

MANAGING EMPLOYEES EFFECTIVELY

By Roy E. Chitwood

Managing employees has likely been written about more than any other business area, and with good reason. For in the end, it's a company's people that produce the results and determine the ultimate success or failure of the operation.

I absolutely believe that any company's greatest asset is the undeveloped potential of its people. And to manage effectively, you must focus on the undeveloped potential of each employee, as doing so will benefit the company, the employee, and even you, the manager.

Before we discuss strategies for empowering and effectively managing employees, however, it's worthwhile to consid-

er the history of today's employee, what his values are and how they've been shaped.

Nido Qubein is an international speaker and consultant, and is the chairman of several national and international companies including High Point, N.C.-based Creative Services, Inc. In his recent article, "The 'Baby Bust' Generation," Qubein argues that those who believe nothing good arises from the attitudes, values and behaviors of the younger generation are greatly mistaken.

He does cite, however, several values of the modern day worker that management must consider if they are to effec-

tively manage and empower these employees, including the following:

Impatience. Because they grew up in a fast-paced society, they look for rapid advancement. They want as much as possible as fast as possible.

Autonomy Younger people are far more likely to ask, “What’s in it for me?” They will give you their loyalty but only if you can show them how loyalty to the company serves their personal interests.

Self-fulfillment They’re looking for jobs that allow them to work at the things they enjoy, while allowing them the leisure to pursue off-the-job interests.

A need for attention. Many grew up in single-parent homes or had to fend for themselves because of workaholic parents. Therefore, many look to their managers to give them the time and interest their parents didn’t.

Self-reliance. Often left alone and having had to make independent decisions while growing up, many are self-reliant and, as such, not highly impressed with the authoritative management hierarchy within traditional companies.

Yet, although an employee’s values may differ from a manager’s, they are equally valid. Therefore, skilled managers will find ways to honor an employee’s values in a way that also serves the company’s interests and goals. One of the best ways I’ve learned for making this link is through an employee development charter that reflects the “big picture” and offers a blueprint for employee development and success.

The blueprint we teach our clients for effectively managing and building the careers of their employees—and the blue-

print I use with my own staff—is what we call the “Pyramid of Success,” and is comprised of the following five key areas:

Interest

Interest is the decision you make to develop, practice and apply the information available that will cause you to become as successful as you are capable of becoming. When you’re interested, you keep abreast of industry trends and developments, engage in continuing education and fraternize with successful people in your field.

Attitude

Positive thoughts produce positive results and negative thoughts produce negative results. Attitude communicates your opinion of people, business and life in general. As Henry Ford said, “Whether you believe you can do a thing or not, you are right.” How you think affects your outcome. People can change their lives by changing their attitudes.

Energy

Energy is developing your capacity by getting a little better every day This isn’t just physical, but also mental and emotional, and it grows from interest and a positive attitude.

Skill

Skill is the knowledge and mastery of the information required to perform the skills necessary for a high level of excellence in performing a job. Skills are learned and make up the core of an employee’s undeveloped potential.

To visualize the Pyramid of Success, in your mind, picture a pyramid with five steps (see the graphic on the next page).

The bottom step is “Interest,” the second step “Attitude,” the third step “Energy,” and the fourth step “Skill.” When you combine skill with interest, attitude and the energy that it creates, and you will be on top of the “Pyramid of Success.”

Success

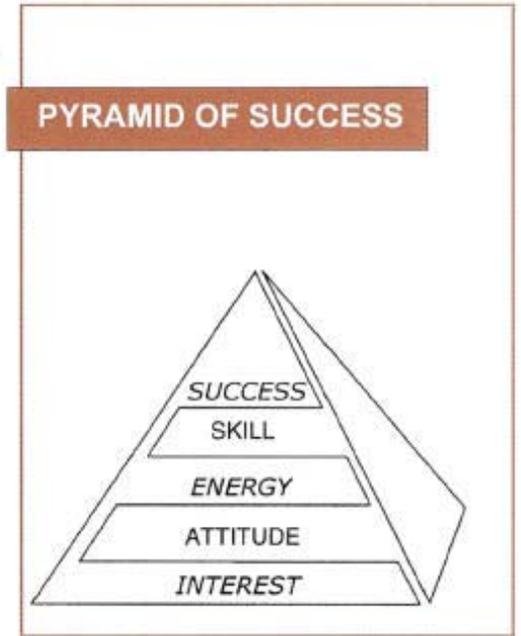
Success is the self-satisfaction in accomplishing something that is important to you. Obviously success means different things to different people, so only when you’re clear what success means to you can you pursue it effectively.

The way we train our clients to implement the Pyramid of Success as a management function is by having it serve as

the guide for employee reviews and action plans. Our clients provide an employee with a copy of the pyramid and ask them to rate themselves—from 0 to 1—in each of the five categories. Management then offers its own rating of the employee’s performance, which allows for honest communication about shared and unshared perceptions. From this meeting, the employee’s expectations and personal development are planned for the next six to 12 months.

Understanding that the Pyramid of Success charts the “big picture,” following are several strategies a manager can employ daily to complement the Pyramid of Success and more effectively manage his people:

Define the employee’s role. Ensure that your people know exactly what their



responsibilities are, and how they affect the team and organization as a whole. Once employees understand the impact they make on the team and company, managing them becomes easier.

Set goals and expectations. You can't get to where you want to go until you decide "where" this is. Effective goals define the "where" and have these four qualities:

- **Big.** If your goals don't get you excited and nervous, too, make them bigger because you will only achieve what you aim for.

- **Long-term.** As Dr. Stephen Covey coined, "Begin with the end in mind." Managers should help their people set

long-term goals (three, five or maybe even 10 years out) as much as possible.

- **Short-term.** Much like steps in a staircase, goals should be short term, too (three to 12 months). Once an employee commits to his long-term goals, achieving them is made much easier by breaking each down into short-term, step-by-step goals.

- **Written.** It's been said that the faintest of ink is better than the strongest of memory. Have your people set their goals, and then commit them to writing. This one simple step can dramatically affect whether they're achieved.

Get employee "buyin" by having them

restate these expectations. By having employees restate what they've heard and agreed to, it allows you to clarify any ambiguity while making expectations lucidly clear.

Create employee personal development plans. Employees nowadays want to know, "What's in it for me?" Tell them! A personal development plan shows the employee the areas of improvement he will focus on during the next six to 12 months, incorporates both his long-term and short-term goals, details the experience, skills and proficiencies he must demonstrate to be promoted, and shows the role his position plays in, and the affect it has on, the company.

Provide an ongoing performance tracking and feedback mechanism. Built into the employee development plan, this consists of monthly or bimonthly "check in" meetings that allow the manager and the employee to see what's working, what's not and to adjust the plan accordingly.

Help employees prioritize. Have your people provide you with a prioritized weekly action plan that lists their planned activities in order of importance. This is valuable in three ways:

- First, it encourages employees to be thinkers rather than just doers. Most people could fill out a four-page "To Do" list, but certain things take priority over others. The prioritizing process lets the employee determine those things and thus build his critical thinking skills.

- Second, it's a tremendous learning tool. If you disagree with the importance the employee places on a certain task, you can ask why he feels that's more important than another and then coach

him appropriately. Who knows? You might even stand corrected.

■ Third, and most practically, it ensures that the most important things are accomplished.

Encourage employees to share their thoughts and ideas. Most employees are dedicated, have integrity and want to contribute. Allow them to do this by actively encouraging your people to share their thoughts and ideas. Providing an open forum for them to be heard can be invaluable toward building trusting relationships.

Recognition. Recognize outstanding performance publicly. This rewards the individual employee while demonstrating to your other people that you care about them and are in their corner.

Appreciation. Last, and most importantly, appreciate your people. The great philosopher, Dr. William James, said that the greatest need of a human being is to be appreciated. Management must realize and honor this need as most employees aren't gold diggers and money's often not the major issue. They simply want to be acknowledged and appreciated. 📌

About the Author

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