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Unpacking 5 Myths About Management

by Stephen Bungay

Harvard Business Review blog

Summary: In science the key question is “Is it true?” In management the key question is “Does it work?” But context is critical: Just because an idea works in a particular case does not mean it is a universal truth.

If you set a stretch goal, make sure that the organization has some stretch in it, or it will break. To execute a strategy, you need a dashboard covering a wide range of performance indicators. If you treat those indicators as your strategic goals, be very sure that what you are asking for is what you want, because it is what you will get. Your business needs a value proposition for employees as much as it needs one for customers. In developing one, think hard about what “talent” means for you and do not forget that the real challenge is building an organization that enables average people to deliver an above-average performance. Develop good leaders, but do not neglect the skills of management, for no-one can perform if they do not have the right resources in the right place at the right time. Reduce bureaucracy to a minimum, but make sure you have enough structure to distribute decision rights in a rational way and enough process to enable people to know how the organization will work. To deal with external unpredictability, you need internal predictability. Ambitions, targets, talent, leadership, and culture are all important. But in each case, make sure that you’re using them rather than letting them use you.

Creating Flex Work Policies ... **When Everyone Has Different** **Needs**

by Liz Kislik

Harvard Business Review blog

Summary: When it comes to flexible work arrangements, it's tough to satisfy everyone. Whatever any organization is doing — requiring everyone to return to the office, keeping people at home, or some mix of the two — you can be sure that at least a handful of people want or need something else. How can you treat your people as the individuals they are without creating a chaotic mess of confusing, arbitrary exceptions? The author presents six strategies for managers during this period of transition.



Leaders, Stop Trying to Be Heroes

by Hortense le Gentil

Harvard Business Review blog



Summary: For decades, the traditional view was that to be successful, business leaders had to be infallible, unflappable, in control, and fearless. These leaders appeared to be born hero leaders, naturally endowed with supreme intelligence, coming up with brilliant ideas and directives from the mountaintop that lower echelons were then expected to execute. The pandemic has highlighted what was already becoming clear before the emergence of the virus: that hero leaders are no longer what companies need. The most effective leadership today — at all levels — isn't about technical expertise and having all the answers. Besides articulating a compelling vision, it's about being human, showing vulnerability, connecting with people, and being able to unleash their potential. Seemingly fearless hero leaders are facing one sizable obstacle: their own fear. The author presents three steps leaders can take on their journeys from hero leader to human leader.

Dealing With Seasonal Changes in Workload: Planning for Busy and Quiet Periods

Mind Tools blog

No matter what industry you work in, chances are that you'll experience some seasonal change in your organization's activity. For example, if you work in retail, you're likely to have a busy period before the holidays.

Your organization may need to work particularly hard during this time, so that it can generate the revenue needed to survive leaner months ahead.

However, busy periods can be difficult to manage – for you as a manager, and for your team. Unless you plan ahead, you may find that you're short on staff, or that your team members struggle to cope with their increased workloads.

Of course, in many industries, there are also quieter periods. These can happen when customers are on vacation, after major deadlines such as year ends, or after the end of the holiday season.

As a manager, you need to deal with the impact of these seasonal variations on your team. When you do this, you can ensure that you have the resources you need, that your people feel supported, and that you make the most of each person's skills.

In this article, we'll look at how you can manage seasonal changes in your team's workload.



The Power of Recognition: Celebrating Self and Others

**by Mike Barzacchini
Mind Tools blog**

What does recognition at work look like to you? Is it a pay raise, more responsibilities, or simply a vote of confidence from your manager?

Celebrating achievement in the workplace can take many forms, and it can go a long way to making employees feel appreciated and motivated. But how can organizations move away from empty gestures and toward a culture of recognition?



How to Create a Culture of Recognition

It can be easy to get caught in a cycle of tired, traditional rewards and recognition programs. Instead, here are three approaches to help you break the mold and create a lasting culture of appreciation!

1. Recognition Goes Up, Down and Sideways

Employee recognition may traditionally come from the top,

but that doesn't mean it needs to remain there. In order to grow a culture of appreciation, leaders need to model and encourage positive behaviors at every level.

An "employee of the month" or "team of the year" program may have value. But what about all those other employees and teams doing outstanding work that may go unnoticed? Instead, you could schedule time during regular meetings for employees to thank their colleagues. Or perhaps install a bulletin board – be it physical or virtual – where employees can celebrate their co-workers' successes.

By encouraging rewards and recognition throughout the organization you create and reinforce a culture of appreciation. And though the goal should be to get everyone involved, it starts with examples, expectations and resources from the organization's leaders.

2. Get Creative

The trophy. The certificate of appreciation. The gift card. While these more traditional forms of recognition still hold value, alone they can feel like hollow gestures rather than true appreciation. Organizations that make recognition an everyday practice need to find creative ways to say "thank you" and "job well done." Perhaps you could bring in sweet treats on Friday afternoons to celebrate the end to a successful week, or hold regular company barbecues where the managers dish out hamburgers, potato salad, and extra portions of gratitude to employees going through the serving line. Creative recognition programs that go beyond the expected not only recognize employees, but they also create a buzz and help tell the story that this is an organization where appreciation is a priority.

3. One Size Does Not Fit All

Every employee is different. And when it comes to recognizing workplace achievements, what suits one person may not suit another. For example, a former co-worker of mine was scheduled to be recognized for her years of service and outstanding work at a company-wide event. But on the day of the celebration, she called in sick. Afterward, I learned that she suffered significant anxiety for days leading up to the celebration. Not everyone wants to be in the spotlight. In fact, many people who go above and beyond do so not for a pat on the back, but simply because they enjoy it. We later celebrated in a manner she felt more comfortable with: an informal lunch with her immediate team. As I came to know this employee more closely, and many others like her, I learned that these smaller, personal recognitions made them feel more valued and comfortable.

Make Recognition a Priority

The challenge for organizations is to keep recognition approaches relevant, meaningful and valuable. By establishing recognition as a core organizational value, employees learn that they are appreciated every day, not just on occasion. Better yet, they are invited to be part of a culture of recognition.

Flexible Working: Unravelling 35 **Years of 9-to-5 Conditioning**

by Keith Jackson
Mind Tools blog

I can work at times that match my physical and mental energy or take appropriate timeouts when I need a bit of headspace. As for working in the evening or at the crack of dawn to make up my hours, well, that's no chore when it's a personal choice.

Bosses: Offer Flexible Working!

If you're an employee and flexible working is on offer, take it! If you're an employer, and your business can function with flexible working, then offer it! Your business may do more than function, it could absolutely thrive!

But yeah, the second point... it just didn't feel right at first! But that feeling is changing as I embrace it and get used to it. I was always fine with occasionally grabbing an hour so out of a working day and paying it back to get to a medical appointment, for example, or to do the school run.

But, not too long ago, the weather forecast was looking good, so I let it be known a day in advance that I would be juggling my task list - no one would be inconvenienced - and I'd be taking the afternoon off to go to the beach. It felt weird declaring it. But it was just "thumbs up" and beach and sunshine emojis in response.

Don't Give in to Guilt

Even at the beach, it felt like I was AWOL! A swim in a surprisingly cold sea didn't wash away the feeling of guilt. Were

my colleagues and team members actually annoyed about it?
Had I misinterpreted the spirit of what flexible working is all
about?

But it's all down to conditioning. For 35 years or so, I worked set
hours on set days. Not always Monday to Friday, not always 9-
to-5, but I had no say or flexibility. However, another trip to the
beach, and a late-morning rather than evening gym session -
all without furious calls of, "Where are you, Jackson?" have
reduced the guilt and weirdness. Long may flexible working
continue!

