

Managers Need Changing More Than Anyone

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The suggestion last month that workplace veterans, especially managers, take on new roles occasionally, or periodically be rotated, elicited an overwhelming response. Everyone, 100%, vehemently supported the idea, most with real world examples.

Further discussion is warranted, especially in the workplace. The sensitive nature of the topic has made it taboo and ignored. It's not an attack on longevity, loyalty, wisdom, or tacit knowledge; they are all invaluable. It is an open discussion of a contentious factor (i.e. problem) in the advancement or progression of businesses and organizations.

Never before has the phrase "This is the way we've always done it here" been so destructive, regressive, and expensive. Anyone, especially management, who thinks that thought today is out of touch with reality.

Great managers must be particularly dynamic and action oriented, the kind of people who enjoy the challenge of battle; courageous, not afraid to look foolish when failing or wrong because we all fail and we're all wrong many times; calculated risk-takers that know the bigger the risk, the greater the gain; humble, because all successful people owe their success more to others than themselves; and great listeners because the people working where the rubber meets the road have the best view of how to do what matters most better.

No matter what job or process, improvement is never finished; there is always a better way to do it. No matter how good we think we are at something, somebody is better at it: if not now, then any minute now. How long was Michael Jordan the best basketball player, or, was he ever the best at all facets of the game?

Great managers must be great leaders, and the only way to be a great leader is to be respected. Respect is something that cannot be demanded and is never given freely; it has to be earned.

For many reasons, respect for managers is almost always declining, like a bucket of water with a hole in it. Good managers have a slower decline and can be effective longer than poor managers. Great managers may be able to maintain or even increase the level of respect for some time, but eventually it always begins to decline.

Respect is lost when managers appear complacent and not dynamic or progressive; when we see better choices or ways of doing things than what management chooses; when it's obvious the organization is not headed in the right direction; when explanations aren't offered and communication is lacking; and when we know our opinion doesn't matter and we don't feel cared about by management. It completely disappears when everyone sees dynamic and respected people within the organization lose respect for management.

As humans, if we don't respect someone, we also don't care about their success. We may not help them fail, but we certainly won't help them succeed. The organization suffers most in such an environment.

Additionally, the most valuable assets any organization has, the best, most ambitious employees, the kind of people who make organizations great, see long-tenured management as eliminating opportunity for advancement. With advancement limited, especially coupled with less than dynamic management, these valuable assets leave to make other organizations great.

Change is... well... fill in the blank...