Project As a manager and motivator, you’ve got to set the bar high—for both yourself and your team. You also need to get team members to buy into your expectations. You can tell your employees that together, you’re going to achieve great things. If the employees don’t have a stake in how you’re going to do so, however, your expectations may not motivate them to try. In some cases, your expectations might seem unrealistic to employees, who may perceive that you’re setting them up for failure.

It’s fine to let your team know that you expect great things from them. But remember to bring them on board early on and have them buy into your lofty goals and your strategies on how to reach them.

Setting Benchmarks for Achievement Sure, your employees can accomplish great things, but it probably won’t happen overnight. Setting benchmarks for achievement of goals will help keep your team on track and give employees opportunities to celebrate successes on their way to reaching the bigger goal. Make sure that members of your team know that you are involved and interested in their work. Don’t hover, but ask frequently how they’re progressing. Ask them to report to you about their work and accomplishments and to consult with you about any problems that arise.

It’s a fine line sometimes between being overly hands-on and appearing to be disinterested about what your

employees are doing. Good advice is to communicate clearly what you expect your team to accomplish and let team members decide how they'll do so. Make it clear that you're there for them along the way, and let them know that you're appreciative of their efforts.

Tips for Getting Employees to Aim High and Achieve More Here are a few ways to entice employees into giving their all: • Establish stretch goals for yourself and share them with the team, explaining how you plan to accomplish those goals.

- Eliminate obstacles to success every day.
- Be a role model by working hard and following the rules without exception.
- Be fair and consistent in enforcing the rules.
- Don't be afraid to use discipline, but use it appropriately.
- Understand the power of the self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Involve the team in setting the standards.
- Celebrate reaching new heights, and work with the team to raise the bar another notch.
- Never accept mediocre work.
- Be action oriented and focus on the important.
- Teach others to identify what is important and help them to focus on it.
- Stamp out wasted work, and reward employees who do the same.

What You Should Never Say to Employees No matter how frustrated

or discouraged you get, there are certain phrases that you should never utter to employees. These work instantly to bring down morale and slash productivity: • It's not our problem.

- It's good enough.
- I just do as I'm told.
- They don't pay me enough.
- If only the customers would leave us alone, we could get some work done.
- Don't push yourself.
- I can't believe they are making us do this.
- Who really cares?

49 Be Your Team's Cheerleader

A team that meets and exceeds goals should be celebrated. Everyone likes to be recognized and appreciated for work well done, and your employees are no different. As their manager, it's your job to make sure everyone knows how good they are.

Knowing that you appreciate their efforts enough to share their achievements with others is a big deal for members of your team. They may never verbalize their appreciation, but they will respond to your enthusiasm and continue working to meet further goals.

How to Be Your Team's Cheerleader Keeping your team upbeat and productive can be a challenge, especially if your company, like many others, is demanding more and more of its employees. Being a cheerleader for your team, however, will go a long way in keeping them committed and enthusiastic. Here are a few tips on how to keep everyone feeling that rah-rah spirit: • Make sure that every time your team does something good, it shows up in the company newsletter.

- Send press releases to the business editor at your local newspaper announcing promotions and other significant achievements of your team. Don't overdo it, though, and report on every small accomplishment—the editor is likely to stop looking at your press releases.
- Post signs on company bulletin boards celebrating your team's accomplishments.

50 Review Leadership Competencies

According to Ninth House, a leading San Francisco-based consulting company, 100 percent of top-performing companies have adopted a defined set of leadership competencies.

What exactly are competencies, anyway? Competencies are explained as a collection of behaviors that together define successful performance. A competency model identifies the behaviors necessary in order to achieve competency in a particular area. For instance, if the competency area is effective decision making, the behaviors necessary to achieve that competency may be making timely and sound decisions, conducting risk analysis, and taking decisive action.

Leadership competencies were a huge deal during the 1990s, when a typical competency model could have up to twenty competencies and dozens of sub-behaviors.

Today, however, the trend is to focus on a limited number of competencies, all selected to drive the execution of key behaviors. Let's have a look at an example of a leadership competency model.

Competency	Key Behaviors
<i>Setting strategy</i>	Defines business direction, goals, and priorities; persistently communicates the strategic plan to all employees and externally to partners; actively seeks to influence others to support strategy; seeks strategy integration throughout the business.
<i>Results oriented</i>	Sets high realistic goals; monitors performance against clear and measurable standards and objectives; identifies and utilizes best practices within the system and industry.
<i>Employee engagement</i>	Coaches, mentors, and develops staff; delegates effectively; appropriately holds staff accountable; recognizes the contribution of staff; attracts the best talent.
<i>Execution</i>	Drives operating efficiencies through resource management; is functional expert, maintains awareness of current industry trends.
<i>Effective decision making</i>	Makes timely and sound decisions; conducts risk analysis and takes decisive action.
<i>Promotes quality</i>	Drives high quality standards throughout company; meets or exceeds customer expectations.

As you can see, the competencies are supported by the behaviors that will help to achieve them.

Understand How You Rate on Leadership Competencies If your company has identified core competencies, pay attention to them and familiarize yourself with the behaviors associated with the

competencies because they are the road map to success within your organization.

It is important to get feedback from others on how you stack up against the competencies. How do you rate for each one? Are you a novice, just developing the skills with which to master competencies? Perhaps you're a journeyman, competent and sure of your skills, or a master, able to demonstrate excellence and mentor others?

Excellent organizations do more than just develop the competencies. They review competencies annually to ensure that there is a tight link to the organizational strategy. They incorporate the competencies into the hiring process, performance appraisal systems, and training programs. Leaders are guided through mentoring and ongoing feedback to master the skills, with those who don't master them either leaving the organization or finding themselves at a career plateau.

In the new millennium, successful companies are those that can execute the business strategy with precision. Leaders are judged not on their ability to be warm and fuzzy with their staffs but on achieving objective outcomes.

51 Commit to Self-Development

The world is changing rapidly and relentlessly. In order to be successful as a manager, you've got to be willing to change along with it. Just because you're comfortable with one inventory-tracking software system doesn't mean it's the best one for your department to use. If there's a better one, you'd better be willing to learn how to use it and have it implemented. Don't ever become complacent in your role as a leader, and be willing to consider every suggestion you encounter. Encourage employees to come up with new ideas and, when they're put into place, let others know where they came from.

Complacency leads to obsolescence. Leaders strive to remain relevant in today's world by making a commitment to ongoing learning and development. Some areas in which smart managers make a point of seeking self-development include technology and information skills, time management, communication skills, stress management, memory improvement, project management, decision management, and problem solving. There is no shortage of seminars, workshops, and training for managers in these areas, and most companies are happy to support employees who wish to participate in self-improvement.

Twelve Steps a Leader Can Take Toward Self-Development Here's a guide to getting started in a self-development course toward stronger leadership:

• Read weekly publications pertaining to your field.

- Read a minimum of two business books a year.
- If available, get certified in your chosen field.
- Attend several professional society meetings annually.
- Mentor a new person.
- Seek opportunities to present at professional society meetings or within your company.
- Seek constructive criticism from others. Regularly seek input from peers, managers, and staff.
- Learn to be comfortable self-promoting your successes.
- Learn to value networking, and participate in a weekly networking opportunity.
- Commit to continuous education—set the example.
- Learn new skills.
- Incorporate new methods into routine work.

CHAPTER 10

How to Earn the Respect of Your Team

52 Make Sure Every Employee Has Responsibility This book contains a lot of information about the responsibilities of managers. You're responsible for attracting top talent, for finding the best job candidates, and for interviewing candidates in the proper manner, choosing the ones best suited for the jobs, and keeping them all happy once they show up to work.

It might be a relief, therefore, to switch gears for a few minutes and read about employee responsibility. The problem, however, is that in many cases, employee responsibility seems to be in short supply.

Managers across the country bemoan the fact that employees don't seem to take responsibility for their work. They complain that employees don't seem to be accountable or won't go the extra yard to address a concern or fix a problem.

These workers are known as disengaged employees, and there are a lot of them. A study reported in the *Gallup Management Journal* revealed that only 29 percent of

employees are fully engaged in their jobs. Fifty-four percent—more than half of the entire workforce—are not engaged, while another 17 percent are actively unengaged. Let's have a look at what that means:

- Engaged employees possess the willingness and ability to put forth great effort at work. They are enthusiastic and anxious to contribute. They don't head for the door five minutes before quitting time but are willing to stay on until the job is finished.

- Employees who are not engaged are those who show up but merely go through the motions of doing their jobs. There's no excitement, no "wow" factor, and no willingness to complete more than is absolutely necessary.
- Actively unengaged workers are the ones who cause managers to lose sleep. These employees not only are unhappy, they want everyone else to know that they're unhappy and why. The danger, of course, is that actively unengaged workers can demoralize other employees and undercut their accomplishments.

It goes without saying that engaged employees are more productive than unengaged, making them more beneficial to their companies. The question is, how can you encourage employees to remain engaged in their jobs so that they continue to be productive and happy at work?

Delegate in Order to Ensure Significant Responsibility for Every Employee A key factor in keeping employees engaged is knowing how to delegate responsibility to every member of your team. Engaged workers want to be involved. They want to know how their work fits in with the bigger picture and that they are making a difference within the company.

Most employees start in jobs as engaged workers. They're willing to give it a chance and to see how they'll fit in and what kind of difference they can make. If they are not assigned any responsibility, however, they lose their focus as to their role within the organization. Once that happens, they begin to disengage and lose their sense of employee responsibility. Your job, of course, is to keep them engaged by maintaining their levels of responsibility. Keep the following tips in mind when it's time to delegate and follow through with employees:

- Delegate the entire task. Engaged employees want to understand what is being asked of them and how their work fits into the bigger project or job.

- Link the assignment to the big picture. Get in the habit of always stressing how the assignment contributes to organizational goals.
- Make sure employees have the tools and equipment necessary to get the job done.
- Require regular progress reports to keep employees accountable and let them know that you're involved in their work.
- Follow up and provide feedback to employees. They need to know that you're interested.
- Determine how you define and measure success, and do it.
- Recognize and reward deserving employees.

Employees who are given significant responsibility are likely to remain invested and interested, and will strive to make a difference within the company with their work. Smart managers know this, and they are conscious of how work is delegated to ensure that every employee is responsible and accountable.

53 Know the Job of Every Employee

It's difficult to be an effective leader if you don't know what the members of your team are doing. That may sound like an odd thing to say, but the truth is that many managers have only very basic understandings (and sometimes not even that) of how employees spend their days.

That's not to say that you should spend your time sitting in cubicles, supervising your team members' work. You don't have to know how to perform every task that your team members perform. You should, however, clearly understand their jobs and job objectives.

Managers who rose through the ranks often find it easier when it comes to training employees, setting realistic performance goals, and understanding the problems their team members encounter. If you landed your position without holding many, or any other positions, it's important to consider how you can become familiar with the job of every employee.

Find Out Firsthand the Jobs of Your Team

Schedule a day to work side-by-side with an employee to learn what she does and the obstacles and challenges she might face. You don't need to become an expert or be able to take over her position, but, at a minimum, you should understand her primary responsibilities, how long it takes to complete typical tasks, and the resources that are necessary for her success.

If you've already held the position of the employee, you'll still need to check in periodically to see how the job has changed—or perhaps how it should be changing. Many managers have assumptions about positions that aren't accurate. It's difficult to provide coaching and guidance if you don't know the ins and outs of a position. As a manager,

you need to know the responsibilities of those who work for you.

Knowing the Job Isn't the Same As Performing the Job
Knowing the responsibilities of various employees, however, does not mean that you should perform their work. A hands-on manager is a good thing, but a manager who takes on the jobs of her employees and lets her own work pile up is not providing the necessary support for her staff. You are a leader, and you need to lead.

If you find yourself taking on the work of your employees, ask yourself why:

- Do staff members simply need more help?

- Do you feel guilty that you haven't been more helpful?
- Have you set the expectation that you're always available to help, so that employees now depend on you?
- Do you feel that no one can do the work as well as you can?
- Do you not trust employees to complete their work satisfactorily?

If you're spending too much time helping employees finish their work, analyze the situation and figure out why it's occurring. If your department is understaffed, get started writing a justification as to why more staff is necessary. If you feel guilty, make a list of managerial tasks you haven't performed and how your staff will benefit from them when you do. If employees aren't competent enough to do the work, request additional training.

While it's important that employees perform in the jobs for which they were hired, it's also important that they understand their responsibilities and goals.

54 Be a Visible and Accessible Boss

We've probably all known managers who were more comfortable in their offices than out of them, who preferred e-mail to face-to-face conversation, and who never seemed to be comfortable around their employees. That style of management negatively affects morale and productivity.

In Search of Excellence, a landmark book written in 1982 by Tom Peters and Robert H. Waterman, introduced a concept called management by walking around (MBWA). Simply put, Peters encouraged managers to get out of their offices and spend time in the trenches with their employees. Managers were to observe their employees at work and listen to their ideas and problems.

How to Implement Management by Walking Around **There are 10 steps to implementing MBWA:**

1. Spend at least 20 percent of your workweek out of your office, interacting with staff. Block out this time and stick to it. You need to make MBWA a priority.
2. Spend time with every level of employee, not just the ones with whom you have contact at meetings. Make it a priority to spend your MBWA time with staff members who report to your managers.
3. Visit every area on a regular basis. Employees will be surprised to see you at first, and might not be all that welcoming. If you are persistent and they understand you're serious about your mission, you'll begin to notice changes in their attitudes.
4. Ask employees how you can help them. Find out the obstacles they face. Fix what you can, and be honest about what you're unable to change. Word will spread

quickly about changes you're able to make on behalf of employees.

5. Listen. You should spend 80 percent of your MBWA time listening to employees, getting their ideas on how their jobs can be improved.
6. Thank employees for jobs well done. Some managers are uncomfortable thanking employees for performing jobs they're paid to do. Employees, however, want to be appreciated and are motivated by appreciation. A simple but meaningful thank you can go a long way in building trust and loyalty throughout an organization.
7. Share your vision for the company. Talk about the big picture and tell employees how they fit into that picture.
8. Communicate good news and bad news, but more good than bad. Employees want to know that you're leading them in the right direction. Be honest, but don't dwell on bad news. Don't sugarcoat the truth, either, because it will affect the trust factor between you and your employees.
9. Share information about yourself, and learn about your employees. Talk about your family and outside interests. Do you play softball every Friday night? Volunteer at the soup kitchen on weekends? Share, and be sure to show an interest in your employees' lives outside of work.
10. Catch your employees doing something right. This tactic works in elementary schools, and it's equally effective in the workplace. Recognizing workers for little things will encourage them to accomplish big things.

55 Pay Attention to How You Spend Your Time

A manager who is disorganized and undisciplined is not likely to earn the respect of his team. You can't announce a 10 a.m. staff meeting, not show up until 10:45 because you were out on a call and forgot about it, and expect to be admired and highly regarded. Every one of us has the same twenty-four hours in a day. What separates the effective manager from the ineffective manager is how she chooses to spend her time.

Many managers, at some point of their careers, take a time-management course. Some hire business coaches to guide them. Nearly all of the time, the goal of these types of measures is to become more organized and efficient.

There are all kinds of seminars, books, and courses available that provide tips and techniques for better managing your time. The problem is that there is no secret formula. Learning to manage your time is similar to dieting in order to lose weight. Nearly everyone can do both of those things successfully—the challenge is in making sure you don't backslide and end up right back where you started.

Managing time and dieting both require changed behaviors. Anyone can pick up some techniques for managing time better, but if you don't change your behavior to accommodate your new knowledge, it will be of little benefit. And, as you know, old habits are hard to break.

Difficult, But Not impossible

It requires discipline and determination to become an effective time manager, but it's certainly not impossible. In his book *First Things First*, business guru Stephen R. Covey encourages managers to move beyond the basics of time management, which stress establishing processes to manage paper, managing lists, and setting goals, to identify what is truly important.

Managers must move beyond the urgent tasks that eat up time to identify and act upon what is important. By focusing on those really important matters, and not the urgent ones, managers can be successful in their jobs while still finding time for activities that establish balance in their lives.

This advice isn't new. Time-management experts have for decades encouraged managers to avoid getting caught up in the problems that crop up daily and get termed "a crisis." Instead, they should learn to set goals—long-term, mid-term, and short-term. Progress should occur every day in meeting those goals, and the daily stresses that eat up time, such as e-mail, phone interruptions, and low-priority tasks should be avoided.

Strategies for Managing Your Time

The list below is a common-sense guide to keeping track of your time and figuring out how you can spend it more effectively. It's not a miracle cure, but if you use it as an impetus to change behaviors, it can be useful: *1. Evaluate how you spend your time.* Keep a time log containing blocks broken into fifteen-minute segments for three to seven days. Jot down everything, including phone calls, interruptions, and work and non-work activities. Analyze the log and identify your time wasters.

2. Identify your most productive time and protect it. If you are a morning person, don't spend that time checking e-mail or conducting other routine work. Reserve your most productive time for truly important work.

3. Develop a system to track your daily schedule and goals. Employ whatever means you feel comfortable using. A Blackberry allows quick access to e-mail, Internet, and phone, but some people prefer paper and pencil. It's not the system that's important, it's the deliberation with which you learn to allow—or not allow—

activities and tasks to be placed on your schedule. Make time for the important.

4. *Become ruthless with paper, determining to touch it only once.* As you sort through a stack of paper, scan each item and make the decision to either toss it in the garbage, read it immediately (and either file it or toss it so that it doesn't end up back in a pile), or place it in the tickler file for follow-up. Note the required action in your planning system.
5. *Take a class to learn how to organize your computer.* It will save you hours searching for lost documents.
6. *Learn to stop interruptions.* When people stop by unexpectedly, have a stand-up conference. They will get the message and keep the meeting short.
7. *Do not let e-mail and instant messaging rule your day.* Set specific time aside to go through e-mail. Let people know that you will respond to e-mail twice a day. Tell people to instant message only for extremely urgent matters.
8. *Learn to delegate.* Follow up on what you delegate.
9. *At least once a month, identify one item that you will stop doing.* Check with customers about reports you prepare and send out. If they don't use them, stop doing them. Identify a committee that can get by without you, and ask permission to be excused.
10. *Spend part of every day organizing your goals for that day or the next day.* The best time to organize your next day usually falls at the end of the current day.

56 Keep Meetings Productive and Meaningful

A short meeting that accomplishes what's intended serves to keep people informed and on the same page. A long, drawn-out meeting during which participants wander from the topics at hand, no decisions are made, and nothing important is accomplished is a drain on productivity and can negatively affect employee morale.

Fast Company, a New York City-based magazine devoted to covering the latest and best business trends and practices, developed a list of "The Seven Sins of Deadly Meetings," along with some strategies to make meetings meaningful and productive.

The Seven Sins of Deadly Meetings

Sin Number One: People do not take meetings seriously. They don't arrive on time and often leave before the meeting ends. During the meeting, some employees doodle aimlessly, whisper to their neighbors, tune out, or even try to complete other work. To avoid this, the meeting organizer should focus on meeting basics, such as an agenda, rules to govern the meeting, and sticking to a process. Managers need to be trained in order to be able to successfully facilitate a meeting.

Sin Number Two: Meetings are too long. They should accomplish twice as much in half the time. One way to convince people to make meetings shorter and more productive is to track how much the meetings cost. Simply multiply the hourly rate of each person in the room by the amount of time spent in the meeting, and add the figures together. Often, after this exercise is conducted at several meetings, the organization will decide to offer meeting-management training.

Sin Number Three: People stray from the topic. Participants spend more time digressing than discussing. The solution to this problem is to create an agenda in

advance of the meeting, and to get buy-in on the input from others as to what the agenda should include. Some of the best agendas record not only the topic but also the purpose. They inform participants which items are intended for discussion, which are for information only, or which requires a decision. Plus, they allot a certain amount of time to each item.

Sin Number Four: Nothing happens once the meeting ends. People don't convert decisions into action. A simple solution to this is to track the outcomes of the meeting on white boards and flip charts for all to see. A designated person should record the key points and required follow-up activities on a computer during the meeting. Distribute the minutes immediately as the meeting ends. Real-time minutes with follow-up activities in bold, including the responsible party assigned, can go a long way toward improving meeting follow-up.

Sin Number Five: People don't tell the truth. There's plenty of conversation, but not much candor. So why don't people speak the truth? The three most common reasons are that the meeting facilitator doesn't solicit opinions, dominant personalities are allowed to intimidate the rest of the group, and there is a general lack of trust among participants. People are afraid to speak up. Better training for the facilitator can help with the first two reasons. The trust issue is more difficult to solve. One solution is to allow anonymity by using technology to gather input from the group, prioritize issues, and record individual decisions. A lack of willingness to share ideas openly leads to poor decisions and a lack of support for the decisions once the meetings have ended.

Sin Number Six: Meetings are always missing important information, so critical decisions get postponed. *Fast Company* suggests that meetings should be timed to include all the relevant people and the necessary data. The

Texas-based computer services giant EDS has designed meeting rooms that allow easy access to data. They call these high-tech rooms Capture Labs because the participants have access to incredible amounts of data through sophisticated electronics.

Sin Number Seven: Meetings never get better. People make the same mistakes over and over again. It's only through trial and error and continued effort to improve that this concern can be overcome. Leaders should make the time to evaluate each meeting as it ends and determine what needs to be changed.

57 Keep a Level Personality Style

Extreme behaviors cannot be tolerated in the workplace, and that includes managers. Employees need to know what to expect from managers. Someone who is personable and friendly in the morning and completely unapproachable by afternoon is not good for morale, productivity, or the sanity of employees.

Avoid Hostile Work Environments at All Costs There's been a lot of discussion in past years about hostile work environments, and the number of claims filed has been increasing. A book called *The Bully at Work*, by Gary and Ruth Namie, claims that 81 percent of workplace bullying is carried out by supervisors and that employees are becoming less and less tolerant of it.

To avoid these sorts of problems, first employ some common sense and a simple rule that you probably learned as a child: Treat others as you would like to be treated. That means no yelling, screaming, or giving someone the cold shoulder. It means displaying an approachable demeanor

that allows employees to feel comfortable with you. Your job is to provide direction and guidance to staff. You can't do that if employees are avoiding you because they're afraid or resentful of your actions.

The Tools You'll Need

Emotional Intelligence , a landmark book by Daniel Goleman, published in 1995, introduced the concept of emotional intelligence. People who are attuned to their own emotions and those of others will be more successful in their personal and professional lives, Goleman claimed. Furthermore, he said, 90 percent of poor manager performance is linked to ineffective emotional intelligence. The tools you need to score high for emotional intelligence are these:

- *Self-awareness*: This is knowing your emotions by recognizing feelings as they happen and being able to discriminate among them. Leaders must recognize how they react to various situations and understand the cause of their emotions. That makes it easier to control reactions.

- *Mood management*: Handle feelings as they occur, and ensure that your reactions are relevant and appropriate to the situation at hand.
- *Self-motivation*: Direct your energies toward a goal. Learn to overcome self-doubt, inertia, and impulsiveness. Managers need to become comfortable in taking calculated risks. Self-doubt and inertia lead to slow decisions or no decisions, both of which frustrate staff and management. Impulsive behavior leads to poor decisions, because those people don't take time to solicit help from others, or they quickly dismiss the input without giving it consideration.
- *Empathy* : This is recognizing the feelings of others by tuning in to verbal and nonverbal clues. Managers must

be able to take in to account the feelings and concerns of others. If you discount others' reactions, you'll have less chance of success because you won't know how much resistance you're facing. By tuning in to others, you can work together to overcome barriers.

- *Managing relationships:* Handling interpersonal interactions, conflict resolution, and negotiations are important tools. Every leader needs to be effective at working with his or her peers, subordinates, and lower-level managers. Conflict and problems happen daily. How you handle that conflict will help determine whether or not you're a strong leader.

58 Don't Make Excuses for Staff Members

Most managers don't like being thought of as the bad guy or police officer of their employees. Many times, however, managers neglect to follow through and hold employees accountable for their actions.

Consistency requires time and energy, which can be difficult and stressful. Most managers don't enjoy disciplining or even correcting employees, and many tend to let little things slide by. They have good intentions of dealing with poor performance, but somehow the day ends without the necessary follow-up with employees who are late, park in the wrong areas, make minor errors, or display attitudes that aren't in line with what you'd like.

A frustration for managers is that behavioral and performance issues are ongoing and must be dealt with continuously. You may spend hours—even days—dealing with a behavioral or performance issue with an employee and see positive results. Chances are, however, that the

minute you cease to reinforce the changed behavior, the employee will backslide into the previous behavior or performance.

Overlooking behaviors or making excuses for employees is a dangerous practice. One, it affects the productivity of your team. Two, it can cause hard feelings among team members and toward you if they believe someone else is being given special privileges.

Little Things Mean a Lot

A good manager learns quickly that following up on little things goes a long way to creating a high-performing team. Employees take their cues from what happens around them. If some staff members show up late to work and meetings, others will assume that they can, too. Most employees expect to have to follow the rules, but when they see others taking advantage, they feel they also should be entitled to do likewise.

It might seem petty to strictly enforce basic rules of time, attendance, telephone etiquette, and how employees treat one another. Ignoring them, however, can result in low morale and hard feelings. Everyone needs to be held accountable for all rules. Most employees understand that others will occasionally make a mistake that affects the team, will arrive late, or will need to make an extended personal call. Most employees want management to be flexible and understanding when those things occur. When mistakes or poor behavior become a habit and are not dealt with by management, however, it will become a big problem.

Getting Your Team Back on Track

What should you do, then, if your team is not disciplined and has been allowed to drift? If you, a manager who has

overlooked performance and behaviors, suddenly start writing up staff and enacting disciplinary measures, you'll appear to be hypocritical and inconsistent.

A better way to proceed is to schedule a staff meeting and share what you've observed. You'll need to acknowledge that you've not been as attentive to matters as you should have been. Discuss with employees the impact that this can have on morale and productivity. Then announce that you're making a new start and that everyone has a clean slate.

Review the policies, and make sure every employee understands the expectations and the ramifications if rules are broken. Then immediately begin to monitor performance, and follow up right away on any problems. There may be some initial grumblings as workers settle in and accept your new expectations of them, but stick with it. Your employees will respect you and perform better for you because of it.

Making Exceptions in Special Circumstances

Managers sometimes feel they need to make allowances for employees who are experiencing especially difficult circumstances. Perhaps a child is seriously ill, or there are grave financial problems.

When these types of events occur, a manager needs to use good judgment. If you know that the problem will rectify itself soon, you certainly can use some leniency and make exceptions to departmental rules. All of your employees will be appreciative for that because we all like to be supported during difficult times. Where judgment is required is figuring out when enough is enough. At what point does the exception you've made for one employee become too much of a burden on the overall group?

A human resources director who teaches coaching for improved performance tells managers that every time they

make an exception, they should realize they still need to follow the steps of progressive discipline. If, for instance, you allow an employee to be late twenty or thirty times because you know there are serious child-care issues, you can't turn around one day and fire the employee because you've suddenly decided that she's taken advantage of the situation.

As a fair manager, you'd have to start at the beginning of the progressive discipline steps and issue a verbal warning. By this time, your employee no doubt assumes you don't have a problem with her being late so often. She assumes that you're in her corner—that you really understand her situation. You have to make it clear that her actions are detrimental to the rest of the team and you can no longer make an exception for her. Then you can begin to hold her accountable.

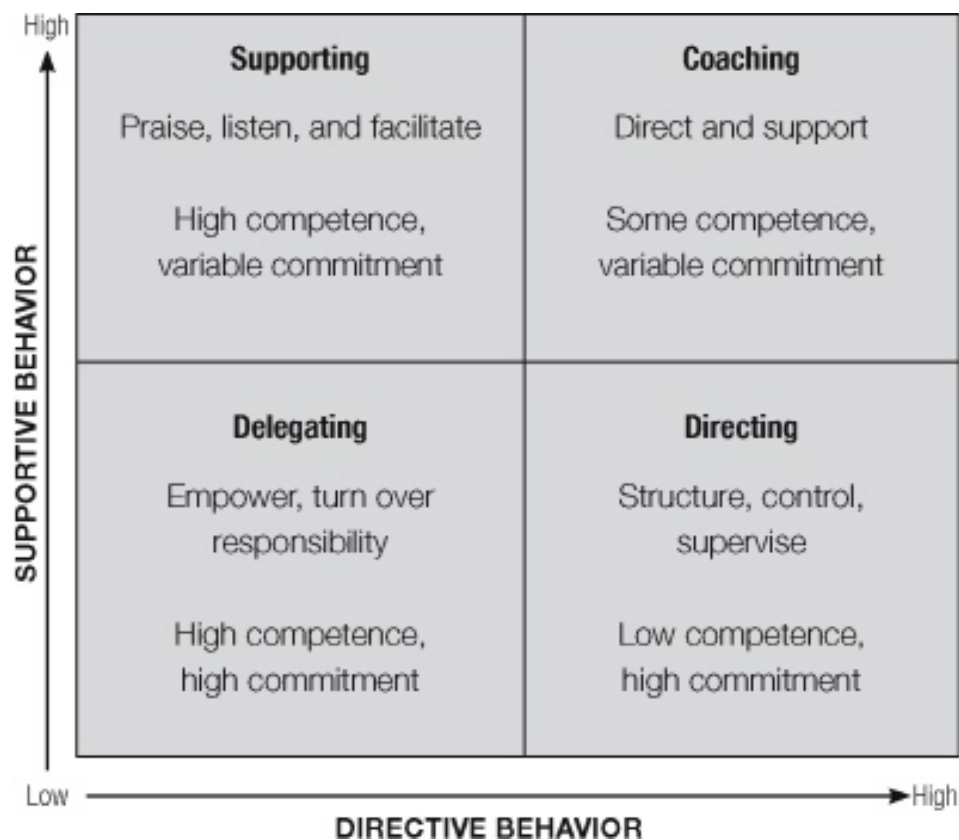
It's not easy to be a fair and consistent boss. If you are, however, you'll earn the highest praise a staff member can give, which goes something like this: "It's great working in this department, because everyone pitches in and we work together."

59 Match Your Leadership to Each Employee

A good manager understands that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to handling employees. What works to motivate one person will be a complete turn-off to another.

Fortunately, there is a proven and easy way to provide leadership and direction on an individual basis. It's called the situational leadership model, which was developed in the late 1960s by management gurus Ken Blanchard (best known for the *One-Minute Manager* series) and Paul Hersey.

It's likely that you're familiar with the model. Even so, it's worth another look. The following table, adapted from the work of Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey, is a tool that enables managers to match appropriate leadership styles to employees' competence and commitment levels. Situational leadership calls for managers to flex their leadership styles depending on the circumstances associated with various tasks.



Using the model of situational leadership when assigning a task, a manager evaluates an employee's competence (ability and skill) and his commitment (motivation and desire to perform) and then selects the appropriate leadership style for the particular situation.

It takes some getting used to, but after practice using the model, it becomes second nature. You simply ask yourself

three questions:

- Does this employee know how to perform the task I've asked him to complete?

- If so, to what degree is he equipped to do so?
- Is this employee willing to do what I've asked him?

Once you've determined the answers to those questions, you match up the employee with one of the four categories included in the model and flex your leadership style to best suit the characteristics of the employee. Let's have a look at the different categories of leadership styles.

Supporting

Supporting is a leadership style that managers should use every day. Experienced staff members often have the skills necessary to perform the work, but they may not apply themselves to the job. When that occurs, a manager should make an effort to understand why motivation is lacking. Is it because the employees don't like the assignment? Do they feel overburdened? That the job should have been assigned to someone else? As a manager, you need to get to understand the reason for the lack of motivation and respond accordingly. If employees are feeling overburdened, you may need additional team members. By listening to their concerns, you'll be able to select the appropriate supportive behavior.

Coaching

Coaching is a leadership style that's appropriate when an employee has some ability to do a job, coupled with variable commitment. In this situation, a manager should help the employee master the skill. The manager should also find out what is causing the variable commitment to the task so that she can develop an appropriate response. Someone who lacks motivation needs to be sold on why the task is

important and how it fits into the big picture. As a manager, you need to be directive and supportive in order to boost motivation. Stay in close contact with the employee until you're confident that he can complete the task on his own.

Delegating

Delegating should be the goal of a good manager because it means that you have skilled and motivated employees carrying out tasks. When you reach this level of management, you should allow employees to perform without interference as much as possible. The style calls for low supportive behaviors, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't occasionally thank employees or recognize their performance.

Directing

Directing is a leadership style that's applicable when the employee doesn't have the skills required to do the job but is open and eager to learn. It makes sense to employ the directing style when an employee is new to an assignment. Your efforts should be directed toward teaching and directing the employee to master the task and to encourage the employee's willingness. Your approach should be professional, yet warm and helpful.

Don't Get Stuck on a Style

An important point to remember is that most employees will jump from box to box, depending on the task assigned. Very experienced workers may almost always remain in the "delegating" box, but they could shift over to another occasionally. You have to be willing to flex your style constantly to meet the needs of your staff.

As you've read before, no manager is perfect. Understanding the attributes that employees value and appreciate, however, such as a flexible management style, good time-management skills, equal treatment of all, and being visible and accessible, will help you to earn the respect of your team, resulting in a happier and more productive staff.

CHAPTER 11

Building a Great Team 60 Fulfill the Expectations of Your Employees Our society pretty much revolves around teams. The National Sporting Goods Association reports that more than 20 million kids sign up each year to play baseball, soccer, hockey, football, basketball, lacrosse, and other team sports. School-aged children learn early on to work in teams, and they continue to do so through high school and college.

Industry Week magazine reports that 68 percent of small companies employ teams for projects, and huge companies such as General Electric include team skills as part of their management curriculum.

Employees of every generation recognize the value of working in teams:

- *Baby Boomers* (born between 1946 and 1964) thrive on teamwork. They enjoy collaborative learning and working as part of a group, and, according to a study produced by Development Dimensions International (DDI), a global consulting firm headquartered in Pittsburgh, Boomers thrive in a team culture because they are good at nurturing relationships and excel at collaboration.

- *Generation Xers* (born between 1965 and 1978) tend to be independent, but they crave the connections and ability to work with others around shared goals. They will embrace the team concept, as long as the team focuses

on solving immediate needs and producing concrete results. They want to be part of a team that requires their unique skills. Gen Xers seek teams in which leadership is shared based on knowledge and skill, rather than position.

- *Generation Y* (born between 1979 and 1988), also called the Millennials, has grown up knowing little except teamwork.
- Boys and girls have participated in sports since an early age, and their generation has experienced team learning. This generation comes to work expecting to participate on teams. Workers want to be mentored and encouraged, and they expect constant feedback.

Managers Must Be Willing and Able to Be Team Leaders Because this team mentality is so ingrained in our society, including our businesses, managers need to become effective team leaders. Some managers aren't comfortable with team management and try to minimize teams within their departments. That rarely is successful because employees want, and expect, to work in teams. If you are a manager who is uncomfortable with team leadership, there are many books, courses, and seminars available to help you learn the necessary skills.

Leading a team often can be a springboard to career advancement. If you ask a successful executive how she came to be in her current position, she often will remember a mentor who helped her along the way. A mentor often nominates the less-experienced worker to lead a team that brings high visibility in the company and launches a career.

61 Work Hand-in-Hand with Your Team

An effective and respected team leader supports his team continually and is always there for his employees. When you work closely with your team, it makes your life easier and your team members happier.

A manager who is aloof and distant from his team may be setting up himself and his employees for failure.

Your role as team leader is distinct from those of team members, yet it is intricately intertwined with that of every employee. A good manager is an active, involved member of a team, not someone who dispatches assignments and orders and then retreats to his office with little responsibility of his own.

The following sections provide some examples of what an involved, hands-on manager might say to members of his team as he fulfills key responsibilities of team leadership.

Logistical Leadership

This leader's key responsibility is to take leadership for logistical tasks, including setting up meetings. In this role, the leader arranges for the time and place of the meeting, sets the agenda, keeps the minutes, and encourages participation. Here are some things you might hear: • "Jane, the CAL team is meeting on Tuesday. You missed the last two meetings, can we count on you being at this one?"

- "Before the end of the day, let's get together to think about next week's meeting agenda."
- "John, I'll work with you on how to lay out your report. Call me and set up a time for us to get together."

Support and Coaching Leadership

This leader's key responsibility is to support and coach members, with a focus on ensuring everyone has the skills necessary to accomplish the work and a stress on good team dynamics. In this role, the leader arranges for needed training and development. He helps facilitate problem solving, stresses collaboration, seeks to motivate and inspire through sharing the vision, and provides constructive feedback and recognition. Here are some things you might hear: • "Before we move into the data analysis stage, I have arranged for the quality department to come and give us an in-service on how to read the SAP reports."

- "Good work, John. This is exactly what we needed in order to be able to move ahead with the project. Thanks for everything."
- "I'm not sure we're on track with the data gathering, so let's pull a sub group together next week to try to hammer it out. I have some information that should help, and I'll make sure you get a chance to see it before the meeting."

Tracking Progress Leadership

This leader's key responsibility is to track team progress. In this role, the leader establishes timelines and keeps status reports. He coordinates with other groups that may impact the team's progress and makes certain the team communicates with areas that they have the potential to impact. Here are some things you might hear: • "Susan, it seems like the marketing department has not been able to give enough time to your layout. It's important that the project stay on track, so I'll call Keshia and try to move things along."

- “Wow, it appears from these numbers that the project is coming in \$20,000 over budget. Let me work with finance to get their buy in before we go much further.”

Redirecting the Team Leadership

This leader’s key responsibility is to redirect the team as required or necessary. In this role, the leader takes responsibility to coordinate communication among the organization’s leadership and keeps everyone apprised of changes to the original scope of the project. Here are some things you might hear: • “Jose, I just wanted to let you know that we’ve evaluated six different systems, and the team is leaning toward the Gruno product, not the Williams product as I originally proposed. The cost differential is \$50,000.”

- “Hey, everyone, I met with senior management last week. Everyone is so pleased with the work we’re doing that they’ve asked us to expand our project to look at the Washington line.”

These examples should give you an idea of how a good manager stays in close touch with the workings of his team. He knows who is doing what, has a clear idea of deadlines and time constraints, understands interaction between his team and other departments, and recognizes when a team member has made exceptional progress. Managers are busy people, and it is sometimes tempting to pull back from your team to attend to your own business. When you refrain from doing so, however, and stay hand-in-hand with team members, your employees will appreciate it.

62 Be Intentional about Designing Your Team Teams change as projects are completed and new ones

assigned. Depending on the size of your department, your employees may work together in teams frequently or infrequently. If you have a small department in which every member is always part of a common team, your ability to design the team may be limited to times when you hire new employees. If your department is large, you can interchange employees and tailor teams for specific projects. This could mean you'll be designing teams on a frequent basis.

A resource for managers who frequently must design teams to fill specific needs is a book by Francis L. Ulschak and Sharon M. Snowmantle, titled *Team Architecture: The Manager's Guide to Designing Effective Work Teams*. Although it was written specifically for the health-care industry, the book contains plenty of information for managers in a wide variety of fields.

Susan M. Heathfield, a management development consultant and the Guide to Human Resources at About.com, has developed twelve tips for building effective teams: *1. Set clear expectations.* Make sure team members know why they have come together and that everyone is clear on the purpose and the mission.

2. *Establish context.* Every member should understand how the efforts of the team benefit the company and be able to articulate how his or her work fits in with the organization's bigger picture.
3. *Identify commitment.* Verify that every team member wants to be part of the team and will make the necessary time to be actively engaged in the team's work.
4. *Verify competence.* Make sure that team members have the necessary skills and abilities to accomplish the goal of the team and that the team has the right mix of members for the project at hand.
5. *Set up a charter.* Every team should have a charter, a document that specifies the purpose and scope of the team's work. It should identify the membership makeup, as well as the broad strategies the team will follow. Some charters specify the team's mission and vision.
6. *Establish control.* Teams need to be empowered to take action. Management should specify the extent of the team's authority. As long as the team stays within that authority, it should be free to make decisions.
7. *Verify collaboration.* Make sure the team has established guidelines as to how it plans to work together and an appropriate strategy for how it will accomplish its goals and that all team members are on board with them.
8. *Communicate.* Be certain that everyone is clear concerning the priority of the task. Encourage team members to be honest in their participation and to engage in healthy dialogue. Encourage feedback, address the issue of potential conflict, and make sure that team members have all the information and data they need to make decisions.
9. *Welcome creative innovations.* Does your organization truly champion change? Encourage team members to

work creatively, and employ new ideas and unique approaches.

10. Establish consequences. Identify the positive rewards for achievement and the potential consequences if the team is not successful.

11. Coordinate. Make sure there is coordination between the team and any central body. See that the team is focused on customer needs and that team members are open to suggestions from others.

12. Address cultural diversity. Be aware of the necessity to address the cultural needs of each team member regarding issues such as performance appraisals, job descriptions, and rewards.

Teams Begin and Finish with Very Different Dynamics
Teams are dynamic, changing organisms. The moods of their members change as the team works through a project. It's generally accepted that teams progress through four stages:

- **Forming**
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing

Initial excitement and anxiety during the forming stage typically gives way to fretfulness and uncertainty regarding the project's outcome during the storming period. Once a team sets its pace and members get comfortable with one another—the norming stage—productivity rises as all members get involved at an increased level during the performing stage.

TEN ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD TEAM MEMBER

1. Competent; excellent technical and professional skills
2. Strong interpersonal skills; good communicator
3. Shares openly; freely shares knowledge and expertise

4. Respectful of authority and others

5. Customer-focused; sees things from the customer's point of view
6. Positive; self-reliant, happy, enjoys work
7. Welcomes feedback; willing to adapt as required
8. Aware; alert to team dynamics, focuses on the win-win solution
9. Dependable; keeps commitments
10. Integrity; honest and trustworthy, true to himself

Managers need to understand team members' attitudes and concerns over these different stages and be available to direct and advise. Your leadership style must be adaptable to the needs of the team at every step.

63 Understand the Function of Different Teams As you've probably figured out by now, teamwork and committed and enthusiastic team members are crucial to your company's productivity. That said, it's also important that a manager assemble the right kind of team for the task at hand. To do so, she has to fully understand the situation and carefully consider her options. Some

problems can be taken care of by having a discussion at a staff meeting; others require detailed reports and analysis. Whatever the need, it's better to take a bit more time and get it right than to do it fast and have to explain disastrous results.

Recognizing Different Types of Teams

There are several types of teams, depending upon the project:

- *The work team:* All team members report to the same manager, and they work together to achieve the department's goals. They are a team because they are dependent upon one another to get the job done.

- *The focused team:* These teams exist for a specific purpose and maintain a sharp focus on a core business strategy. Examples of focused teams include safety committees, planning committees, cost-reduction teams, and reward-and-recognition teams.
- Team members tend to come from throughout the organization and meet regularly to ensure high quality in each area of focus.
- *The project team:* This team works on solving problems and process improvement. Project teams often have cross-functional membership, and the members take time away from their regular work to develop and implement process improvements. The leadership comes from within the team, not necessarily from the manager.

There are several types of project teams:

- *Quality circles:* They're made up of employees from the same work area who come together on a regular basis to discuss process improvements. They usually meet at a specific time and have a formal agenda.
- *Kaizen teams:* They address a physical process that can be directly observed. The process is studied as it's taking place to try to identify areas of improvement.
- *Lean/process improvement:* This group looks horizontally at issues, using people familiar with multiple disciplines or functions. Once the problem is identified, the team selects improvement options.
- *Six Sigma:* This group provides the most analytical approach to process improvement. The team applies sophisticated tools and analysis. The training required to be a part of this team can last months.

As a manager, you should be deliberate about the type of team you put together, and make sure employees understand the goals and purposes of the team.

64 Overcome Resistance from Difficult Team Members Difficult people are everywhere, and at some point, every team—and manager—will have to deal with one. Difficult people are disruptive, and they challenge our ability to accomplish what we need to do. Other team members tend to disengage when working with someone who has an aggressive or

abrasive personality, rather than having to address the matter. If you're faced with a difficult team member who is affecting the performance of the rest of the team, you can't ignore the issue.

It's difficult to imagine, but often a difficult person does not realize that he's causing a problem. He might recognize that a problem exists but has no understanding that he's the reason for it. Other team members will understand the situation but not feel empowered enough or responsible for addressing it.

As a manager, it's your responsibility to address the problem and take steps to correct it:

- Meet with the person who is the source of the problems and describe the situation.

- Work with the difficult employee to set goals toward solving the problem. Perhaps an immediate goal would be for the employee to say good morning when she enters the workplace. A one-week goal might be to stop sighing when another team member asks her to do something.
- Let the employee know that if there is not marked improvement, you will need to take disciplinary action, and his job may be in jeopardy.

Keeping Conflict Healthy and Productive

Whenever you have a group of people working together, you can expect that some sort of conflict will occur. Each

person has his or her own ideas about how the work should progress. We all have biases and thoughts on how things should operate. We all have different attitudes, values, beliefs, and needs. From time to time, there will be personality conflicts.

Mature, reasonable people are able to work through conflict in a healthy and productive manner and can even turn it into a positive experience. Conflict can bring about growth and insight. It can produce new and different styles of work. It can generate ideas and opinions that may not have been previously considered.

When conflict is handled poorly, however, it can be damaging and divisive. Mishandled conflict can result in hurt feelings, anger, resentment, personal disrespect, and disengagement from the job.

Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, who in the 1970s developed the Thomas-Kilmann Instrument, a tool to help people deal effectively with conflict, recommend six ways to reduce conflict. These rules also apply when you're in a situation in which you're going to have to confront an employee about his or her difficult behavior: *1. Make sure relationships are the first priority.* Always remain positive under pressure.

2. Keep the people and the problem separate. You want to solve the problem without damaging the other person.

3. Pay attention to the interests that are being presented. Through effective listening, the leader can better understand the other person's situation. Try to identify what is important to your opponent and why.

4. Listen first, talk second. Try to understand the other person's viewpoint.

5. Set out facts. Both parties need to clearly articulate their positions.

6. Explore options together. By working together, you may find a way to meet everyone's needs.

As long as you have employees, you will occasionally run into difficult employees. In the team-driven business world, however, difficult employees must be addressed and handled before they cause damage to the efforts of other team members.

65 Expect Commitment from Your Team

As a team comes together, it's important for the team leader to be direct and honest regarding expectations. How much time will be required from each member? Will there be work outside the formal team meeting? Will it be necessary to work some overtime?

Don't sugarcoat the facts, and make sure you communicate your expectations clearly. You need members to commit to the work, or the team will not be successful. If everyone reports to you, set times for regular meetings to keep everyone on board and up to date. If team members report to another area, communicate directly with that supervisor so that he or she understands the commitment and will support the participation.

Most teams have sets of ground rules that they commit to follow. Sometimes rules are developed for the entire company and posted in meeting rooms, while other times the committee develops its own set of rules. A typical list would include the following:

- Arrive on time.
- Meetings will begin and end on time.
- Participate fully.

- Share your expertise.
- Listen and keep an open mind.
- Value diversity of opinion.
- Focus on the problem, not the person.

Typically, team members can write a list of ground rules in a couple of minutes. The difficulty, of course, is getting people to consistently follow the rules.

The team leader should have initial responsibility for this list, making sure that it gets created and seeing that it's posted during meetings. And, during the early stages—forming and storming—the leader should actively reinforce the ground rules. In a well-functioning team, however, members will hold themselves and each other accountable during the norming and performing stages of team development.

Leading a Team Isn't Always a Bed of Roses

You probably already know that, as a team leader, you will be tested. Members will arrive late for meetings, interrupt and talk over one another, not be prepared for presentations, and lose patience with one another when tensions run high. While you can expect these things to happen, there are steps that you can take to minimize them and keep the team on track and moving forward. From the moment the team is formed, you should make your expectations clear and expect commitment and cooperation. It's also important to be a role model. You can't hold others accountable to a standard you aren't maintaining yourself. Keep in mind the following tips: • *Don't use sarcasm.* It's never welcome and seldom gets the desired results. Instead, issue a clear, declarative statement: "John, you're twenty minutes late and we've

already begun. At the end of the meeting I'll review with you what you've missed."

- *Don't provide excuses for not finishing a task on time.* Saying something like, "I know you're very busy," or "This is next to impossible," gives a less-than-fully committed team member a way out. Instead, ask her for what you need. If she offers an excuse, such as being too busy, try to help her resolve the problem.
- *Don't be vague when asking for work.* Instead of asking, "Will you be ready for next week?" say something like, "We need your analysis on the Meade line or the team can't move forward. Will you have it ready for the next meeting? What will be included in the analysis?"

As a leader, you need to be clear and decisive and to set high expectations for your team. Employees will perform up to the expectations that have been set for them. If you don't expect much and you communicate that, either verbally or nonverbally, chances are you won't get much. When you establish high expectations for yourself and your team, however, you will build commitment and a high-functioning group.

66 Establish Yourself As the Leader of Your Team Every team should have a strong leader, and that leader must be clearly established and recognized. The leadership must remain constant, even on those days when you wonder why you ever aspired to be a leader in the first place.

Leaders exhibit certain characteristics that set them apart from other workers and establish them as people in charge. Let's have a look at each of these characteristics and see how they contribute to effective leadership.

Good Decision-Making

An effective leader will consider all aspects of a problem or situation before making a decision on how to proceed. It's imperative not to rush into ill-advised decisions because you're feeling pressured. Even if a decision must be made quickly, you need to consider all contingencies. Never make a decision about which you're lacking information.

Willingness to Listen and Consider

Employees appreciate a leader who values their opinions, respects their ideas and wishes, and recognizes their needs. In order for you to be that kind of leader, you need to get to know your employees and to listen to what they have to say. You can't know what they need or how they're feeling about a situation if you don't ask.

Competent and Able in Times of Challenge

A leader doesn't lose his composure and become unhinged when challenges arise. As a leader, you're sure to find yourself in some crisis situations. Since throwing in the towel and declaring that the situation is out of control and can't be fixed isn't an option, you'll need to remain calm, assess the situation, and figure out what is your best course of action. Maintaining the attitude that there's always a means to solving a problem is invaluable.

Perseverance and Determination An effective leader sees every project through

An effective leader sees every project through to the very end and follows up on results. If your team is tasked with coming up with cost-saving measures for the transportation fleet, you not only will stay with the project until it's completed, you also will follow up on how well your team's recommendations worked.

Possessing and exhibiting these characteristics as a leader will establish your position and set you apart from other team members.

CHAPTER 12

Addressing the Career Needs of Each Member of Your Team 67 Learn to Focus on Every Member of Your Team Knococo Graphics was a growing firm with a problem. It had no trouble attracting talented designers and other staff members, but it had a lot of trouble getting workers to stay.

Not understanding why this was happening, Knococo wisely hired an outside firm to contact employees who had left in order to help management understand why the company was experiencing such high turnover. What came back was a real wake-up call to managers, who realized they simply hadn't been paying attention to individual needs of employees. Some sample responses included these: • "I left Knococo because I felt like no one cared if I stayed or not. I can't say that I was treated poorly, but I felt I was just a cog in the wheel. I wanted to work somewhere where they cared about me and my future. I know that nobody owes me a living and that it's not all about me, but I wanted to know that I count for something."

- "I left because I was one of the best artists on staff, and all of a sudden this new guy was getting all the interesting assignments. I was really ticked when no one asked me if I wanted to work on the Geiger account, which everyone knew was the best account we'd had in a while. I didn't talk to my boss because what difference would it have made? He obviously didn't care what I did."

- “I asked my boss what the next step for me was, and all he told me was to keep doing what I’ve been doing. Well, I’d been doing the same job for seven years, and I really wanted—no, I needed a change. He wouldn’t even consider me for something else, so I left.”

The theme was clear. The terminated employees wanted to feel appreciated for the work they had done, and they needed to know that their efforts would benefit them in the future. Quite possibly, their bosses did value their work, and the employees would have advanced if they had stayed with the company. Because those sentiments were never expressed, however, Knococo ended up losing a number of valuable employees. Let’s have a look at what these managers should have done.

Every Individual Is an Individual It is a very rare employee who doesn’t spend at least some time contemplating her future. It’s natural for employees to want to have an idea of what’s to come.

Thus, it’s important for managers to provide those employees with honest feedback about their strengths and weaknesses so employees have solid foundations from which to plan. If an employee isn’t going to get another person’s job when he moves on, she should know that. If she assumes the position is hers, when in reality there’s no way she could handle the job, there’s been a serious failure in communication.

A performance appraisal is a great time to have a career discussion, but it shouldn’t be the only time. In fact, it sometimes is better to have the discussion off cycle, when pay and performance rankings aren’t involved. The employee may be more open to hearing and accepting feedback in a more informal manner.

A good manager is honest with employees and doesn't lead them to have false expectations. You certainly don't want to be discouraging or overly negative, but it's your responsibility to be straight. Express plainly what you like about the employee, and make suggestions as to how she can improve her job performance. Ask her to express her concerns with the job and her expectations of her future role within the company. Listen carefully as she tells you, and be ready to help her understand what she'll need to do to help her move ahead.

Employees need data to fully understand job opportunities for today and where they'll be in the future. They should be encouraged to learn all they can about the area of business or industry in which they're employed and to participate in discussions regarding it. Managers can help employees get invested by sharing articles and trade journals and encouraging participation in dialogue during staff meetings. Some areas for discussion include the following:

- Major trends affecting your industry
- Challenges and opportunities facing the company
- Overall outlook for the profession
- Shifts in educational requirements for employees
- What traits your company most values in employees
- How employees can help themselves move up the company ranks

Employees who feel they are valued as individuals, and not just as team members, will be happier and more productive than those who feel their individual strengths are not recognized or appreciated. Smart managers know how to make that happen.

68 Pay Attention to Career Development

Promoting career development for members of your team is a great way to keep employees invested and motivated. Unfortunately, some managers want nothing to do with

career development because they're afraid employees will develop to the point where they will surpass, or even replace, them. They're threatened by the thought of employee advancement.

Smart managers, however, know that workers who are looking ahead in their careers are strong employees who raise the level of the entire team. While some companies consider career development to be strictly the responsibility of employees, others embrace the concept and encourage workers to take advantage of all opportunities. The goal, of course, is to foster employees who will use their increased knowledge and skills to benefit the company.

Providing Constructive Career Advice to Receptive Employees If your company doesn't offer career advancement programs, you, as a manager, can still take an interest in and pay attention to the goals of your employees. Workers generally welcome constructive advice from managers regarding their career path. Valuable career advice might include examples such as: • **Take a public-speaking course. It will build confidence and give you a huge advantage when you must make a presentation at a meeting.**

- Get into a master's degree program. You won't be considered for higher-level jobs without an advanced degree.
- Learn to play golf. The golf course is a great place to build relationships and conduct certain types of business.
- Behave like the person who has the job you want—not the one you have.
- Think about your behavior and appearance. If you want to be treated like a professional, you'll have to act and look like one.

- Join multidepartmental teams so you get to know coworkers and managers outside of your own department.
- Find a better balance between your professional and personal lives.

Letting members of your team know that you are interested in their success will foster loyalty and breed respect. Avoiding the subject of career development because you're threatened by it will not. Strong employees will move ahead, with or without your help. The difference is that they'll be happier and more productive while they're with you if you're supportive of them.

69 Know When Career Development Is Necessary
Employees who won't engage in on-the-job career development can become a drag on their coworkers and hold back your entire team. Every employee—especially these days, when the rate of change keeps accelerating—must be open to development and willing to learn new skills and increase knowledge in order to keep your team moving ahead.

Linking Learning to Career Development
As a manager, you can't force employees to do what they don't want to do in terms of career development. You can offer them opportunities, but if they refuse to take advantage of them, you're likely to find yourself in a difficult position.

Your responsibility isn't to force your team into training—either on or off the job—that they don't want, but to help them to understand the rewards or consequences of their decisions.

If, for instance, Christine, who is a graphic designer, declines to attend an off-site workshop on Adobe Flash that would benefit not only her, but the rest of her department, it's your responsibility as her manager to impose consequences and help Christine understand the reason for them. Employees who won't stretch themselves to learn a new skill hurt not only themselves but also the productivity and morale of your entire team.

Each time a new process, piece of equipment, technique, or new system is introduced, employees have an opportunity to learn. Managers should celebrate these events and link the learning that occurs to the employee's career-development plan.

70 Use Career-Development Opportunities to Reward

While unmotivated employees may balk at opportunities for career development, motivated, engaged employees will embrace them. Companies that show up consistently on best-places-to-work lists always place a premium on learning and education. Employees rank those companies as outstanding for providing resources that support ongoing learning and career development.

Some organizations—think Motorola, General Electric, and Cisco—contain corporate universities to promote ongoing learning from within. Furthermore, the heads of General Electric and Motorola assume active roles in teaching. Ongoing learning can happen in many settings, both formal and informal. You can help employees develop career plans by making them aware of various opportunities for learning, including the following:

- Degree programs
- College courses
- Continuing education courses for continuing education units
- Corporate universities
- Classroom

learning • Online learning • Conferences • Seminars • Professional associations Ideally, your company offers financial support for education through tuition assistance programs, and it encourages employees to get any special assistance they may require, such as English as a Second Language classes or preparation classes for a General Education Development (GED) test.

Rewarding Employees Who Excel with Career-Development Opportunities Smart managers recognize employees who are motivated by career-development opportunities and use those opportunities as rewards and incentives. Classes, conferences, and seminars can provide a break for employees while at the same time increasing their motivation and commitment to you and your team.

When an employee is rewarded with participation in a career-development program, extend the experience when he returns by asking him to share the experience with the rest of the team. Inform him in advance that you'd like him to do this so he can prepare. This lets other employees know that workers who excel will be rewarded; allows the returning employee to share his excitement, which can help to motivate the entire team; and provides a little spotlight time for the outstanding employee.

Always be sure to recognize employees who reach educational or training milestones, such as earning a degree or obtaining professional certification. You can do this within your department, in the company newsletter, and through press releases to your local newspaper. Celebrating along with your employees lets them know that you are interested in them and want the best for them as they continue in their careers.

71 Be Prepared for When Employees Leave Despite your best efforts, not every employee will stay with you. A certain amount of turnover must be expected because the circumstances and motivations of your employees change.

Even employees who were being groomed for promotion may choose to leave your organization if they are ready for their next opportunity before the company is able to provide it.

Your job as a smart manager is to always be prepared for the possibility that someone might leave by never allowing anyone to become indispensable.

Be aware that some employees thrive on being indispensable and go out of their way to “own” jobs, information, or processes. These employees usually are productive and capable, making it tempting to let them continue with their controlling behaviors. When, for whatever reasons, those employees leave, however, you will be faced with the daunting task of filling overly large shoes.

When an employee does announce plans to leave, it’s your job to manage her exit professionally and to the benefit of your team. Do not, for instance, exhibit distress about the person’s decision to leave, even if it’s going to leave your team short-handed and stretched thin. Team members will be looking to you to advise them on how to continue their work—not to be wondering out loud how they’ll ever manage to finish their project.

Stay in touch with the employee during her notice period to be sure that she’s facilitating the transition and that work underway continues to proceed smoothly. Get a handle on

what knowledge needs to be transferred to other members of the team, and make sure that occurs.

Work with remaining staff members to resolve transitional issues and provide extra support, as necessary. And, if the employee is leaving for a better position, more pay, or another happy reason, be sure that you're glad for her and offer her your best wishes.

Expect Professionalism Through the Very Last Day of Employment Exiting employees should be held to a professional standard of conduct, just as those who are staying are. That means they should report to work on time, complete tasks as expected, and remain a productive member of the team. Allowing them not to do so can have an extremely negative effect on other employees.

If an employee who is getting ready to leave is not behaving in a professional and productive manner, you'll need to intervene. If he refuses to do as you ask, you're probably better off to terminate his employment immediately and pay him out for the remainder of his notice period. An uncooperative, disrespectful employee can disrupt the other members of the team, damage morale, and set a precedent for poor behavior and low productivity.

Part III

MAINTAINING MORALE TO KEEP EMPLOYEES HAPPY AND PRODUCTIVE

CHAPTER 13

Creating a High-Performance Culture

72 Have a Clear Picture of Your Team's Culture

Every organization has a particular culture, even if it's never been expressed or described. A company's culture defines the character of the organization. It shapes attitudes, expectations, and, to a large part, everything that occurs within the organization. It guides employees by letting them know what's important and how they're expected to act. New employees generally get a sense of company culture pretty quickly, and, smart new employees will use that information to their advantage by letting it direct their actions and attitudes.

Organizational culture will be present both on the larger level of the company and on the smaller level of your team of employees. Hopefully, the culture of your team will model the culture of the larger company. And, hopefully, the culture will encourage high performance, creativity, problem solving, camaraderie, commitment, and other positive features that help workers achieve more. Allowing a different culture for your team is asking for trouble, and you'd be setting up your employees to fail. To that end, it's important for you, as a manager, to understand the company's culture and to model it for employees.

Clues for Determining the Culture of a Company

There are several areas you should consider when trying to get a handle on the culture of an organization:

- *Physical:* Physical culture is comprised of the processes, tools, and structures of an organization. Is the table of organization hierarchical or flat? Are there many layers to the organization or just a few? Consider what the company looks like. Is it homey looking? High tech? Artistic? Is the atmosphere inviting or extremely businesslike? Does the physical space support people working together, or is it pretty much one-person cubicles? Is there an open door policy, or do employees interact by appointment only?
- *Infrastructure:* The infrastructure includes the systems and processes that direct and manage work. What types of information are shared with employees? How is technology used? How many and what types of teams exist? Do the majority of employees work in teams or mostly on their own? How are employees rewarded? Are rewards geared for teamwork or individual contributions?
- *Behaviors:* The manner in which people within a company treat each other reveals volumes about its culture. Observe whether or not people seem friendly. What are they talking about with one another? Does conversation revolve around work, or is it interspersed with gossip or negativity? What are other managers talking about? What are the stories and legends of the past that define the company?

Ideally, the physical elements, infrastructure, and behaviors of an organization will all be aligned with the culture the company wishes to create. Culture can be very intentionally put into place, or it can evolve over time, shaped by the personalities of decision makers. What's always clear, however, is that as a manager, it's your job to express to employees what the culture is and to set an

example with the behaviors that support it. Your employees will look to you to set the tone for them regarding company culture.

What a Company Says and Does Are Not Always the Same

Sometimes a company's real culture doesn't always jive with its value and mission statements. Some common statements of companies that often don't find their way into practice include the following:

- *"Employees are our most important asset."* Sounds nice, right? But, is it true? What kind of turnover does the company experience? How much is spent on training, and for whom? Is the pay competitive for the market? What kind of benefits are offered?
- *"We value teamwork."* What teams really exist, and who is on them? Does only management work in teams? Does the reward system promote individuals or teams? What problems are teams empowered to address?
- *"We value change agents."* Can anyone name three new ideas that have been implemented within the past six months?
- *"We want risk takers on our team."* What sorts of initiatives have been tried and either implemented or failed? If they failed, what happened to the initiators?
- *"We want to be number one in customer service."* Does the company provide customer service surveys? What kind of response does it get? Can someone tell you recent changes that have been instituted to improve customer satisfaction?

While most companies subscribe to some sort of culture, it may not be clearly stated or defined. Or it may be clearly

stated but not practiced as prescribed. As a manager, you need to understand the culture, even if it means asking someone at a higher level to explain it to you.

73 Get Your Entire Team to Buy Into the Culture

To restate an important fact, the culture of your team must mirror the culture of the larger organization. Your team will, however, also have its own culture, and it's important that every member owns it.

Creating a positive, high-performance organizational culture is the responsibility of senior management. It is an arduous job that requires a clear vision; the means of communicating that vision; and the ability to ensure that organizational strategy, structure, and rewards are in synch with the desired culture.

You, as a manager of a team, need to understand the organizational culture and strategy and pass that along to your staff. From that culture will emerge your team culture. Your employees will look to you for clues on how they should behave. How you act and communicate will significantly impact the values and attitudes of your employees. They are looking to you to guide them to success.

Tools to Use When Guiding Your Team to Bigger and Better Things

In their book *The Carrot Principle*, authors Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton describe four basic areas of leadership that are necessary for leading a team and establishing values and attitudes among employees:

- Goal setting

- Communication
- Trust
- Accountability

As the leader of your team, you can use these tools to better understand your role in creating and cultivating a team culture that's in alignment with the greater culture of the organization. All of these goals should be present to help foster a healthy and productive culture.

Setting Goals

It's your job to set clear goals for your employees and to help them link those goals to the mission and strategy of the organization. Let them know how their role contributes to the greater good of the company, and make it clear why they need to meet those goals so that the greater mission can move forward.

A major part of the culture of your team should involve establishing and meeting goals, and you can grow the culture and ensure employees will buy into it by celebrating those goals as they are met.

Don't be afraid to advocate for your team, cheer for your employees, or even to brag about them a little when goals are met and success achieved.

Communicating with Members of Your Team

When employees complain about poor communication, managers frequently bristle in defense, blaming the employees for not picking up on something that had been said, written, or otherwise communicated.

Generally, however, when employees address communication issues, they are referring not only to what's been said but the manner in which it was said—and what

wasn't said that should have been. Employees are attuned to body language, tone of voice, omissions of information, and other nuances that managers sometimes employ.

Good communication is necessary in order for you to communicate the expectations and standards that shape company and team culture. If you can't verbalize or otherwise communicate what it is that will lead your team members to success, they're not likely to have a clear picture of how it is they're supposed to get there.

Establishing and Maintaining Trust Within Your Team

It is virtually impossible to establish and maintain a positive culture without trust. This includes trust between you and your employees, your employees and the company in general, and among the employees themselves.

You can encourage trust among and within your team by always adhering to the following rules:

- Publicly own up to mistakes.
- Always honor commitments you make.
- Always act ethically.
- Keep trustworthy people near.
- Never detract from the company's reputation.
- Never participate in deception.

Making Every Team Member Accountable

A team that is guided by a positive culture is called on to share responsibilities, with every team member accountable for his or her role. Employees want their manager to set standards and hold everyone accountable for meeting them. Few things can threaten a positive culture more quickly than

the reality, or even the perception, that one or more team members are being treated differently than others.

Getting all team members to buy into team and company culture doesn't always happen readily, but it's extremely important to continue working on those who don't. Having everyone on board as far as culture is concerned is vital to maintaining good morale, excitement, and the desire to achieve.

74 Make Your Team a Winner

If you've ever been a part of a great team, you know that it's a joy. Employees who work on great teams enjoy what they do, and enjoy working together. Sure, problems still crop up. All in all, though, great teams are winners because they believe in their mission and enjoy the process of working together to meet it. Let's take a look at the qualities of a great team and how you can encourage your team to assume those qualities.

Building a Winning Team

There are plenty of ideas and opinions regarding what it takes to build a great team. Most employees and managers, however, would agree that a great team possesses certain characteristics:

- *Great teams have fun.* Why? Because they allow themselves, and they're allowed to be silly. They understand each other's jokes, remember funny incidents that have occurred in the past, and maintain a sense of humor when problems occur.
- *Great teams breed in-groups.* Remember how it felt in high school to be a part of the in-group, or how badly you might have wanted to belong? Being a member of a

great team gives employees an inside spot within a company. Members have inside jokes and stories that only they understand. They are accepted and valued by their team members, and they feel secure and confident about their ability to work and how they fit into the larger organization.

- *Great teams appreciate that every member is different.* They see those differences as opportunities for strengths, and they realize that the characteristics of one member complement those of another. Team members are not threatened by one another but are anxious to help each other.
- *Great teams know there's no "I" in "team."* They keep their eyes on the goal and work together to reach it. Team members celebrate one another's successes because they realize that they all contribute to the greater good.
- *Great teams aren't afraid to ask for help.* Team members rely on each other for help and value input from one another. One member doesn't get resentful or bitter when another can do something better but tries to learn from the one with the stronger skills.
- *Great teams view problems as opportunities.* They understand that problems will occur but that they aren't cause for discouragement, simply a reason to look for opportunities to improve a situation. Great teams instinctively operate in a way that allows them to work together, utilizing the expertise and strengths of each person in order to move the team forward.
- *Great teams are not afraid to fail.* Their members are willing to be creative because they know creativity is valued. A failed project is viewed as an opportunity to learn. Members of these teams know that there's always

a better way to complete a task or finish a project—they just need to figure out what it is and how to do it.

Your job as a manager is to encourage the members of your team to cultivate these characteristics of great teams. You'll need to set the tone for silliness, creativity, and problem solving. You'll need to enable and encourage employees to participate in team-building activities and encourage trust and understanding among team members.

Once you understand and embrace the qualities of great teams, you'll need to communicate those qualities to employees and then provide constant feedback as they work to instill them. Once your team establishes a reputation as a great team, you'll have no shortage of others wanting to get in on a good thing.

75 Know Thy Employees

Employees are people first and need to be recognized as such. Teams are made up of individuals who enjoy and fully recognize the value of being part of a larger group but who also want and need to be recognized as individuals. And, regardless of how important their jobs are, employees still have personal lives that sometimes must take precedence over work responsibilities.

A good manager knows how to make employees happy by valuing and affirming them as people as well as workers. Sure, you're the boss, but that doesn't mean that you can't express concern regarding a personal situation, celebrate a happy occasion with an employee, or accommodate someone who has a personal issue.

Getting to know something about the personal lives of your employees as you get to know them at work will make it easier to be understanding and as accommodating as possible when problems occur. Your understanding attitude

and willingness to accommodate deserving employees will pay off in loyalty and commitment when the situation has passed.

In addition to acknowledging problems, managers also should help their employees to observe one another's milestones with lunches to celebrate birthdays, special anniversaries, promotions, and other events. Taking time out to celebrate life's events lets employees know that they are valued and cared for, not just cogs in the company machinery.

What to Do When Tragedy Strikes

Nearly every team or department will experience tragic events. When they occur, you need to take a leadership role, establishing an atmosphere of concern and encouraging other employees to help out as they can. Some ideas for helping members of your team facing tragic situations include the following:

- Allow coworkers to donate vacation time to a sick employee who has used all of her time off or who needs extra hours to care for a family member.
- Encourage staff to organize a sunshine fund to assure that money is available for flowers or other gestures of concern when a need arises.
- Allow coworkers to organize and participate in fundraising events to benefit an employee in need.
- Remember that most people want to help when there's a need. When a local or national tragedy occurs, help your staff to focus its energies on doing something productive, such as sponsoring a food drive or raising money. Let employees decide what is appropriate.

Successful companies extend their vision beyond their doors and into the community. They use their positive culture to aid the community, and they encourage their employees to volunteer to benefit the community, as well as to care for each other.

When you let employees know that you're concerned for them, or happy for them, and willing, when possible, to accommodate their personal needs, they will respond in kind to their team members, reinforcing a culture of caring, productivity, and high performance.

CHAPTER 14

Communicating in the Twenty-First Century

76 Improve Employee Morale and Increase Productivity Effective communication does more than just convey information. It's ironic that in this day of mass and instantaneous communication, it still is lacking or absent within many organizations. Many companies talk around issues, exclude employees from discussion, or don't communicate much at all. Yet a healthy company is much like a healthy family.

Issues that affect an organization, whether a business, a place of worship, a school, or a family, must be examined, discussed, and resolved if the organization is going to move ahead successfully. Those issues that are swept aside or ignored don't go away.

Successful companies understand that communication is the glue that holds a company together. Effective managers use communication to keep employees informed and up to date on everything happening within the company. They understand that employees want to know about the issues that affect them, both good and bad.

Employees who experience an information vacuum will fill it themselves, opening the door—or the grapevine—for trouble. All important information within a company should originate from one top source and travel in an orderly manner through the ranks.

The Five-C Approach to Effective Communication The National Business Research Institute, Inc., has the following suggestions for developing communication techniques that will, in the long run, improve employee morale and increase productivity among workers: • *Communicate with clarity.* When it's your job to convey information, say or write it clearly, leaving no room for misinterpretation or doubt. Your presentation doesn't have to be fancy, but it does need to be clear.

- *Be consistent.* When communicating a message, it's extremely important to get all the messengers on the same page. Additionally, make sure you have a full understanding of an issue before you communicate it to your employees. You don't want to have to come back later and tell them you've given them incorrect information.
- *Communicate constantly.* Circumstances within your company change constantly, with many of those changes affecting employees. It's your job to keep members of your team informed of anything that might affect them or their jobs, as well as to continually communicate goals, values, and beliefs. When employees know what is happening at their company, they feel connected and accountable.
- *Cascade information.* Important information should start at the top, then cascade down from one level to the next until it has reached every person within the company.

Despite good intentions, information often reaches a certain level and then dries up, leaving everyone below that level to speculate about what might be happening. And while it's important to get information down through all levels, it's equally important to get it back up.

- *Communicate with credibility.* If employees can't buy into your message, or can't trust that what you're telling them is accurate and true, they'll make up their own version. It's vitally important that you establish and maintain credibility in all cases with members of your team.

High- and Low-Tech Strategies for Effective Communication The days of relying on dry company newsletters and printed interoffice memos are long gone. Companies must keep their communication fresh, frequent, and relevant. Effective managers understand that they play a significant role in communication, and they make sure they have the necessary information and tools with which to do their jobs.

E-mail, when used properly, is a valuable communication tool. You might also consider using videos, the company intranet, text messaging, and engagingly written memos. Don't, however, neglect the personal touch in favor of technology. When it's time to deliver really important news, face-to-face communication usually is best. You're not going to garner much respect by sending out an e-mail announcing layoffs or pay cuts. As unpleasant as it may be, that kind of information normally is best delivered person to person.

Technology also shouldn't replace regular staff meetings, which should occur at least once a month. Make it known that everyone is expected to attend, and see that everyone

gets a copy of the minutes. Large-scale, company-wide meetings should be held at least once a year and are best organized and attended by the CEO for purposes of sharing global company news.

Round-table groups, or lunch or coffee sessions at which to discuss company-related information and issues, are effective means of communicating with employees. Don't overlook the tried-and-true bulletin boards, employee mailboxes, newsletters, and memos.

With more and more methods of communicating available, the most important factor remains the willingness to share information in an effective, meaningful manner.

77 Educate Yourself (and Employees) about E-mail Many people, including perhaps yourself, have love-hate relationships with e-mail. Sure, it's fast and efficient, and it makes it possible to stay in touch with a lot of people. It also, however, can be an incredible time drain.

How many mornings have you turned on your computer, only to find that you're inundated by e-mails, most of which turn out to be unnecessary? The problem, however, is that you can't know for sure which aren't important until you've read them.

And so a good portion of your morning is consumed by your email, at the expense of other work you should be doing. You may have been so busy dealing with your e-mail, in fact, that you failed to notice your employees also were spending too much time in their inboxes.

That having been said, e-mail isn't going away. The trick is to learn to manage it and to use it wisely, instead of letting it use you and your time. An absolutely incredible amount of e-mail gets passed around every single day, and some of it is vital to your business. You can't ignore it, but you can't let it consume and distract you.

Once You Send It, It's Sent

If your business is typical of most, you're increasingly trying to accomplish more work with fewer people. As a result, we're always rushing to work faster and faster, and e-mail is a tool that helps us do that. It's quicker than a phone call, you don't have to leave your seat to send it, and it's a reasonably reliable way to deliver a message.

A tendency for many people, though, is to dash off an e-mail without putting too much (if much at all) thought into the process and then send it off without even reviewing what they've written.

Because e-mails generally are brief, we tend to get right to the point. While these messages are efficient, they often can be interpreted as being dismissive or downright rude. The normal niceties that would be included in a voice conversation or a written letter are gone, and the brevity of the communication can come across as angry or harsh.

Another potential pitfall of e-mail is that information not intended for the reader sometimes gets tacked onto a message that's come to you from another sender. You should always carefully review all the information contained in the e-mail you're writing, scrolling all the way to the bottom before hitting "Send."

And, because e-mail can provide instant gratification, many people who are upset with someone else have succumbed to the temptation to write and send a nasty e-mail before they've had time to calm down. If you've ever

been tempted to do is, remember that, unlike spoken words, an e-mail can be saved and looked at again and again, perpetuating the hurt you may have inflicted on someone.

E-Mail Dos and Don'ts

Since it doesn't look as though we'll be getting away from sending and receiving e-mail at work anytime soon, it's important to keep the dos and don'ts of e-mail in mind. Be sure you communicate information concerning e-mailing to your employees, and encourage them to use email responsibly and with courtesy. Here are a few basic tips to share:

- Do be short and to the point. Most people don't want to read lengthy e-mails.

- Do use short sentences and paragraphs.
- Do always use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Do review the e-mail thread before you reply or forward a message.
- Do always complete the subject line and make it meaningful. Recipients want to know the purpose of the e-mail before they open it.
- Do choose a professional name as your business e-mail.
- Don't use instant-messaging shortcuts in business e-mail.
- Don't overuse the high priority or the confidential flags. Use these sparingly so that recipients take your e-mails seriously.
- Don't automatically reply to all. Send only to those people who truly need to read your response.
- Don't use e-mail to discuss confidential information.

- Don't ever send e-mails that contain libelous, sexual, or racially discriminatory comments or jokes. Don't assume that the recipient shares your sense of humor. These types of e-mails are never appropriate in the workplace. They can get the company sued and you fired.
- Don't open attachments from an unknown source. It is not worth the hassle of releasing a virus into your computer, or worse, the entire company computer system.
- Don't send or forward chain e-mail.

Remember that business e-mail is never fully private. Companies have the right to view all e-mail that is sent or received on company computers and handheld devices. Users of e-mail should assume that everything they write and send could end up in court.

78 Control Your Employee's Personal Distractions While e-mail can be a time thief, it's certainly not the only distraction employees encounter. Cell phones, wireless handheld devices, portable media players, and non-work related Internet features can consume hours of an employee's workday. Researchers Gloria Mark and Victor Gonzalez, of the University of California, Irvine, found that office distractions such as phone calls and e-mail, both personal and

organizational, consume 2.1 hours per day for the average worker.

By studying employees at work, Mark and Gonsalez found that the average employee works for eleven minutes before he or she is interrupted, and then takes twenty-five minutes to resume the original task. Employees, the researchers found, change activities on an average of every three minutes. And a February 2007 report from Office Team Surveys revealed that the average worker used thirty-six minutes a day for business that was strictly personal. Men averaged forty-four, and women twenty-nine minutes of personal activity every day, with employees between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four using the most time. The most common personal distraction? The cell phone.

How Much Should You Limit Personal Communication?

For all the reasons you've just read, many companies have instigated policies that restrict the time employees may spend on personal email, cell phones, and other electronic distractions. Employers can choose to ban these activities all together, or they may place limits on the amount of time they allow for them. Either way, it is important to communicate expectations.

Most companies have purchased software that allows them to monitor employee computer use. While you don't legally have to tell employees they're being monitored, many employers find that letting workers know you can watch them pretty much solves the problem of personal Internet use at work.

With many employees working long hours and juggling home, kids, career, and other responsibilities, it's unrealistic to think that personal and work lives can remain exclusive of

one another. As a result, it's probably unrealistic to completely ban personal communication devices. You may, however, want to consider the following suggestions:

- Cell phones are to be kept on silent mode.

- Personal cell phone calls should take no more than two minutes, with the exception of a real emergency.
- Personal e-mail or other personal Internet business occurs only during break or lunch periods.
- Personal cell phones or other devices may never be used in front of customers.
- Anyone operating a company vehicle may not use a cell phone or other personal communication device.
- Using phones or other devices to take photos in the workplace is not allowed.

The list of rules regarding personal communication and the devices used to facilitate it could go on and on. If your company hasn't already established guidelines concerning personal communication, it's probably time that you suggest a committee is formed to begin doing so.

79 Be Able to Assess the Value of Meetings Meetings can be valuable and necessary for your company. What happens, though, if your meetings no longer seem to be productive, or if they've become a waste of time? Many—perhaps most managers— may vote to eliminate meetings completely because they

can be a drain on time without seeming to accomplish much. Those same managers, however, realize that meetings are often essential for moving work forward.

Do you insist on meetings, even if employees don't like them and they don't seem to increase productivity? Before you schedule your next meeting, consider the tips and suggestions described in the following sections.

To Meet, or Not to Meet?

Before you send out a meeting notice, ask yourself if the meeting is really necessary. Might there be another way to handle the situation? What about a conference call or memo instead?

Some meetings start with a purpose, but over time they lose their focus. If you're meeting regularly but can no longer identify exactly why, it may be time to eliminate the exercise.

Some managers fear that canceling a meeting will make them look bad or will start a precedent. The reality is, however, that if there is not sufficient reason to meet, everyone's time will be better spent catching up on work or conducting other business. Good managers focus on having good agendas and making sure that those attending their meetings keep up with their assignments. If key information isn't ready in time for a meeting, you'd be better off canceling the meeting than wasting the time of your employees. If you do cancel, though, let attendees know why, and remind them of the next meeting date and any outstanding assignments.

During a meeting, it's your job to keep participants focused and on task. Be a strong facilitator by keeping the meeting moving forward and making sure that objectives are met. Stick to the agenda, listen carefully to what is said, and don't be afraid to call on people and ask for their ideas. Establish a code of conduct and insist that everyone observes it, and don't tolerate side conversations or distractions.

Prior to the end of the meeting, review action items for follow-up, and make sure all participants understand their assignments. Spend the last few minutes reviewing the meeting and what you've accomplished.

Developing an Agenda

Every meeting needs an agenda, and the agenda should be relevant to the meeting at hand. In order to make it relevant, you'll need to gather input that will appear on the agenda. At least five days prior to the meeting, send out a reminder notice and ask for suggested topics. Every item should have a reason for being on the agenda, whether because it's informational, for discussion, or that it requires a decision. If you use general headings, such as "New Business" or "Old Business," specific items for discussion during the meetings should be identified.

Every agenda should contain a meeting start and end time, as well as a location. The agenda should be sent out in advance of the meeting so the participants are reminded of their responsibilities.

**SAMPLE AGENDA: EDUCATION COMMITTEE,
JULY 15, 9-10 A.M.**

Item	Purpose	Respons.	Time
Computer-based learning system	Information: Review format of student transcript	KST	7 mins.
Mandatory education	Decision: Select 2009 requirements	JMCG	30 mins.
ESL program	Discussion: Review state grant opportunity	NP	15 mins.
LHU affiliation	Information: Update on on-site college program	NP	3 mins.
Next meeting	Discussion: Set date/agenda; review follow-up responsibilities	KST	2 mins.
Meeting evaluation	Discussion	KST	3 mins.

Factors to Consider When Evaluating a Meeting

Evaluating a meeting when you've finished is extremely important.

The evaluation can indicate whether or not the meeting was necessary and how you might make the next one more productive and worthwhile. Here are some questions to ask and answer when evaluating a meeting:

- Was the meeting well planned?

- Were participants notified in advance of the time, place, agenda, and responsibilities?
- Was the meeting room set up, with all necessary equipment available?
- Did the meeting start and end on time?
- Was everyone prepared?
- Did everyone have a chance to speak and be heard?

- Did you follow the agenda?
- Did you accomplish the goals of the meeting?

If your answers to all these questions are affirmative, then your meetings most likely are effective vehicles for advancing communication between you, your employees, and others, and you should keep on meeting. If your evaluation comes up short, you may need to reassess why and how you are meeting, and determine if meetings hold any real value to you or your team.

80 Recognize How Your Employees Communicate

Chapter 2 outlined characteristics of four different generations currently employed in the workforce. As a manager who wants to be able to effectively communicate with your employees, it's important to understand that each of those four generations, the Matures, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials, communicates differently.

Members of the Matures typically are most comfortable communicating in writing or by telephone. Baby Boomers favor short memos and phone calls, although most have embraced e-mail. Generation Xers grew up with e-mail and can't imagine life without it. Millennials can text message at speeds that leaves older generations breathless. It is important that generations don't judge each other because of communication differences. A Generation Xer doesn't send short, terse emails to be offensive; he considers it efficient. On the other hand, that same Gen Xer must understand that Baby Boomers truly value group input, meaning that team meetings are very important.

Historically, the generation gap closed as younger generations aged. Younger workers became increasingly like the older workers. According to Claire Raines, the author of

a number of managerial books, including *Connecting Generations*, that is no longer a valid assumption. Raines claims that the Baby Boomers were the first generation not to replicate the older generation. The communication styles they adopted early in their careers did not morph to become more like those of the Matures. The Millennials and Gen Xers who have followed the Boomers also have communication styles particular to themselves.

Managers who oversee multiple generations must learn to anticipate the differences they are sure to encounter and not to be offended by any one style of communication. By having open discussions about when and how e-mails will be reviewed, when meetings will be considered necessary, how an open-door policy will be tolerated, and other matters, conflicts can be minimized or eliminated. It is important that each generation respect the others' communication styles.

CHAPTER 15

Without Feedback, You Will Fail

81 Recognize That Feedback Is Necessary

Everyone needs feedback, both positive and in the form of constructive criticism. A 2001 study involving 20,000 employees who participated in exit interviews confirmed the number-one reason why employees had left their jobs was “poor supervisory behavior.” The study further showed the number-one factor contributing to “poor supervisory behavior” was poor communication skills.

In order to be an effective manager, managers must learn to communicate effectively. And key skills for effective communication include giving and receiving feedback. Every employee at every level of an organization desires feedback, both positive and negative. This requires managers to become adept at giving feedback. Smart managers also understand that, in addition to giving feedback, it's equally important for them to be able to ask for and receive feedback regarding their own performance.

Managers Give Feedback All the Time, Even When They Don't Say a Word As a manager, you give a lot of feedback, often without realizing it. Employees draw their own conclusions on their job performances based not only on what you say but on what you don't say, as well as how you look at them and the tone of voice you use. In other words, they fill in gaps

by making assumptions about how they're doing, regardless of your opinions or intentions. Direct and clear feedback, whether positive or not, provides employees with correct assumptions and teaches them what to expect.

While it's good to have regular times established for employee reviews, feedback in between those times is just as—or perhaps even more—important. Feedback doesn't have to be a big deal: A few words of appreciation, a quiet suggestion, or a pointed question intended to make the employee think about his performance usually suffices. Offering feedback is a skill that can be learned. It only takes a little planning and practice.

82 Cultivate Effective Techniques for Feedback

The process of spoken communication sounds simple. There's a sender and a receiver. The sender speaks and the receiver hears. The problem often is that the receiver also sees the sender, which can change how she understands the sender's words.

When your employee is hearing what you're saying to her, she's listening not only to what you say but how you say it. And, she's watching you, as well. Experts claim that messages are interpreted 55 percent by what the recipient sees, 38 percent by what she hears, and just 7 percent by the sender's words.

That means that your tone of voice and the demeanor you display while speaking may significantly affect your message.

Five Categories of Feedback

Carl Rogers, who was prominent in the founding of the humanistic school of psychology, studied and wrote extensively on communication. Rogers analyzed feedback and came up with these five different types: • *Evaluative*: This is feedback that involves judgment, either positive or negative. Evaluative feedback is explicitly given with the purpose of offering an opinion.

- *Interpretive*: This type of feedback is used to express to one person what someone else has said. Paraphrasing another's words is a type of interpretive feedback.
- *Supportive*: This is feedback that's intended to bolster or assist another person.
- *Probing*: This is using feedback communication to gain more information about an issue.
- *Understanding*: This type of feedback is used to discover what another party meant.

Thus, feedback is not only used to relate to an employee what you think of his job performance but also to discover information, provide assistance, let someone know how their behavior may be affecting someone else, or pass along information.

Tips for Giving Effective Feedback

Constructive feedback relates usable information with the intent of that information's having an impact on a situation. While most employees want and welcome feedback, some will handle feedback defensively. To minimize defensiveness, focus on the situation or behavior at hand, not the motivation behind it.

Tips on Giving Effective Feedback

- *Be specific.* Say: “You handled the questions about the budget very well. I was amazed by the amount of detail you were able to provide.”
- *Focus on behavior, not motivation.* Say: “I have some concerns about how the Q&A went. We need to be prepared for tough questions. Several times you didn’t answer the question that was asked. For instance, when Charles asked you to explain line 3, you spoke for ten minutes and never answered his question. It was very confusing. Let’s think about how to deal with a situation like that if it happens again.”
- *Be sincere.* Be honest and direct. Employees see through fake praise. They want your honesty.
- *Focus on what can be changed.* Say: “When I asked you yesterday why you were late, you raised your voice and moved very close to me. It made me very uncomfortable.”
- *Be timely.* Provide feedback directly following the situation.
- *Avoid unsolicited advice.* Ask permission before giving feedback to reduce defensiveness.

Tips on Receiving Effective Feedback

The ability to receive feedback is just as important as the skill required to give it. Everyone desires positive feedback and recognition for a job well done. As a manager, you need to learn to graciously accept positive praise with a simple thank you. It’s also important that you create a climate where others feel they can provide you with feedback. Here are some strategies:

- Ask for feedback. Ask others how you’re doing, both generally and after a specific situation.

- Be approachable.

- Control your own defensiveness.
- Learn to listen without being judgmental.
- Ask for examples of behaviors or actions that are relevant to the feedback, but don't get upset if the person providing feedback can't come up with any. Try to listen to the intent of the message.
- Be reflective about what you hear. Sometimes it takes a day or two to fully process information.
- Seek input from others about feedback you've been given. Don't, however, ask in such a way that the listener is put on the spot. Say, for instance, "Maria told me yesterday that I have a tendency to be negative at staff meetings, and that my behavior sometimes keeps the department from resolving issues. Can you help me understand what she may have meant by that?" Don't say, "Maria accused me yesterday of being negative at staff meetings. That's not true, is it?"

Feedback gets easier, both to give and to receive. When giving feedback, be honest, but not brutally honest. When getting feedback, be open about what you'll hear, and receive the information in a positive manner.

83 Don't Limit Feedback to Manager/Employee If 360-degree feedback systems haven't yet been introduced within your company, chances are they soon will be. These systems are becoming widely used, particularly in large companies.

The 360-degree feedback system is a carefully developed process in which employees get feedback on their effectiveness from multiple sources, including peers, direct reports, supervisors, customers, and sometimes even vendors. Feedback often is submitted anonymously. Employees also complete feedback forms in order to compare their own personal assessments to those of others.

The big advantage of the system, of course, is that it provides a full range of feedback for employees, who also have the opportunity to assess themselves. In addition, it provides a comfort zone for people who aren't comfortable offering face-to-face feedback.

As you can imagine, there is controversy concerning this system. Critics say it breeds distrust and can be hurtful, while proponents say it can be a great development tool for those assessed. Nearly everyone agrees that, in order for the system to be used successfully, it must be carefully introduced and employees and management trained to use it properly.

Even if you're not using the 360-degree feedback system, you can still solicit feedback from your staff in order to get a better handle on your performance and to find out how employees feel about their working conditions.

A simple way to get started is to ask employees a simple question at the end of a regular meeting, like this: "Is there anything else on your mind?" Be prepared to listen and to take action on what is offered. Once employees feel comfortable asking for help or providing you with input, you can formalize the approach by letting the staff know that you value their feedback and you will be asking for it. It is best to solicit the information face to face and one on one. Some questions you might ask include the following: • Do you feel the work is fairly distributed in our area?

- Do you feel the environment allows you to perform at your best?
- Am I respectful in my interactions with staff? With you personally?
- How do I do at resolving problems that affect the department?
- How are we doing enforcing the policies and procedures in this section?
- How am I doing with conflict management?

You may not always agree with what the employee has to say, but it's important that you don't immediately discount the feedback. You want to listen carefully to responses and ask questions to clarify what the employee means. You don't have to agree to change things based on what the employee shares. But you should pledge to consider it and to get back to the employee with your thoughts. When employees see a manager listening and then acting on their feedback, they begin to be open to change themselves.

84 Learn the Best Ways of Evaluating Performance Employee evaluations are a task that many managers would rather ignore. They're time consuming. They're uncomfortable. The process is outdated. As you know, however, evaluations have an important purpose, and when done properly, they provide necessary

information for both you and the employee.

Yearly performance reviews keep you and your employees on the same page regarding perceptions and expectations. Employees get a clear understanding of what you consider their strengths to be and in which areas they need to seek improvement. You are able to refine your relationships with employees during performance reviews, letting them know that you're willing to help them advance in their career goals.

What you might not realize is that you evaluate your employees every day. Every time you walk by them, you're observing their job performances, skills, behaviors, and attitudes. You're constantly forming opinions about your employees, which serve as foundations for their performance appraisals. While you're sure to have opinions about your employees' job performances and other factors, it's still likely that you have trouble completing evaluation reports when the time rolls around.

Making the Performance Appraisal Process Worthwhile and Meaningful The most important thing you can do to make the job of performance appraisals easier for you and more meaningful for your employees is to keep a file on each member of your team. The file can be kept electronically or in a confidential desk drawer; it's not the process, but the content that will be important. Files should be updated weekly with your recorded impressions of how each employee performed that week. Note the positive aspects and the problems, and include any e-mails and letters that reflect performance.

If you're thinking that employee files sound like a lot of work, you're probably not remembering how you've

struggled filling out evaluation reports and wracking your brain to think of examples that support those reports. Spending a few minutes a week updating your employee files will give you all the information you need when it's time to complete the performance appraisal.

While the performance appraisal form can be difficult to use, you can overcome its shortcomings by planning the performance appraisal dialogue in advance, talking your employee through the performance appraisal, and sharing how your assessment is reflected in the document. Managers who take the performance appraisal process seriously can transform a process that employees hate into something worthwhile.

Qualities of a Good Performance Appraisal Employee evaluations should help you to learn more about the members of your team. They should help you to discover how the employee views his role within the company and how he envisions that role down the road. Ideally, evaluations should be a give-and-take experience, with you and your employees sharing thoughts and opinions.

There are many evaluation forms and processes available, both in electronic and written forms. Good performance evaluations contain the following qualities:

- They are honest, fair, and consistent.

- They cover a full year.
- They contain no surprises. Your employees should, based on feedback from you throughout the year, have a pretty good idea of what their reports contain.
- They seek to be balanced. No employee is perfect, and every employee has good qualities. (If they didn't, why would they be your employees?) • They evaluate employees against established standards.
- They objectively articulate whether the employee is poor, average, or excellent and why.
- They include time for you to ask the employee her impressions of the job.
- They include time for you and your employee to together set goals for the coming year.
- They include time for you and your employee to discuss her goals and how you might assist her in meeting those goals.

With advance preparation and a carefully thought-out system in place, evaluations can be easily accomplished to the benefit of your organization.

85 Know When to Use Employee Opinion Surveys Many managers who thought they knew exactly what their employees were thinking and doing and talking about have ended up surprised to learn they were way off base. Sometimes it takes a confrontation to wake up a manager

who's been sleeping. Sometimes a number of employees leave the company within a short time, or a manager finally notices groups of employees who abruptly end their conversations when they see him coming.

How do you get a realistic handle on how your employees are doing, what they're thinking, and how they're feeling? You ask them, of course.

Using Employee Opinion Surveys to Learn the Real Story Employee opinion surveys, also called employee engagement surveys or employee satisfaction surveys, are intended to measure employee perceptions. Such a survey measures employee satisfaction concerning pay, benefits, job satisfaction, workplace safety, communication, and supervision. It also may focus on career-development opportunities, human resources policies, and diversity issues.

In order for an employee survey to be successful, employees have to be willing to complete the survey honestly and without fear of repercussion. Management must also be willing to consider responses seriously and to act on them. Few things are more demoralizing to employees than to be asked to share their thoughts and opinions, only to have them ignored once they do.

Prior to surveying employees, be certain that you're willing to hear the results and are committed to making improvements based on those results. Too often, companies survey employees, review the results, and end up making

excuses for their poor performances. Some companies even pick and choose what feedback they'll address with employees, glossing over issues that might be uncomfortable or might require change that the company's not willing to make.

Remember that it's better not to ask, than to ask, get answers, and choose to ignore them.

Tips for a Successful Employee Survey

When conducted and instituted properly, employee surveys can benefit you, your employees, and the organization. Some tips to ensure a successful survey include the following: • *Seek high participation.* Surveys conducted within the workplace typically have a higher participation rate (about 75 percent) than those sent home for completion (about 35 percent). Increase participation through advanced promotion and by committing to make changes based on the results.

- *Share the results.* Share the results as quickly as possible, and don't hide any results. Employees participated in the survey, and they have a pretty good idea what it will show.
- *Develop company-wide action plans.* As soon as the results are in, develop action plans to address issues that affect the whole company. Be sure to share these with employees.
- *Develop department-specific action plans.* Each manager should develop action plans to make improvements in his or her own department. Employees should have input into the action plans.
- *Remember that it's okay to say no .* Resource constraints mean that not every problem identified can be improved. The key is to communicate survey results but let

employees know that, due to those constraints, there won't be an action plan for improvement at this time. Employees who feel lied to or deceived will not be happy and productive workers.

- *Take credit for improvements.* Attention should be called to all changes that are made in response to the employee survey, and the changes should be conspicuously linked to the survey. Companies often make improvements and forget to market the changes to their employees. Employees need to be reminded routinely of these improvements. A good strategy is to include employee survey updates as part of staff meetings.
- *Resurvey regularly.* Excellent companies survey employees annually and benchmark their scores internally and against best-in-class companies. The newest trend is to periodically conduct a full survey and supplement it annually with shorter surveys covering key areas.

Progressive companies want to hear from their employees and are committed to workplace satisfaction. These companies have learned that engaged employees go above and beyond at work, resulting in excellent customer service and high profit margins. These in turn improve a company's reputation, thereby helping the organization attract the best employees.

CHAPTER 16

The Importance of Coaching and Mentoring

86 Know When and How to Coach Your Employees

If you want your employees to be happy, commit to becoming a coach. Coaches help employees reach their full potential by helping them overcome obstacles that are blocking them from excellence. Coaching is about guiding employees to expand in their roles so they are able to resolve their own issues and move ahead. Often, a coach simply asks a question that prompts an employee to think differently about a problem so that he's able to develop his own solution.

Good coaches know their staffs and their strengths and problem areas. They help guide them on their paths to achieve their career aspirations. Coaches set high expectations for employees, and they help employees understand that they can meet those expectations. As you've probably discovered, employees often will rise—or not—to the expectations managers set for them.

Coaching is completely different from disciplining. Discipline focuses on what an employee is doing wrong and specifies exactly what must be done differently. Discipline is very black and white, and, when administered correctly, tells the employee with 100 percent certainty what and how he must perform.

Nor is coaching the same as training. If an employee needs to acquire the knowledge and skills to do the job, he

should be provided with training in order to learn to do what is expected of him. It is not your job, as his coach, to teach him to do his job; instead, it is your job to help him achieve more once he has.

What a Coach Does

A good coach creates an environment in which employees feel they can flourish. This enables employees to have confidence and to take risks that expand the boundaries of their jobs. A coach does all of the following:

- Makes time for employees and makes them feel comfortable and welcome
- Takes time to observe employees in various settings
- Provides feedback regarding employees' strengths and areas for improvement
- Ensures that appropriate training is available when needed
- Uses effective listening skills
- Masters effective questioning techniques
- Allows employees to make mistakes and then helps them process how to do things differently the next time

Coaching Is Not Always Appropriate

Coaching often is desirable and highly appropriate, allowing you to develop close, professional relationships with your employees and helping them to advance in the workplace. Sometimes, however, attempting to coach an employee can result in more harm than good, even though you have the very best intentions. Consider these instances on the following page, in which coaching would most likely not be beneficial:

- *An employee's training is not complete.* During training, an employee needs direction and support in how to perform his job. Attempting to coach him can distract from the learning process and actually have a negative impact.

- *An employee does not understand what is expected of him.* This employee doesn't need coaching; he needs instruction, which is a different function.

- *You are rushed and in a hurry.* Coaching takes time. If you don't have time to coach with deliberation, chances are you'll simply be telling employees what to do, which could have a negative effect on your relationship with them.
- *You're angry or upset.* It takes patience and skill to help employees resolve their own issues. If you are angry or upset, the chances are great that you won't exhibit the skills necessary to coach, again endangering your relationship with members of your team.

87 Don't Confuse Coaching with Discipline

While coaching is designed to empower employees to grow and expand in their roles, discipline is the process used when employees can't or won't meet the expectations of the job. Poor-performing employees take up a tremendous amount of manager time and emotional energy.

While there is no simple answer as to why some employees repeatedly exhibit behavior that is unacceptable, at least most companies have policies established to help managers deal with poor performers.

A widely accepted and employed practice is the use of progressive discipline. As the name implies, progressive discipline is the process of applying increasingly severe steps or measures when an employee fails to correct a problem after being given an opportunity to do so. The idea is to apply the least amount of pressure in order to achieve the desired behavior change. The basic rules of discipline are:

- Always discipline an employee privately.

- Make sure you have all the necessary facts before approaching an employee about a discipline problem.

- Allow the employee to tell her side of the story.
- If there are witnesses, interview them one by one before approaching the subject of the discipline problem.
- Try to get the employee to tell you what behaviors she will change in order to remedy the problem.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting with the employee in order to review progress.
- Offer your feedback regarding the employee's progress.

Performance problems run the gamut from simple, such as poor attendance and unacceptable tardiness, to complex. A company normally has policies governing attendance and starting times, making it easy to identify poor behavior. More complex problems include behavioral issues that affect other team members or customer service. These types of problems can be more difficult.

Keeping Everyone on the Same Page

It is a manager's responsibility before beginning any discipline process to first determine if the employee knows what is expected of her. In other words, does she understand what rules she is breaking or what the performance expectations are? If she doesn't, it's your job to explain to her exactly what is expected. It's hard to imagine, but it could be that an employee doesn't think there's any problem with spending forty to forty-five minutes of every workday on personal phone calls.

If you are positive that she does understand the expectations but can't, or won't, comply with them, you're going to have to begin a discipline process.

Before you set the progressive process in mind, however, conduct some simple counseling during which you clarify your expectations and let the employee know in what ways

those expectations are not being met. Tell her if her behavior doesn't change, you will be forced to begin formal discipline.

Official Steps of the Progressive Discipline Process

The progressive discipline process is appropriate when you are satisfied that an employee has been told and understands what is expected of her, has been counseled concerning her performance and/or behavior, and has been warned that formal discipline would be forthcoming if the performance and/or behavior didn't change. Here are the steps of the discipline process:

1. *Verbal warning:* The verbal warning is the first official step in the progressive discipline process. You, as the manager, bring the problem to the attention of the employee, including specific circumstances and times and dates on which the problem has occurred. You also clearly communicate the expected behavior change. A verbal warning is different than counseling because you're making it clear that if improvement in the employee's behavior is not immediate, there will be further discipline. Make sure you keep notes regarding the conversation, including dates and the specific details shared.

2. Written warning: If the poor performance continues, a written warning is the next step of the process. Follow the steps outlined in the verbal warning, but put everything into writing. The written warning is shared with the employee, with both parties signing the statement. The written warning should include a statement such as, "If immediate improvement is not evidenced, the employee may be subject to additional discipline, up to and including termination."

3. *Suspension without pay:* If the employee's behavior continues to be poor, you can apply for a suspension. A typical suspension is one to three days and is documented exactly like a written warning. Some organizations prefer to impose additional written warnings instead of a suspension.

4. *Termination:* This is the most significant act you can take as a manager, and it should never be done lightly or without deliberation. If progressive discipline has been followed appropriately, and the employee has been given every chance to improve and has failed to do so, termination may be your only option. Terminations should always be conducted privately and should be handled calmly and factually. Have all applicable documentation regarding the discipline problem and the process at hand before you begin the process.

It's important to understand that the progressive discipline process is not always applicable. While it's appropriate for routine performance problems, such as attendance tardiness and dress code infractions, gross infractions such as stealing or exhibiting violence may result in immediate termination. Problems that affect quality and behavioral issues between staff members may start at the written, rather than verbal, warning stage, due to the nature of the problems. If you're unsure at which point to enter the process, check with your company's human resources department.

88 Don't Discipline Without Documenting

Although it's a cumbersome task, every conversation you have regarding the behavior of an employee should be

noted. Keeping notes will save you time in the long run and allow you to make better decisions regarding discipline issues. By establishing a system and keeping it updated, you'll know at a glance if and when it's time to move to the next step in the discipline process.

The most frequent mistake managers make regarding discipline is that they repeatedly engage in counseling instead of counseling once and moving on to a warning. You talk to your employee about the problem, but nothing changes. Wanting to give him the benefit of the doubt, you talk to him again—and then again.

Still nothing has changed, and by now you're so fed up with the employee that you just want to get rid of him, but you can't. Why? Because you haven't employed progressive discipline, as your company's policy requires.

You end up incredibly frustrated, and your employee doesn't even understand there's a serious problem because all you've ever done is talk to him, giving him little motivation to change. If you had documented your conversations and referred back to them, you might have noticed that you were repeating yourself and might thus have started the progressive progress much earlier.

You can record and keep notes regarding conversations in paper files, on computer records, or even on a calendar. No matter what your methodology, you'll need to record dates and times you spoke with the employee, and the purpose of the meeting, such as for counseling, to deliver a verbal warning, and so forth. If, when reviewing your notes, you see you've done too much counseling without seeing any results, move on to the next step.

Documenting Formal Discipline

Managers must understand that any and all documentation regarding an employee's performance could some day show up as part of a wrongful discharge suit. This means that all supporting documentation must be carefully drafted. The following sections describe a four-step process for documentation.

The Problem Statement

This is a factual statement that clearly describes the performance issue. It should include the whos, whats, whens, wheres, and whys regarding the situation. A problem statement should not include any guesses, hunches, or comments about motivation. Your statement should not make general or unsubstantiated statements such as "Janice is always late," "Mary exhibits poor-quality work," or "Jack seems to have some anger issues."

Your statement should read like this: "Janice was late on five occasions in the past two weeks (list specific dates). When she arrives, she doesn't begin working immediately, but talks with coworkers and gets coffee, making her start time even later. On (provide dates) she actually began her work at (provided time)."

Be as specific and factual as you can, and keep the problem statement in a place where it can be easily accessed and referenced.

Desired Performance

This section details exactly what the employee must do differently in order to solve the discipline problem. Cite the policy or procedure that has been violated. You might write: "Janice must be at her desk and ready to begin work each day at 8 A.M ."

Steps to Be Taken

This step of the process specifies any help that you or someone else in the company will provide in order to assist the employee to improve her performance. In the case of tardiness, sometimes a manager and the employee can agree on a different start time. Perhaps the employee will be assigned to work temporarily with a coworker who is more proficient at skills the employee needs to learn, or maybe she can be sent to a class to learn how to better perform her duties.

Consequences

Every documentation should indicate what will happen if the employee's performance does not improve. This can be a global statement, such as "If there is not immediate and sustained improvement, there will be further discipline up to and including termination." Or you can describe the next step in the process, such as: "As this is Janice's third written warning for tardiness, the next occurrence will result in an unpaid suspension."

Clear, factual, and concise documentation is a manager's best protection. When employees are faced with the facts, they tend to be less defensive and more open to change. If a discipline problem is serious enough to warrant termination, you'll have all the notes necessary to demonstrate the nature of the performance issue and how you tried to work with the employee to improve the situation.

89 Be Willing to Make Difficult, But Necessary, Decisions There are two simple statements regarding job

performance that managers need to fully understand. The first is this: Nearly every person who accepts a job understands that, in exchange for a paycheck, he is expected to follow the rules and meet established performance standards. That's not to say that every employee will honor that agreement. Some will knowingly try to break the rules, while others simply are incapable of meeting the expectations of the job. However, nearly all understand the premise of the working arrangement.

The second statement is this: Nearly everyone who accepts a job also understands that there are consequences for poor performance. This means that those employees who knowingly slack off or break the rules expect that their behavior will get them into trouble. The ones who try but aren't capable of performing the job know they are working below standard.

And, the employees who are following the rules and meeting standards expect you to do something about those who are not. Over time, managers who allow poor performance to go unchecked will lose the respect of their staffs, and eventually, control of their teams.

Every manager should become familiar with setting standards and holding staff accountable. Coaching works with employees who want to meet the standards. Discipline is for employees who can't or won't meet the standards.

The trick is to have standards and hold staff to them. Staff will see that you are fair and consistent in your behavior.

You may not enjoy disciplining employees. In fact, you might consider disciplining employees to be the worst part of your job. As a manager, however, it is your responsibility to do so, and you've got to be willing to make the tough decisions and take the sorts of actions that benefit your entire team.

90 Use Respect and Common Sense When Terminating

Firing an employee in today's litigious society can be more than a little scary. The threat of a wrongful discharge lawsuit is real, and as a manager, you must take appropriate steps to protect yourself and your company from these types of charges.

Understanding Wrongful Discharge

In order to claim wrongful discharge, an employee must claim that her rights under a protected status (such as race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation) were violated. If you're faced with firing an employee, you'll need to consider the situation carefully and make sure that the termination is fair. To avoid wrongful discharge claims, carefully consider the following questions before taking any action:

- Was a thorough investigation conducted?

- Are there sufficient (documented) facts available to justify the termination?
- Did the employee offer a legitimate explanation for her poor performance?

- Does the punishment fit the crime?
- Would a neutral third party agree that termination was appropriate for the facts presented?
- How have other, similar situations been handled?
- Have other people been fired for the same poor performance, or can the employee claim she is being treated unfairly and point to examples where others were treated more leniently?
- Should the employee be given one more chance? (If she has protected status under the Americans with Disabilities Act, sometimes a “final probation” is a better step.) If after answering all of these questions you still believe that discharge is appropriate, you should begin to plan the termination meeting. Contrary to popular belief, you shouldn’t fire someone on a Friday afternoon. The best days are midweek because it allows the employee to call with any questions she may have regarding the action. Sometimes an employee is so shocked or upset during the meeting that she is unable to ask questions about termination pay, benefits, or other issues.

It is always recommended that a representative from human resources be present at the meeting. The meeting should be fairly short and to the point. It’s important that you remain calm at all times throughout the meeting. You need to ensure that your behavior is legal and that you act with kindness and compassion when speaking with the employee.

Dealing with Employee Reactions

It’s impossible to predict ahead of time how an employee will react to termination. Some are relieved. Others are shocked, and some will get angry. You should allow the employee to express herself, but don’t allow the meeting to

become a review of past history. By this time, you've had multiple meetings with the employee and have given her a chance to explain or change her behavior. If the meeting begins to heat up, or you feel yourself being pulled into past history, you should cut it short, saying something like, "I hear what you're saying, but the decision has been made and it's final. Now I need you to collect your belongings and turn in your badge so that someone can escort you from the office."

For some, the termination meeting will bring closure to a difficult period during which they knew they weren't performing well and hated how that made them feel. Employees have been known to say something like, "I knew it wasn't working out, but I didn't know what to do about it." Or, "I tried to do what you asked, but I just couldn't."

The fact is that most people are fired well beyond when they should have been. Sometimes, however, managers put off dealing with the problems, or they need time in order to build the case for termination.

If you are in any way afraid that the employee you're firing will react violently, be sure to have a security presence close by. It is not worth the risk of someone getting hurt, or even having the discussion escalating to a shouting match. Security is trained to assist with these types of individuals.

91 Use Mentoring to Advance Your Team

Mentoring relationships have existed for as long as man has lived in society. It's a natural tendency for someone who is just starting out in an endeavor or is new at something to look to another, more experienced person for support and guidance. If the two connect, it's not unlikely that a mentoring relationship will form.

People of accomplishment often give credit to a mentor, whether a parent, religious figure, or someone in their area of accomplishment. Always, the mentor has been a benefit to the mentored.

What Mentoring Is Meant to Accomplish

Thousands of formal mentoring programs are in place in corporations such as General Electric, Sun Micro Systems, and General Foods. Mentoring, however, can take place without the structure of a formal program. Generally, people in business seek mentors to:

- Provide insider information about the organization.

- Offer feedback about how the mentored is perceived within the organization.
- Teach strategies to help the mentored become more successful at his or her job.
- Help the mentored become more politically savvy.

By seeking a mentor, an individual demonstrates that he is taking charge of his career and that he has the desire to develop professionally. By agreeing to be a mentor, a more experienced worker agrees to share some special talent or knowledge that he possesses. Mentors generally find their tasks rewarding and discover that mentoring keeps them fresh and challenged in their jobs.

Whether you sign up for a formal mentoring program or seek out a mentor on your own, you should have a clear goal in mind. By having a goal, you will be better able to identify potential mentors and be able to articulate what type of help you want.

Tips on Establishing a Mentor Relationship

Sometimes a person falls into the role of mentor inadvertently. Other times, a more formal decision concerning mentoring occurs. As a manager, you will serve as mentor simply due to your role within your department. Certainly, you won't have an established mentoring relationship with every employee, but you are in a mentoring role to your team. If you are seeking a mentor yourself, keep the following tips in mind:

- Have an established goal and seek someone who has the skills and knowledge to help you.

- Together, work out the goals of the mentoring relationship. A primary goal brought you together, but you may have several areas in which you are seeking guidance.
- Determine together how frequently you will meet. Ideally, you'll meet face to face every other week. Many relationships, however, flourish via e-mail and telephone.
- Determine at the outset how long the mentoring relationship will last. A six-month or one-year agreement is typical.

Your Role As a Mentor

A mentor typically plays four roles: those of a coach, career counselor, role model, and networker.

As a coach you'll help to maximize your mentee potential by challenging her thought processes and helping her to understand the consequences of her actions. You'll serve as a tutor and teacher and offer assignments that will help her to acquire new skills.

As a counselor, you'll help the person you're mentoring to become more confident as she improves her skills and begins to envision success. You'll help her to gain insight by being direct and honest in your assessments of her, and

you'll help her develop specific plans with which to guide her professional development. You also will be a good listener, offering support during challenges.

As a role model, you'll put yourself in front of the one you're mentoring, giving her a chance to choose characteristics or traits that she wishes to emulate.

And, as a networker, you will guide and direct your mentee to beneficial sources throughout the company, making introductions to people inside and outside of the company who might be able to help her in her career.

Whether you are doing the mentoring, or arranging for members of your team to find others to serve as mentors, you should recognize the value that mentoring will have for your department as it increases employees' confidence and helps them to become more effective and productive workers.

CHAPTER 17

Reward and Recognize Employees to Boost Morale

92 Make R&R Your Mantra One of the simplest and most effective morale boosters a manager can employ is to make sure that employees feel appreciated. Employees crave recognition for good work, and a manager can easily supply it, but it's amazing how many employees feel that no one appreciates what they do. A vital message for managers is that recognizing and rewarding employees for good work goes a long, long way in maintaining morale and keeping workers happy and productive.

Creating a company-wide culture of recognition is a responsibility of senior leadership, who should model expected behaviors and ensure the development of company-wide programs. What occurs daily between a supervisor and his staff, however, has a far greater impact on making employees feel appreciated. Employees want

more than anything to be recognized for good work by their managers.

A Simple Thank You Goes a Long Way In addressing employee complaints about not feeling appreciated, one organization conducted an informal study. Every manager was required to ask employees two questions: • How do you like to be recognized?

- What can we do in this department to make staff feel more appreciated?

The results were amazing. By far, the one thing staff asked for was a simple thank you for a good job. Employees wanted their managers to notice when they fixed a problem report, dealt with a difficult customer, or stayed late to complete an assignment.

This survey showed that managers did not say “Thank you” nearly as much as they thought they did. Many employees didn’t appreciate a casual, “Thanks for everything” dismissal at the end of the day. Employees want to be thanked individually for specific accomplishments.

Reward and Recognition Programs Most employees like and appreciate reward and recognition programs. Department recognition programs can be especially effective because employees know each other and understand the significance of the rewards.

There are thousands of recognition and reward programs that can be easily implemented within a department or companywide. Here are some suggestions: • Department employee-of-the-month programs • Employee recognition during the monthly staff meeting • Departments creating their own celebration days, similar to Administrative

Assistant's Day • Candy-bar rewards for employees observed going above and beyond • Department-wide team dinners and team outings • A monthly lunch program in which a manager gives his top-performing employee a gift certificate for two to a local restaurant for lunch, with the employee choosing a companion from within the department

Benefits of Recognition Programs

Reward and recognition programs serve to encourage and reinforce desired behaviors among employees. They help to create an atmosphere of appreciation and trust, contribute to job satisfaction, encourage employees to take pride in their work, and promote empowerment and involvement among employees with one another, their projects, and the company in general.

Reward programs that really recognize the good work of employees create and foster employee loyalty and build self-esteem.

When creating a recognition program, make sure that it recognizes a specific behavior or accomplishment. Employees want to be recognized for completing a tough project two days ahead of schedule, not a general nod for being a "good worker."

Make sure that employees fully understand the program before it's implemented, and, above all, be certain you see it through to the end once it's started. There are few things more demoralizing to workers than to have their manager bail out on a reward program halfway through because she's lost interest or doesn't have time for it.

Once you get in the mindset of recognition and reward, it will become second nature, and everyone will benefit.

93 Think Past Compensation When Rewarding

Some managers believe that money is the only thing that motivates employees, but that's not necessarily true. Money is important to everyone, that's for sure. And if a company doesn't pay its employees fairly, money issues will overshadow all else.

But while money is an excellent form of recognition, it's not the only form with value. A study revealed that it takes 5 to 8 percent of an employee's salary to change behavior if the reward is offered in cash. But if the reward is other than cash, it takes only about 4 percent of the salary for the employee to exhibit changed behaviors.

Money Is Nice, But Maybe Not Memorable Cash awards are great, but, once they're gone, they're gone. A survey showed that 29 percent of employees who received cash awards used them to pay routine bills, and 18 percent couldn't remember what they used the money for. Helpful, but hardly memorable.

What employees remember is the presentation, letters, and words attached to the recognition.

Great Recognitions Without Cash If you assume that money is the only reward that counts, consider some of the most famous awards that have no money or little money attached. These awards are internationally known, are feverishly sought, and have stood the test of time: • Heisman Trophy • Academy Award • Nobel Prize • Olympic Medal There is no one-size-fits-all award program that is going to make everyone happy and motivated. As a manager, you need to know your employees and select the recognition approach that best fits them. Be creative and resourceful, and you'll be able to recognize employees in meaningful, memorable ways.

94 Rewards Come in Many Shapes and Sizes The challenge is to be creative when recognizing employees—choosing rewards that not only acknowledge good work, but serve to further motivate workers and foster manager/employee loyalty.

When choosing how to reward a particular employee, consider why you're recognizing him or her. Do you want to thank the employee? Promote a specific behavior? Perhaps you want the worker to know that he or she is valuable to the team, or you'd like to recognize work that extended above and beyond the call of duty.

Whatever the reason for recognizing and rewarding an employee, be sure to clearly state it both to the recipient and the rest of your team. That eliminates speculation and keeps everyone informed.

The reward you present should be proportionate to the accomplishment. Consistently meeting expectations is commendable, for instance, but would not merit the same level of reward as for an employee who, on his own time, came up with an improved method of inventorying stock that resulted in savings of tens of thousands of dollars. Ideally, the reward will be tailored to the individual receiving it. Be careful, though, to be sure the award conforms to the culture of the organization and won't create resentment among other employees.

Tailor the Reward to Fit the Recipient Employees are motivated by different types of rewards. Some seek power, while others crave public recognition. Money

can be a great motivator, as can time off, on-the-job privileges, or a special gift.

Small rewards can be as effective as large ones, as long as they single out employees in a meaningful way. Thinking outside of the box when choosing rewards can generate excitement among your team, helping to maintain morale and keeping workers satisfied and productive.

95 Cultivate Employee Loyalty Through Recognition

Recognition programs are important, there's no question about it. An employee will work for a paycheck, but an employee who is recognized and rewarded for particular jobs will work happily and productively, with greater motivation than the weekly or biweekly check.

To keep recognition within organizations alive and well, it's important that all managers be well trained regarding existing programs and able to demonstrate that they use them. Some organizations ask managers to send monthly reports to their supervisors indicating the formal and informal methods of employee recognition they used that month.

Education regarding recognition programs can be part of a company's new-hire orientation program. During the part of the program where the mission, vision, and values of the company are reviewed, have the presenter describe the various reward programs. At the same time, if there are any peer-to-peer programs, give the new hire a sample kit to get him started. This is a great way to get new hires motivated about your organization.

Recognition Should Begin Right After Hiring New employees probably won't feel comfortable early on

giving out peer awards, nor is it likely that they'll earn any awards during the first few months of work. To get new employees off on the right foot, hold a recognition ceremony when they complete their introductory or probation period, usually after ninety days. Give them a certificate of welcome, make sure they've met all the other employees, and review the rewards program. Then stand back and watch how motivated these new employees are to earn recognition and to give it to others.

Recognition of employees early on pays big dividends for managers because it motivates them and commits them to the job.

Recognition of employees can be as simple as a small ceremony or an encouraging word. Managers should employ it regularly.

How and Why Are Employees Recognized?

Different organizations recognize employees for various reasons, including length of service, sales, successful cost-saving suggestions, client referrals, attendance, and employee referrals.

While about 90 percent of organizations recognized employees in some way for years of service to the company, elaborate celebrations these days are rare. Because of the explosion of early retirement packages and layoffs, some companies have stopped celebrating retirements altogether, and that is a mistake. An employee who gives ten, twenty, thirty, or more years of service to an organization should be recognized.

Two other common employee recognition programs are for sales and cost-saving suggestions because both are easy to quantify. These awards should be commensurate with the achievement; big achievements deserve big awards. If an

employee develops a cost-savings idea that saves the company millions of dollars, she deserves more than a coffee mug. Some companies give employees a percentage of the savings, up to a maximum amount.

96 Don't Limit Employee Recognition Programs While it's important for employers to recognize their employees for outstanding service, being in business is really all about having satisfied customers, which leads to an attractive bottom line and a thriving organization.

Of course, it stands to reason that one will lead to the other: If you have a hard-working, dedicated, and enthusiastic work force, you'll have no shortage of satisfied customers. Call that a win-win situation.

So for managers, the challenge is to find ways to energize your employees and make them feel that they—and their tasks—are an integral part of the organization. Not only will the employees perform at a high level, they'll develop pride in and become part of the culture of the organization.

Since the 1990s, hospitals, for instance, have concentrated on increasing patient satisfaction through a variety of employee incentive programs. These programs, which could be tailored for use in any organization, were designed to promote teamwork, quality, and customer service.

There Is No "I" in "Team"

Here are some actual recognition programs that have been effective in getting employees to work together, in boosting morale, and in energizing workers: ***Dancy Dollars:*** Named after the company president, this is a peer-to-peer award program. Each employee is given a supply of Dancy dollars to distribute to anyone who pitches in to help get a job done.

The Dancy dollars can be redeemed in the coffee shop, gift shop, and cafeteria, or they can be saved to purchase a larger item. Many of the Dancy dollars remain unspent, however, because employees write each other notes on them as they are exchanged. The notes, it turns out, mean more than the money.

The Power of Team: This program recognizes special acts of kindness and goodwill among coworkers. A random person in each department is given a booklet, with instructions to recognize a coworker for being a good team member. The employee writes a few sentences, then gives the booklet to that coworker, who does likewise about someone else. When the booklet is completed, it's displayed for all to read.

Quality Counts

These programs are useful in boosting employee participation in quality control measures:

Quick Cash: This program is used when an inspection is pending. To ensure that employees are prepared to be quizzed about policies and procedures, managers hand out coins, worth fifty cents, when an employee is observed doing something right on the job. The positive reinforcement this program provides can result in earning excellent inspection scores.

Great Idea Program: Each month, employees are given the opportunity to submit ideas to improve some aspect of the company. Everyone who submits an idea is entered in a drawing with the chance to win a \$100 gift check.

Service with a Smile

Given that customer service is such an integral function in most companies, it makes sense to develop special recognition programs for star service providers. An example:

Service Star of the Month: This program allows employees to be nominated as Service Star of the Month by anyone in the organization and by customers. The nominees are reviewed monthly, with the winner receiving an award that could range from a certificate to a cash gift.

Whether the award is a trip to Hawaii, a cash gift, or a handshake accompanied by a heartfelt word of thanks, the presentation of the award should always be special. Let your employees know that you appreciate their effort and hard work. Even if you're simply thanking an employee for a job well done, make sure to look the employee in the eye, use her first name, and be specific when offering your appreciation. And just to make sure your "thank you" sinks in, don't discuss any other work-related matters, which might lessen the impact of the occasion. It's important that the employee understand that your feelings are genuine.

Don't Skimp on Presentation It's the night of your annual awards dinner, and it's important that everything go according to plan, which entails more

than making sure the chicken is cooked sufficiently. The most critical part of the evening is making sure the presentations go smoothly and are handled correctly.

You should take these four factors into consideration: • Those in attendance should understand what each person did to earn his award.

- The awards should be commensurate with the achievement. For example, if a suggestion was made that saved the company a large amount of money, the award should entail more than a pen-and-pencil set.
- Award recipients should be prepared for the ceremony. It should be made clear whether family can be invited and whether they will be expected to say a few words.
- Finally, the organizer of the ceremony should double-check every detail, including that all names are spelled correctly and that presenters can pronounce the winners' names correctly.

CHAPTER 18

Taking Care of Yourself and Your Employees

97 Promote a Healthy Work-Life Balance

Juggling a job, much less a career, with a family, a home, a social life, and all the responsibilities that go along with those things is difficult. And, according to recent research, it's getting more difficult.

We work longer hours: The number of working hours in America rose almost 12 percent between 1973 and 2000, according to Juliet Schor, an economist and professor at Boston College who has extensively studied the working and spending habits of Americans. We take less vacation than we used to, and less than workers in most other countries. Twenty-five percent of working Americans get no paid vacation time; in 2006, 43 percent didn't take an entire week off at one time; and a third fewer American families take vacations together than they did in the 1970s. Many of those who do take vacations wouldn't dream of going without a laptop or Blackberry with which to keep up with e-mail or maybe sneak in a little extra work. What's wrong with this picture?

Here's what wrong. We're a nation of stressed-out, irritable workers, with an increasing number of us practicing unhealthy behaviors. The American Psychological Association reported that in 2006, job stress cost U.S. businesses about \$300 billion a year, attributed to medical,

legal, and insurance costs; loss of productivity; absenteeism; and turnover.

If You Get It, Your Employees Will, Too Work is an important and necessary part of our lives, there's no question about it. If it becomes the only thing, however, or becomes so dominant that everything and everyone else is diminished, then it's a problem. As a manager, you need to set the tone for employees regarding life/work balance.

Send out occasional e-mails to staff members, encouraging them to take occasional breaks. Try to get senior management to buy into the importance of life/work balance and perhaps sponsor an in-house seminar or workshop. If your company has a gym, encourage employees to use it over lunch. Check out whether your benefits package includes a gym membership or contributes to the cost of a membership.

The American Psychological Association recommends the following strategies for managing stress, which can carry over from work to home: • Recognize the signs of stress. Headaches, muscle aches (especially in the neck and shoulders), anger, irritability, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, and feeling “out of it” can all be signs of stress.

- Formulate strategies for stress. Instead of coming home and yelling at the dog or, worse yet, your kids, grab the kids and take a bike ride or a walk. Stop by the gym on your way home. Take a break at lunch to read a book or meet a friend. Figure out what helps you relax, and take time to do it.
- Write it down. Make a list of everything you need to do, for both your work and personal lives. This gives you a

clear picture of what you need to accomplish and allows you to stop worrying that you'll forget to do something.

- Turn it off. Put your cell phone away when you get home, or set only a certain limited time to check messages or finish a work-related task.
- Take breaks during the workday. A few minutes to stretch, walk around the office, get a drink of water, or even just to take a few deep breaths can make a big difference and keep you energized during the workday. Encourage your employees to take breaks, as well.
- Take care of yourself away from work. Get enough sleep. Take your vacations. Develop or maintain healthy eating and exercise habits. Take time for yourself and friends and family.
- If you think your stress is out of control or causing unhealthy or destructive behaviors, seek professional help.

There will be occasions when you will need every member of your team to work long and hard to finish a project or meet a deadline. On a daily basis, however, you should strive to be an example to your employees by taking care of yourself and other important aspects of your life.

98 Be a Role Model

If you consistently work twelve-hour days, come in on weekends, and constantly talk about the extra time you put in at night, your employees are likely to feel pressured to keep up with you. While that may seem desirable, it eventually will take its toll on both you and your team. Answer the questions below honestly to get an idea of what kind of example you're setting for your staff: 1. I find myself working more and more.

True___ False___

2. I don't have time for myself or for my family and friends.

True___ False___

3. My day is completely scheduled at work and in the evening.

True___ False___

4. I no longer feel passionate about my profession.

True___ False___

5. I never take time off just to do things that I want to do.

True___ False___

6. I feel stressed out—a lot.

True___ False___

7. I never use up all my vacation time.

True___ False___

8. I almost always bring my work home with me.

True___ False___

9. I can't remember the last time I read a book.

True___ False___

10. I could never have a hobby. No time.

True___ False___

11. I often feel tired and cranky.

True___ False___

12. Having several major work projects going at once is the norm for me.

True___ False___

So how did you score? If you checked “true” for just one to four questions, you’re a great role model for your team because you know how to achieve a balance between life and work. If you answered “true” for five to eight questions, watch it. You’re on the slippery slope to becoming an overworked American, and you’re not setting a great example for your employees. If nine or more of your answers were “true,” you not only are stressed, you’re making others stressed, and it’s time to figure out how you’re going to become a better role model.

99 Work-Life Balance Applies to All Ages Both managers and staff of all ages need to learn to control the stress in their lives.

Dr. Bob Brooks, a clinical psychologist on the faculty of the Harvard Medical School, has identified three characteristics that help people deal better with stress and, as a result, to achieve a healthier work-life balance: • Commitment

- Challenge
- Control

Brooks claims that people who possess the characteristics above achieve a greater capacity for stress hardiness, which is the ability to cope well with stress. Commitment to your work gives you a feeling of purpose and a sense that your work is important. Maintaining a sense of challenge helps you to avoid becoming bored and listless about your work. And a sense of control means that you’re in charge of your work instead of your work being in charge of you.

Being Aware of the Needs of All Your Employees
Working moms get a lot of attention when it comes to issues and problems associated with juggling work, home, kids, activities, and other obligations. Certainly, being a working mom is a tough job that requires a lot of patience, flexibility, good organizational and planning skills, reliable backup, and a great sense of humor.

What about, however, the needs of other employees? What about working dads, or working grandparents—who increasingly are incurring responsibility for child care—or working children of aging parents, or working singles? We live in a fast-paced world, in which we're expected to be busy, busy, busy. As a result, most of us are.

We don't all share the same stresses, but chances are we all experience stress of one kind or another. We all have personal needs and obligations that require our time and attention. Employees who are not given opportunities to meet those needs and obligations usually become resentful and angry, characteristics that don't contribute to productivity and enthusiasm.

As a manager, be aware of the needs of all your employees, and don't assume that you understand their personal situations. If you sense that someone is very stressed over something, ask if everything is all right or if there's something that the employee would like to discuss. You'll have a happier team as a result.

100 Give Employees Options to Increase Flexibility Flexible work schedules aren't just for companies seeking to win spots on best-places-

to-work lists. More and more organizations are working to meet the needs of employees by increasing flexibility.

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, the following concessions are becoming more popular: • Fifty percent of companies offer flexible work schedules.

- Fifty-one percent of companies offer some form of telecommuting.
- Compressed workweeks are becoming more prevalent.
- Job sharing is now widely accepted.

Why Flexibility Is Increasingly Important to All Ages Many Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) are choosing to remain in the workforce longer than their parents did, but they're looking for options for full time, nine-to-five jobs. Some want to work from home, some want to work only on weekends, others want to work only from 5 to 9 a.m. Baby Boomers are looking for flexibility, and smart employers are figuring out how to supply it to them.

Gen Xers (born between 1965 and 1978) have never committed to work as much as the Baby Boomers. They continue to seek a work-life balance and have brought a lot of attention to the matter. Many experts say it was Gen X that forced companies to take the issue of work-life balance seriously. Many Gen Xers are at the age where they are having or caring for children, and many are opting out of the work force altogether. Those who remain not only desire but expect flexibility. To Generation X, balancing family and outside interests is a priority. A recent study by the Pew Research Center reported that 60 percent of working mothers with children under age seventeen prefer to work part-time.

Generation Y (born between 1979 and 1988) is probably the most interesting generation in respect to workplace flexibility. For many, there is no true distinction between work and home. The plugged-in generation sees work and life as one. They believe you should be able to work anywhere, at any time. More than half of Gen Y returns home when completing college, using that safety net to be selective in choosing where to work.

Unlike previous generations, they will take time off from work to travel and view it as a life experience. Many in Gen Y believe that if the workplace doesn't meet their needs, they can consider becoming entrepreneurial. Friendships are very important to members of Gen Y, who prefer to work where their friends work.

As you can see, flexibility is important to workers of all ages. Smart companies are using flexibility to motivate, recognize, and reward employees because they know it makes their employees better workers. Sure, there are times when flexible schedules don't make sense or are downright impossible, but many times, arrangements can be made.

If your organization does not yet recognize the importance of allowing at least limited flexibility for employees, talk to your superior about it. Give examples of how a flexible work schedule would benefit your employees, and, as a result, make them happier and more productive workers.

Being Prepared for Being Flexible As a manager, you have much to balance.

As a manager, you have much to balance. When considering offering more flexibility, there are some issues you should consider and steps to take:

- Analyze every job in your department, and determine how much flexibility you can allow. Think outside of the box. It may be more than you think.

- Be prepared to manage more part-time and job-share staff.
- Evaluate the reward structure. Employees who commit to working the hectic life of travel and around-the-clock availability that the global economy requires should be rewarded differently than those who commit to regular hours and a constant pace.
- Remember that each generation has different needs.

101 Pay Attention to the Needs of Older Employees You have read about the importance of being able to manage employees of all ages and generations. In some cases, managers are overseeing four different generations of employees. If

any of your employees are of the generation known as the Matures (born between 1909 and 1945), they probably are nearing retirement, as the youngest of them are in their sixties. Some, however, will continue to work for ten or more additional years. In addition to the Matures, the Baby Boomers are an aging work force, with many rethinking traditional retirement.

The Blessings and Curses of the Baby Boom Generation Many Baby Boomers are choosing to work, either full-time or part-time, well past the traditional retirement age. They want to remain active and do not view full retirement as their only option. Many are looking to change careers in their later years. According to Harry Moody, director of academic affairs for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), retirement coaches are becoming increasingly popular with Baby Boomers looking to move on to different jobs or careers.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently published a study revealing that 30 percent of the work force are caregivers to elder loved ones or aging parents. The study reports that by the year 2010, that number will grow to 54 percent. Most of these are Baby Boomers. The Society of Human Resource Management reports that 26 percent of companies provide elder-care referral services, and 5 percent offer eldercare emergency services.

The IRS has recently weighed in by providing some new regulations that permit employees who have reached normal retirement age, but have never severed employment from the company, to still have the opportunity to collect their pensions. These new regulations will allow more Baby Boomers to work longer. Many will choose to stay with their current company but work in a different capacity.

On one hand, there will be a great sigh of relief as Boomers eventually, and finally, retire. While it will relieve companies of the high cost of health insurance and maxed-out salaries, however, it also will leave a huge void in the workplace. With only fifty million members, Generation X cannot replace all the Baby Boomers. While Generation Y is much larger (at seventy-nine million), it will take ten years for all of them to enter the workplace, and there is no way that entry-level workers will be able to replace the vast experience of the Boomers.

At this stage, most companies are simply talking about the problem. A more proactive approach is advised. The first step is for companies to model what the Boomer retirements will mean for the company. Now is the time to conduct a formal manpower planning study.

AARP's research indicates that the main reasons a Boomer will stay with a company is for pay and health benefits. Is your company willing to extend health benefits to part-time workers? Other perks Boomers will look for include flexible schedules, retirement planning assistance, wellness programs, and Medigap insurance.

Companies right now should be figuring out what their work forces will look like five, ten, and fifteen years from now. They should also be paying special attention to the needs of those older workers, who will help to determine the company's future.

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Cover image © iStock photo

\$12.95 (CAN \$14.50)
ISBN-13: 978-1-59869-557-1
ISBN-10: 1-59869-557-6

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