

Four Qualities of an Excellent Manager

Do you do a great job managing your people?

Bet you do! It has been my experience that managers having outstanding technical knowledge and skill often mistakenly believe they are also gifted at guiding and motivating their employees. These managers forgo the possibility of new ideas. At the same time, they wonder why their organization is plagued with a high turnover of both employees and customers.



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So, instead, as a superior manager, identify how many of these four qualities you possess.

The best managers ...

1. Make their employees feel important

The number one desire of most people is the need to feel that their lives matter and that the world is a different and better place because they are in it. How often do you remind your employees that each of them is valuable to you and to your organization?

As an example, our family had just moved to town and our oldest daughter, Allison, was just starting high school. The school was both new to us and new to the town. To become involved in the community, and because I have a face for radio, I had volunteered to be the public address announcer for the high school football games.

This particular evening I was wandering down the school's hallway during the meet-the-teachers night when suddenly I heard a voice ring out from behind me, "Ted Janusz!"

I thought to myself, who would know me in our new town, let alone at the new high school?

I turned around to see someone who was smiling from ear-to-ear. He extended his hand to me and said, "Ted Janusz, Voice of the Hilliard Darby Panthers, how in the heck are you?"

He then introduced himself as Jeff, the principal of the new school. Stunned, I shook his hand.

That encounter lasted twenty seconds and occurred over twenty years ago. But each time I recall it, I can easily remember my emotion. In that moment, as a parent in a new town and in a new school, Jeff made me feel as tall as the Empire State Building!

I later learned that Jeff took the time to personally get to know as many people in the school community as he could. When he transferred from his old school to our new school, most of his staff came along with him. Why? Because he uniquely made people feel

important.

More recently, early this past Sunday morning, I was out for my daily run. My iPhone rang. I wondered who would be calling me from a different time zone so early in the morning. I didn't recognize the phone number and so I let the call roll over to voicemail.

I had recently published a book and had quoted a famous speaker in the book, so I sent him a copy of my book.

It was this speaker who was calling and who left a message. He told me that, in a moment of reflection, he was wondering if anyone were listening to the words he was saying and if his words were making any kind of an impact. He went on to say that, today, by reading his words in my book, he had received that assurance.

You would think that a speaker who flies only first class would know that his words were important. But that exchange convinced me that we all sometimes need to be reminded.

2. Make their employees feel appreciated

In taking worker satisfaction surveys over the last 75 years, employees' number one complaint is neither wages nor benefits, but a lack of appreciation.

In my last corporate position, I had a co-worker, Amy, who always did a good job. But one particular time Amy went above and beyond what she needed to do. I wanted to recognize Amy's efforts but times were tough and I wasn't in a position to give her a raise or promotion. Instead, I went to the Hallmark store and designed a postcard that said at the top, "The Top 10 Reasons Why You Are Marvelous" and I then filled it in.

When I gave the postcard to her, Amy looked at the card, then looked up at me. There were tears in Amy's eyes. Apparently no one had ever shown appreciation like that for Amy.

Average managers say, "My employees are getting paid. That should be enough!" Excellent managers

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regularly demonstrate how glad they are to have their employees on the team.

3. Get to know their employees as people
Vince Lombardi, the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers said, "Nothing is more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals."

Translating the coach-speak: Even though your employees may be equal, to motivate them properly, you can't treat them all the same way.

For instance:

- One of your employees is interested in taking on additional responsibilities so they can be promoted into management.
- Another employee desires to buy a house, so they want an opportunity to make more money.
- Yet another employee treasures time off, so they can spend that time with children or grandchildren.

The key to successful motivation is to reward your people the way that they want to be rewarded, not necessarily the way that you or I would like to be rewarded.

Unlike my daughter Allison, who is a loud, aggressive go-getter, my youngest daughter, Heidi, is quiet, shy and sensitive. As middle schooler, Heidi was about to get her first experience on a competitive sports team. With the wrong kind of coach (one that would primarily bark or yell at her), Heidi might last only days or even hours on the softball team.

I watched from the stands as Heidi's coach, instead, worked his magic like a skilled craftsman. He learned exactly what to do to individually motivate each girl on the team.

The coach understood when a girl misplayed a ball, for example, whether she would need a verbal kick in the pants or a literal pat on the back to get her back in the game. He also knew exactly how to motivate Heidi, who as a result went on to become



an outstanding catcher on the high school team.

Realize that Bob or Alice, who works for you, is more than "just" a bookkeeper. He or she has a family and has plans and dreams just as you do. How much do you know about Bob or Alice? Their favorite sports team? Where they like to go out to eat? What they like to do on their free time?

Get to know your employees as people, and not just as "cogs in your machine." Realize that people don't work for companies; they work for (or leave) their bosses.

4. Are role models for the organization
My daughter Allison once said to me, "What you and Mom do speaks so loudly, I can't hear what you say."

I recently took the car through the local car wash. The operator, as he took my money said, "You are driving your wife's car today. And you are not riding your bike like you always do today, either."

I had no idea who this person was.

People are watching you!

As a speaker, I watch others in my industry. It makes

me feel good when my role models act appropriately and it disappoints me when they don't.

Similarly, whether you realize it or not, your employees are constantly watching you. They want to be sure that:

- You don't play favorites among your employees.
- You enforce the rules fairly.
- You have technical knowledge - they know they can always come to you to help solve a complex issue.
- You have emotional intelligence and people skills – they know that you will help them through a challenge they may have with a customer or even with a fellow employee.
- No matter what happens, you will always have

their back.

- You maintain an even keel, no matter how the economy or other external forces impact the business.
- Most importantly, you are in charge, and that knowledge frees them to do their jobs.

Your employees want to belong to something that is bigger than themselves. They want to look forward to coming to their job every day, to enjoy working with you and their fellow employees. Your employees want to feel proud when they tell people in the community that they work at your organization. As an excellent manager, you realize that you make all of that possible.

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