



# Managing Employees

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- William A. Maloney Sr. Chief Talent Officer

The goal of every manager should be to maximize the results of every employee - effectively first and efficiently second. The reasons for this are simple...a manager impacts every employee, and not just the employee's work life, but the employee's whole family life, and further they affect the business owner/company president/investor's livelihood. Employees mistreated by their manager share their frustrations with family and friends. A good manager is measured by their accomplishments in gold and a poor manager is measured in opportunity dollars lost. A poor manager leads to higher turnover, wasting training dollars and more work and stress for the company. For the sake of this discussion let's agree upon the following definition of a Manager. *A Manager is responsible to balance the complexities of getting today's work done today, with the resources and talents and materials available...directly or indirectly to satisfy a demand for which the company will receive a financial reward.*

In looking at some of the complexities of getting today's work done today it is important to briefly discuss some of the challenges of selecting and hiring talent, as well as the impact managers have on employee turnover as a backdrop to addressing management challenges. One of the facts every manager needs to own up to regarding their employees...either you hired them that way or you managed them to be that way...which is it? In truth, if they are not performing up to expectation, either answer identifies a concern and opportunity.

## **Selection and Hiring Talent:**

Most of the time, hiring is based on a resume and an interview. Some hiring is simply to get a warm body to stand in the gap. In reality the process of building a company with good to great employees starts with the hiring process. Most attempt to put someone in a job they think the candidate can do or learn to do. Past practices were to hire for technical abilities and in reality we fire them for attitude issues. Managers that master the hiring process now direct their energies on figuring out what are the essential technical and Inter-personal skills, attitudes and behaviors required to perform the job effectively. Managers are now replacing their old models of employee selection, with batteries of assessment instruments to compliment and learn how to be effective in their hiring approaches to match the person to the right job. Face it, employees are not perfect, but their imperfections make them perfect for certain kinds of work and imperfect for other types. The challenge is without assessments, how do you know? Another challenge has to do with understanding if they are motivated to just get the job and/or

motivated to do the job...how do you know? How many times have you been surprised and thought "they seemed motivated during the interview process," but what happened to that motivation? It's easy to be empathetic and to understand the pressure to get some one to fill the position like...yesterday...but it's never a smart play to put the right person in the wrong job or to just flat out hire the wrong person for your company. Get acquainted with the new tools that aid in the employee selection process. Look at your past hiring decisions to determine just how well your company is doing in attracting and retaining talent. The cost for hiring talent is high; however, the cost for a wrong hire is 10 times more in actual out-of-pocket expenses when you include the impact to morale, on your customers, wasted training dollars and time, not to mention the embarrassment to the company image.

### **Managers Impact Turnover:**

Clearly one of the key reasons for employee turnover is cited to be a poor working relationship with their immediate supervisor or manager or business owner. Here are some of the top reasons why companies lose talented employees:

- Hired a good person – but for the wrong job...employee didn't like what they were doing
- Employee was mismanaged - either a burned-out, worn-out or rusted-out situation
- Employee didn't trust their manager or company – integrity and ethical concerns
- Employee didn't like the people they work with – unfriendly environment
- Employee had limited growth potential – underdeveloped to their potential
- Pay was not satisfactory – for what they were expected to do the grass was greener somewhere else

By looking at your recent turnovers can you identify with the above list? Remember poor managers affect the business owner/company president/investor's livelihood.

One of the serious side effects of employee turnover is the reputation your company gets in the market place. Good employees want to work for a good company, great employees want and expect to work for a great company, poor employees bring down everybody, and a poor manager can bring down even a great company. Companies are only as good as their managers and employees. Remember employees either make and/or run the machines that make the products. Employees provide the service and employees fix the problems. Poor employees produce poor results. Poor managers produce poor employees and push away good employees.

**Employee Development:**

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

The goal when you hire an employee is to get that person to do what you need them to do, the way you want them to do it and in the timeframe you want it done. Nothing too complex...that is all you want and expect...right? Well, unless they have the gifts to just know all that and do that...then they must be developed. So do you have an effective process to develop your employees? The challenge is how do you know? Effective development programs will include developing values, attitudes, behaviors, learning and performance expectations, interpersonal and team skills and new competency learning, assuming they really want to know this stuff. These are the essentials of a good development initiative:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Values -                   | Is what you expect them to learn linked to company values; Integrity, Honor, Commitment, Reliability, Service, Quality, Appreciation and Concern?         |
| Attitudes -                | How do you think about your fellow Employees, Customers and Vendors? What motivates you to learn and perform?   |
| Behaviors -                | How do you interact with your fellow Employees, Customers and Vendors? How you faithfully carry out the controls, policies and procedures of the company? |
| Learning Expectations -    | How do you value new knowledge and experiences? How encouraged are you to continue grow and develop to improve your job?                                  |
| Performance Expectations - | How will you be measured? How effectively will you be evaluated and provided constructive feedback?   |

Inter-personal

Skills -

What are the soft skills essential for your success? What are your core competencies and what areas of strengths and weakness do you need to master?

Team Skills -

How are you encouraged to work together to figure out problems and challenges? How will you overcome obstacles? How effectively will you communicate?

The companies that foster balancing work learning and personal life learning tend to be the companies with the highest retention statistics. Companies that are involved with the community and encourage employees to participate to improve their communities generally have a waiting line for talent to choose from.

### **Performance Management:**

The area that should consume the majority of a manager's time is performance management. You cannot manage what you cannot measure. Reality and experience indicates the lack of performance management along with poor hiring practices is where a majority of managing mistakes are made.

To be effective in managing effectively you must master the critical steps of defining employee expectations, goal achievement, performance tracking and feedback, follow-up and employee appraisals. Effective managers develop an Integrity Managing Culture where the employee is responsible to communicate the status of project progress, what tools and skills are needed and what is working and what is not. Employees report any conflict or difficulties hindering them from achieving expectations then work to resolve the problems and present you with what must be worked on as the priority. Employees need to be the key problem thinkers and solvers, managers must be problem eliminators.

Another value tool for a manager to master is the "IRA" model of investing in employee.

"I" is for Involvement. Involve employees in decisions that impact their work. Get them to think of alternatives/solutions, strategies and obstacles to overcome. After all they will be the implementers and maintainers.

“**R**” is for Recognition. Recognize the value of their Individual and Team contributions. The key is recognizing how much and how little the contribution is to the expected results. Recognize who contributes and who doesn't. Deal appropriately with both. Don't reward bad behaviors.

“**A**” is for Appreciation. Managers must show sincere appreciation for the quality and quantity of the employee's contribution...if it is warranted. Using this model as an employee motivational investment tool will give you deposits, so when dealing with tough times there is something to withdraw. If you haven't invested in an employees IRA model then when tough times hit..., you will be withdrawing dedication, desire and commitment. And when you've depleted that from your employees..., what will be left? Remember, what you reward you get more of.

### **Managing Motivation:**

If you ask a manager who is responsible to motivate them, about 90% of the time they respond themselves...correct!!! Then ask a manager who is responsible to motivate the employees working for you, about 90% respond themselves...wrong!!! The responsibility of a manager is to first hire motivated employees. The second is to avoid de-motivating employees. Poor management practices defeat the will of good employees and thirdly if you have unmotivated employees you must deal with the problem now!!! Unmotivated employees will infect the motivation of other employees. Be sure you fix the root cause and not the symptom. Most of the time it will be a management practice of poor communication, poor people skills, and lack of respect directed toward the employee or employee issue. Other potential problem areas would be lack of advancement opportunities, lack of increases, and poor benefits. It is also possible where a company's image has affected employee morale and motivation when the public image has become a public disgrace.

### **Managing Made Simple:**

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

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

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