

Real Life Management

Planning Your Way to a Better Future

As I write this column, I am in the middle of teaching a university course on Strategic Planning. There is no way to cover all the key principles of planning in one short column — but allow me to share a few key highlights that may be helpful.

What Is the Purpose of Management?

The primary purpose of management is to effectively and efficiently use organization resources to strive for organizational goals.

Notice the reminder that the resources we manage (e.g. labor, money, physical assets) are not ours, but the organization's — and that we should be using (managing) them in pursuit of organization goals. Also, it's helpful to remember the distinction between effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is the degree to which an objective is accomplished ("doing the right things"). Efficiency is maximizing the amount of output for a given quantity of input ("doing things right"). The first priority is to be effective (get the work done), then strive for efficiency without unduly impacting effectiveness.

What Is the Purpose of Planning?

Planning is a tool to help management achieve its primary ultimate purpose of achieving organizational goals. Planning is the "means" to set and reach organizational goals ("ends"). Planning is the determination of what is to be done — and of how, when, where and by whom it is to be done. A plan is a predetermined course of action involving the future and involving the action.

Why plan? The basic purpose is to identify what we want to happen — and then to improve the probability that what we want to happen will happen (i.e. identify our desired future and increase the probability of it occurring).

Here are ten additional benefits that a thoughtful planning process can provide to an organization:

1. Compels management to plan and think ahead; opportunity to look at the future
2. Bases action on thorough investigation, study and research (i.e. improved decision making)
3. Increases management and staff motivation (by establishing standards of performance)
4. Provides basis for resource allocation; makes more efficient use of resources (labor, money and physical assets)
5. Vehicle for senior management to communicate organizational values, goals, strategies and priorities to the entire organization
6. Enhances goal congruence (i.e. goals of individual managers harmonize with goals of organization as a whole)
7. Results in coordinated response to change; increases anticipation and awareness of future threats and opportunities

8. Reveals organization strengths and weaknesses
9. Provides standards for control
10. Allows for subsequent performance reporting and evaluation; provides basis for Performance Indicators

How Do We Plan?

Here are some basic planning principles:

1. Lowest possible relevant units should be involved in the planning process. Goal is participation which results in "buy-in" and a higher quality plan.
2. Planning should precede action
3. Planning horizon should not exceed the available known resources
4. Plans must be coordinated among related functions
5. Plans must be flexible and recognized as subject to change
6. Plans should be focused on probable future events

To organize your thinking and the planning process, I found my 3-step Planning Model to be helpful. I have used this simple model in planning for myself, teams at work and for non-profit organizations that I have been a leader in.

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

Yogi Berra, Yankee Hall-of-Famer and noted philosopher

Wes's Planning Model

Step One: Assess the current situation. Ask and answer the question "Where are we now?" This represents the Starting Place. (Note: I recommend completion of SWOT analysis prior to the completion of Step One — see below).

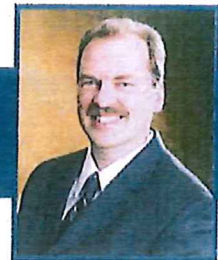
Step Two: Determine your goals/objectives to be achieved by the end of the planning period. Ask and answer the question "Where do we want to go?" This represents our Destination.

Step Three: Develop the strategies that will move you from your current situation (Starting Place) to where you want to go (Destination). These strategies (aka Action Plan) serve as your Road map.

SWOT Analysis

Another helpful planning tool is SWOT analysis. Completing the SWOT analysis early in the planning process will help facilitate development of more realistic goals and strategies and a higher quality plan.

SWOT analysis ideally includes input from all the people impacted by the plan, and involves carefully assessing an organization's:



Strengths. The intent here is to carefully and realistically identify the key strengths of the organization—including relevant strengths about People, Processes and Technology. Strengths are internal-based and will help in deciding what opportunities may be realistic to pursue.

Weaknesses. The aim here is to identify the relevant weaknesses of the organization that may impair successful goal achievement or result in threats to be mitigated. A good starting place is to evaluate where you stand in the areas of people, processes and technology.

Opportunities. Both opportunities and threats should factor in the results of external analysis. External analysis considerations can include economic, social, governmental, technological, competitive and other factors that combined with the strengths of the organization could result in opportunities to pursue. For example, if your team has the latest technology and extra capacity—and the external vendors in your area are relatively expensive—you may want to consider pursuing in-sourcing work and add to your organization's bottom line.

Threats. The external analysis and analysis of weaknesses can identify threats that need to be addressed. Dealing well with Threats will help ensure that your goals and associated strategies are successful.

My final word of advice is to realize that much of the value of planning is in the process, not only in the final plan. President Dwight Eisenhower once stated that "Plans are nothing; planning is everything." Good luck as you plan your way to a better future for you and your team! ■

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Real Life Management

Creating a Great Workplace

"The most valuable 'currency' of any organization is the initiative and creativity of its members. Every leader has the solemn moral responsibility to develop these to the maximum in all his people. This is the leader's highest priority." W. Edwards Deming

An organization will only achieve its fullest potential when people are engaged and inspired to do their best work. Research from the Hay Group finds that highly engaged employees on average are 50% more likely to exceed expectations than the least engaged workers. Companies with highly engaged people outperform organizations with the most disengaged workers — by 54% in employee retention, 89% in customer satisfaction and also in revenue growth.

How do we create great workplaces that maximize our employee's engagement and potential — and the potential of the larger organization? A recent research project conducted by professors Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones identified six imperatives that the best work places possess. Let's look at these keys to successfully building a better workplace.

1. Individual differences are nurtured ("you can be yourself"). I appreciate Desmond Tutu when he said, "Isn't it amazing that we were all made in God's image, yet there is so much diversity among his people?" The organizations with the best workplaces recognize and appreciate differences in the traditional diversity categories (race, religion, gender, age, etc.). However they don't stop there — these organizations also honor and provide room for differences in style, perspectives, thinking and core assumptions. Malcom Forbes speaks to this philosophy when he said "diversity is the art of thinking independently together."

To evaluate how well your particular team is doing, consider asking team members questions like "Do you feel comfortable being yourself at work?" and "Are we all encouraged to express our opinions?"

2. Information is not suppressed or spun (you are told what is really going on). The organizations doing well in this area do not deceive, stonewall, distort or spin. They realize that in today's real-time social media world you are better off telling people the truth before someone else does. Nobody likes to share bad news — but employees appreciate the truth and especially want to hear from their direct boss. Being transparent breeds trust — and trust leads to engagement and higher performance.

3. The organization adds value to employees, rather than merely extracting it from them (your strengths are magnified). The best organizations make it a priority to make their people better. They resonate with Bill Bradley when he said, "Leadership is unlocking people's potential to become better." Part of adding value includes helping employees improve in areas of weaknesses that impair success of the individual and the organization. But the best organizations focus on maximizing people's strengths. The importance of developing strengths is illustrated by Donald Clifton (co-author of *Now, Discover Your Strengths*) when he shared "two key points: 1. Each person's talents are enduring and unique and 2. Each person's greatest room for growth is in the area of his or her greatest strength."

You can evaluate how your team is doing by asking questions of your employees like, "Am I being given the chance to develop?" and "Do you have a specific development plan?"

4. The organization stands for something meaningful (stand for more than shareholder value). People want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, something they can believe in. Leaders of the organizations that excel in this imperative take to heart Jack Welch's admonishment that, "A leader's job is to look into the future and see the organization, not at is, but as it should be." One practical tool to help develop greater meaning for an organization is to pursue "stakeholder symmetry" — this involves trying to add value to all major stakeholder groups and to balance out the interests of the stakeholders and look for the "win-wins."

Who are the key stakeholders to focus on? Some organizations have focused almost exclusively on the shareholders — and certainly they are one of the key stakeholders. But too much emphasis on shareholders will lead to problems with the other stakeholders and will not inspire employees and give them a sense of meaning. To inspire and give meaning also emphasize the key stakeholders of customers, employees and the community. Focusing on providing great customer service, developing and treating your employees well and giving back to the community will really provide the bigger meaning that employees crave.

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5. The work itself is intrinsically rewarding (your daily work is rewarding and makes sense). When it comes to work, President Theodore Roosevelt hit the mark when he said, "Far and away the best prize life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." To make sure work is worth doing, we need to ask questions about the tasks each person is performing such as "Do those duties make sense? Why are they what they are? Are they as engaging as they can be?" Talking with the employees doing the work is crucial. Also, we should look externally for better ways to accomplish the work — through professional organizations like MSMA (www.msmanational.com) and Postal Customer Councils; conferences like MAILCOM (www.mailcom-conference.com) and National Postal Forum (www.npf.org); and trade journals like this one!

6. There are no stupid rules (have rules people can believe in). Some rules are absolutely necessary. But sometimes organizations have arbitrary and unnecessary restrictions that frustrate employees. It's good to keep in mind President Franklin D. Roosevelt's quote that "Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are." And we want to avoid stupid rules that spark the sentiment that General Douglas MacArthur shared when he said, "Rules are mostly made to be broken and are too often for the lazy to hide behind."

To evaluate how your employees feel about the rules you have in place, consider asking questions like "Are the rules clear and applied to everyone" and "Are there any unnecessary rules you think we can eliminate?"

Trying to improve in these six areas is not easy and is partially outside of our control. But certainly we can identify some specific strategies to help us improve in some of the areas where we fall short of our aspirations. More power to you as you strive to create an even more engaging and inspiring workplace! ■

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Keys to Developing Good Relationships

"Treasure your relationships, not your possessions." Anthony J. D'Angelo

People are naturally social creatures — we crave friendship and positive interactions, just as we do food and water. The better relationships we have in life — including in the workplace — the happier and more successful we will be. President Teddy Roosevelt was on the mark when he said, "The most important ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people."

How can we build stronger relationships that will help us be more successful — and add value to the people we are trying to serve in our lives? Let me share 12 principles of developing good relationships that may be helpful.

Twelve Principles to Build Good Relationships

Here are 12 principles that can help build good relationship with people:

1. **Develop your people skills.** Good relationships start with good people skills. People skills are primarily "soft skills" like collaboration, communication and conflict resolution. How do we assess our current level of people skills and identify areas for improvement? Having trusted mentors or close friends that have the freedom to speak into your life is helpful — as is periodically taking confidential surveys and soliciting honest feedback.
2. **Develop relationships with ALL people.** Some people are very status conscious when it comes to building relationships. These people focus on establishing relationships with people perceived to be important in the hierarchy — those viewed as low on the totem pole are given little attention. But the people we most admire are those that treat all people as important. I resonate with the Bill McCartney when he said "Anytime you devalue people, you question God's creation of them." And I agree with Ann Landers when she says, "The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good"
3. **Be a giver — not merely a getter.** Commit to being a servant leader who gives of oneself to help meet the needs of others. We can give of our time, knowledge and resources to help people around us. Giving of ourselves is the ultimate win-win that benefits both the receiver and the giver. Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." Anne Frank reminds us that "No one has ever become poor by giving." And A.L. Williams reminds us that selfless giving also benefits us when he said, "The greater you help others, the greater your own success."
4. **Employ active listening techniques.** Carefully listening to what people are saying is crucial to developing good relationships. Rachel Naomi Remen emphasizes the importance of listening when she advises, "The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention ... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words." Active listening techniques include maintaining good eye contact, asking clarifying questions, and repeating back to the person what you think you heard him or her say.
5. **Promote open and effective communication.** The starting place in developing open and effective communication is to be a good listener as we just covered. In addition, relationships are enhanced when we encourage people to freely express their thoughts in a non-judgmental manner. It's also important to communicate with respect, and to stay rational and avoid being overly emotional. Also, we all have our preferred channels of communication (e.g. face-to-face, phone, email, texts, etc.) so using preferred channels can enhance communication effectiveness.
6. **Work on building trust.** Trust is foundational to good relationships. Tips to build trust include consistently following through on what we say we will do; never break confidences; and avoid bad mouthing others behind their backs.
7. **Get to know people on a personal level.** To really develop good relationships with others, we need to find ways to get to know people on a personal level (within reasonable boundaries). Asking non-probing open ended questions is a good starting place. Then look to build bridges and find connections. Joseph Newton said, "People are lonely (disconnected) because they build walls instead of bridges." To build bridges that connect you to people in a lasting way, share common experiences with them. Share meals. Go to a ball game or other events together. Take people to meetings with you. Participate on work projects together. Anything you experience together helps create a common history and build connection.
8. **Be mindful — and know when to dial it back.** Being mindful means taking responsibility for our words and actions. Those who are mindful are careful and attend to what they say, and they don't let their own negative emotions impact the people around them. Being mindful also includes knowing when to have fun and

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when to be serious, when to be over the top and when to be invisible, and when to take charge and when to follow.

9. Appreciate others. Showing sincere appreciation whenever someone helps you opens the door to great relationships. Prominent psychologist William James spend much of his career researching what our deepest needs were — and landed on the need for appreciation being at the top of the list for most of us.
10. Be positive, not negative. Focus on being positive. Positivity is attractive and contagious, and it will help strengthen relationships with those around you. On the other hand, no one wants to be around someone who's negative most of the time.
11. Be willing to compromise. Compromise involves each party getting something that he or she wants so that everyone wins (think Stephen Covey's "win-win" concept). People are drawn to those that are not self-centered and willing to put relationship over having everything done my way.
12. Practice common courtesy. A simple exchange of smiles and a "Hi" can be the first step in building a relationship. Making eye contact, saying "thank you" and picking up after yourself are also common courtesies that bring people together. Zig Ziglar was right when he said, "When you choose to be pleasant and positive in the way you treat others, you have chosen, in most cases, how you are going to be treated by others."

Building better relationships with people will enhance your influence and help you have greater success in achieving your goals. How will you use your greater influence? I resonate with Booker T. Washington when he said, "Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others." I wish you the best as you pursue better relationships with people and add even more value to the lives of people around you! ■

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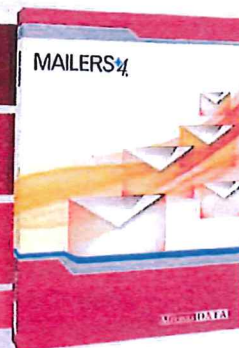
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Are You Treating Your Employees Like Adults — or Children?

"The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men (and women) to do what he wants, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it." President Theodore Roosevelt

Awhile back I stumbled across a book entitled *30 Reasons Employees Hate Their Managers*, by Bruce L. Katcher. This book summarized the results of a large survey project across 65 organizations. The survey found that the biggest area of complaint that employees have is that they feel they are being treated like children — not adults.

These survey results resonated with me, and I remember back early in my career when I had my first opportunity to be a supervisor at the tender age of 23. There was a lady on the team who had put in her resignation to work in another company just prior to my selection. I had heard about the value of doing exit interviews with departing employees, so I took her aside and asked her one simple question — "Why are you leaving?" Her reply was short and to the point. "I am leaving because I feel like I have been treated as a child, and I am going to a company that will treat me like an adult." I was speechless, but her sentiment has stuck with me years later.

Survey Says

The employee survey zeroed in on some sentiments that people feel. Included are feelings like "We feel like slaves;" "I hate being micro-managed;" "I am afraid to speak up;" "Nobody appreciates my hard work;" and "There are different rules for different people." Here are some of the specific results: 46% of employees felt management treats them with disrespect, 40% said they don't have the decision making authority they need, and 43% say their good work goes unrecognized. Fifty-two percent do not feel free to voice their opinions openly.

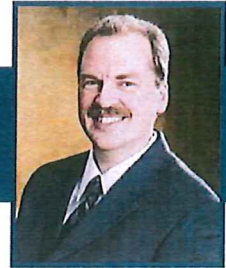
A different survey found that only 26% of workers say that are actively engaged on the job. That means 74% are disengaged — 55% are passively disengaged and 19% are actively disengaged. Sad results. I suggest that a big driver for this lack of engagement and low motivation is a result of being treated like children. I think motivational expert Bob Nelson is right when he says, "An employee's motivation is a direct result of the sum of interactions with his or her manager."

Why do managers treat employees like children and not adults? The reasons are many — and include bad role modeling (that is how the managers have been treated and what they have seen), fear of delegation, lack of trust towards employees and others.

12 Keys to Help Us Treat Employees Like Adults

1. Practice the Golden Rule. Treating others positively like we would like to be treated is an ethical approach that crosses most religious and ethical frameworks. Consciously put yourself in the shoes of your employees and ask yourself, how would I like to be treated if I was in their jobs?
2. Get to know your employees as people. We are all very busy and no let up is in sight. But employees feel dignified and appreciated when we make an effort to get to know them as people — not just a worker producing widgets. This is a challenge for many of us — but practicing MBWA (management by walking around) and looking for opportunities to connect help. I have also found it useful to do 1-1s with all my employees — both direct reports and "skip levels" with front-line employees.
3. Treat employees like assets, not liabilities, and view them as valued business partners. Some managers view their employees as liabilities — or like expenses that need to be minimized. Others view employees like assets that are worth being developed and maximized — which is a more dignifying view. Also, the managers that view their employees as valued business partners are naturally going to treat them more respectfully.
4. Survey your employees. Want to know how employees are really feeling? Ask them. Anonymous surveys can be great tools. We use quarterly employee satisfaction surveys, and annually we do a survey instrument like Gallop's 12 Question Measuring Stick. It's helpful as a manager to periodically do a 360 degree personal survey, with one group of respondents being your employees.
5. Provide more opportunities for employees to have control. Reality is that for some of our departments — especially in production type environments — we need to have some structure and rules to get the work done timely and accurately. However, employees do appreciate having as much control as possible over work schedules (including opportunity for part-time), time off, work space, overtime (voluntary versus mandatory), dress code,

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etc. We should look for opportunities to grant employees some choices and control whenever we can.

6. Promote flexibility rather than rigid rules. Rules do have their place and are needed to ensure some level of consistency and order within the organization. But sometimes we can be too rigid and too arcane — resulting in employees feeling like they are being treated like children and not recognizing that sometimes flexibility is warranted.

I recently had a manager from Nordstrom in one of my university classes that I teach. Here are the rules he shared that are found in their employee handbook:

Rule #1: *Use best judgment in all situations. There will be no additional rules. Please feel free to ask your department manager, store manager or division general manager any question sat any time.*

Obviously we will need more rules than the Nordstrom example — but I think you get the point of trying to avoid too many rules and too much rigidity.

7. Appreciate that employees have lives outside of work. Our employees have lives outside of their vocational work with us, and appreciate when we recognize that reality and work with them when “life happens.” We appreciate the flexibility to attend to our life events — and so do our employees.
8. Respect employee privacy. All of us have expectations of the right to privacy. When there are good business reasons for some type of employee monitoring, we should be open about it. We should also be careful about not treating employees as our possessions and assume we can infringe on their privacy whenever we want.
9. Be a good listener. Rachel Naomi Remen advises that, “The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention ... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words.” I like the practical advice from Dale Carnegie (author of the classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People*) who said, “You can make more friends in two weeks by becoming a good listener than you can in two years trying to get other people interested in you.”

10. Increase recognition and appreciation. According to prominent psychologist William James, the number one psychological need that the average person has is the need to feel appreciated. A Gallup survey found that 65% of employees said they did not receive any positive personal recognition from their boss the prior 12 months — how sad! There are many ways to recognize employees — and some of the simple ones are the most appreciated. Verbal thank-yous, e-mails, and small tokens of recognition are always in order. And in today’s digital age, the value of a hand written note or card has never been higher.

11. Be honest with employees. Research by Kouzes and Posner in their acclaimed book *The Leadership Challenge* shows that people desire leaders that are honest and trustworthy men and women of integrity. There is no place for lying to our employees. Sometimes we need to withhold information for a period of time (e.g. a re-organization that is still being worked on), but we should disclose information as soon as possible.

12. Support professional development. If we truly view employees as assets and valued business partners, it makes sense to support our employees in their professional development. There are lots of ways we can help develop employees as I have written about in the past. Employees do feel valued when we are willing to provide them learning and development opportunities and show that we care.

Treating employees like adults and not children is a great example of the “win-win” that Stephen Covey always emphasized. Employees that are treated like adults will have better morale, stronger motivation, higher productivity and will be more loyal to the organization. Our teams will be stronger and our personal sense of accomplishment will be higher. I wish you success in striving for the worthy ideal of treating our employees like adults! ■

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Real Life Management

Treating Your Employees Like Valued Family Members

"Every single employee is someone's son or someone's daughter. Like a parent, a leader of a company (or team) is responsible for their precious lives." Simon Sinek, author of *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't*

In my last column in the July/August digital-only edition, I dealt with the importance of treating our employees like adults, not children (if you missed the column go to MailingSystemsTechnology.com under Digital Magazine or my personal website (www.wesfriesen.com under Articles). I want to go beyond the last column and talk about the importance of treating our employees like valued sons and daughters (i.e. family members).

I have been inspired to explore this concept after interacting with my good friend Mark Fallon, who is the CEO of The Berkshire Company (Berkshire-Company.com), and reading the book he recommended called *Leaders Eat Last*. Mark and I had the privilege of being featured speakers at the recent NACUMS annual conference (nacums.org). In one of my presentations I discussed the concept of treating employees like adults, and in one of Mark's he discussed the idea of treating employees like valued sons and daughters. As we discussed afterwards we realized these two concepts go hand-in-hand. Let me share the importance and value of treating employees like valued family members and then share some ideas on the "how."

Why Is It Important to Treat Employees Like Valued Family Members?

When employees are not treated like trusted and valued members of a family, a number of negative consequences follow. The Deloitte Shift Index found that 80% of people are dissatisfied with their jobs. A recent Gallup poll showed only 30% are actively engaged on the job. There is an obvious correlation between job satisfaction and job engagement.

In addition, the landmark Whitehall studies showed that job stress was largely driven by the degree of control workers feel that have throughout their day. In a nutshell – less control, more stress. More job stress leads to higher levels of physical and mental illness. And studies show that a child's sense of well being is affected primarily not by the hours that their parents put in at work but the moods they are in when they arrive at home. By not adequately caring for our employees we are harming them — and their children!

In contrast, the organizations that do treat their employees like valued family members develop a culture of empathy and mutual trust. A sense of family is developed where employees feel like

they belong and feel valued and cared for. This caring environment allows people to fully engage their heads and their hearts. The good news is that there are organizations that set good examples for us in treating employees like valued family members — such as Costco, Southwest Airlines, Nordstroms, Bob's Red Mill, Barry-Wehmiller and many others.

Treating employees like valued family members leads to higher levels of employee engagement. What is the impact on the organization's performance? Gallup research showed that work units in the top quartile in employee engagement outperformed the bottom quartile units by:

- 10%** in Customer Ratings
- 22%** in Profitability
- 21%** in Productivity
- 25%** lower turnover
- 37%** less absenteeism
- 48%** fewer safety incidents
- 41%** less quality defects

How Do We Treat Employees Like Valued Family Members?
Following are eight guidelines that can help us treat our employees like valued family members (by the way – these are also great parenting tips for raising our kids!).

1. **Avoid dehumanization — treat like people.** The employees that work on our teams are people — not numbers on a spreadsheet or machines that make widgets! As people they are created body, soul and spirit and have many roles, relationships and responsibilities — some involving their occupation and many more non-work related.

One of the most respected CEOs within the communication industry understood this concept well. Anne Mulcahy was the CEO who positively led Xerox from a place of weakness to a place of strength. Her following quote reveals a key to her successful philosophy: "Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person — not just an employee — are more productive, more satisfied, more ful-



filled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability."

2. **Treat with respect.** Every person that works on our teams craves to be treated with respect — and deserves respect. I resonate with Albert Einstein when he said, "Everyone should be respected as an individual" and also when he said "I speak to everyone the same, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university." One of the most practical ways to show respect to our employees is to listen as this Bryant McGill quote emphasizes: "One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say."

Listening to and respecting our employees leads to people naturally working together to help each other and to advance the organization. Working with a sense of obligation is replaced with working with a sense of pride and teamwork.

3. **Provide protection.** One of the roles of parents is to help protect our children from the dangers lurking inside and outside the home. Likewise, a caring leader will do what she can to protect her employees from the dangers lurking in the work place — such as unnecessary micro-management, unreasonable job requirements or negative work conditions. A caring leader will also try and provide protection from external dangers — such as over reaction to adverse economic conditions or unfair outsourcing attempts.
4. **Clarify expectations and provide guidance.** People need to know what the rules are — and what results are expected. We all need clarity on expectations — and need feedback when we are on course and when we are heading in the wrong direction.
5. **Balance care and accountability.** Just like we care for our real life family members, we should showing caring towards our employees. Showing consistent caring will help develop the family environment we should crave. At the same time, just as we hold our real life family members accountable for following our rules, values and goals — we need to do the same with our employees. When the caring is present, the accountability will be well received and help us maximize performance.
6. **Reinforce and reward positive behaviors and results.** Research has led to the development of what some have called the "Greatest Management Principle in the World" — you get what you reward. Sincere, regular and positive recognition and rewarding of desired behaviors is common sense — but not

common practice. A Gallup poll of thousands of employees found that 65% claimed to have received no praise or recognition the past year!

7. **Be flexible and willing to adjust your style.** I have two daughters. They have the same parents and grew up in the same home — yet that have a significant number of personality, behavior and style differences. Our employees also have differences — and we should try and communicate and connect in ways that best suits their individual differences and preferences.
- 8) **Focus on "positive leading" over "controlling managing."** Bob Chapman is the CEO of Barry-Wehmiller who led the company in a remarkably positive turnaround. His main strategy was to treat employees like valued family members and develop a culture of empathy, caring and trust. The following quote of his really resonates with most people: "No one wakes up in the morning to go to work with the hope that someone will manage us. We wake up with the hope that someone will lead us!"

Treating employees like valued family members is a great example of the "win-win" that Stephen Covey always emphasized. Employees that are treated like valued family members will have better morale, stronger motivation, higher productivity and will be more loyal to the organization. Our teams will be stronger and our personal sense of accomplishment will be higher. I wish you success in striving for the worthy ideal of treating your employees like valued family members! ■

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Real Life Management

The Power of Engagement

"People come to work wanting to be productive for the most part, and managers either set them up for success or cause confusion."

Jim Harter, Chief Scientist and Engagement Expert at Gallup

One of the hot topics in the Human Resources field in recent years is employee engagement. Engagement is the level of discretionary effort exhibited by employee. Wikipedia defines an "engaged employee" as "one who is fully absorbed and enthusiastic about their work and so takes positive action to further the organization's reputation and interest." I want engaged employees on my teams — what about you? Let's talk about why engagement is important, then explore some ways to try and improve engagement.

Why Is Employee Engagement Important?

A recent Gallup study showed only 30% of employees are actively engaged on the job. Why should we care about the level of engagement? Because there is a strong correlation between employee engagement and a number of important performance metrics. For example, Gallup research showed that work units in the top quartile in employee engagement outperformed the bottom quartile units by:

- 10%** in Customer Ratings
- 22%** in Profitability
- 21%** in Productivity
- 25%** Lower Turnover
- 37%** Less Absenteeism
- 48%** Fewer Safety Incidents
- 41%** Fewer Quality Defects

Foundational Principles for Improving Engagement

In a recent article in *Talent Management*, Jim Harter from Gallup shared some key principles for increasing engagements based on Gallup's research:

1. Engaged employees need to know what's expected of them at work — role clarity. Only about half of employees say they know what's expected of them at work. This is considered the starting place for building greater engagement.
2. Engaged employees have what they need to do the work. This includes things like adequate procedures, tools, and support from others in the organization when needed (e.g. trainers, supervisors, staff support like IT and HR).

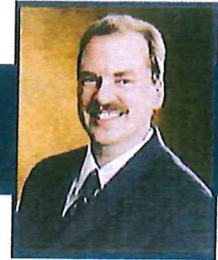
3. Engaged employees are in jobs where they can utilize their talents effectively. It's incumbent on us in management to understand our employee talents and strengths and to place people in roles in which they can excel.
4. Engaged employees receive recognition for good work in a way that's important for them as an individual. Regular recognition is extremely important — and we also want to try and recognize individuals in ways that are most meaningful to them.

The Seven Key Needs of Employees

One approach to increase engagement is to better understand the needs of each of your team members — then respond in ways that are meaningful to him/her. The American Management Association cites research that 99% of employees are motivated by one of the following seven needs:

1. The Need for Achievement. There are some of us that are very motivated by the possibility of achievement. For us, identifying goals to strive for and then celebrating successes along the way is important for our desire to achieve and will motivate us to strive for even greater achievements. Here is a great litmus test to see if you have a very high need for achievement: if you use a "to-do" list and sometimes write down a recently completed task so that you have the pleasure of crossing it off — you are a high achiever!
2. The Need for Power. Some people have a need for power/control. These are the team members that can excel and be motivated by leading special projects or developing policy/procedure manuals or any other task where they have power, control or significant influence. Placing them in a role of power or control will be highly engaging for them and can benefit the entire team.
3. The Need for Affiliation. Some of our team members have a strong need for affiliation — to feel part of a larger team. These are great folks to help organize team building activities and to check in regularly to get a pulse on how the team is feeling.

With Wes Friesen



4. **The Need for Autonomy.** We have team members that really like to have flexibility in their jobs and to be left alone to do them. These are folks that don't want public attention, but want the freedom to do their jobs with minimal outside influence. Finding jobs and tasks that allow for more autonomy is the obvious key to maximize the engagement of these team members.
5. **The Need for Esteem.** Some people have extra need to receive esteem. I remember awhile back I had a supervisor that started working for me that I sensed was not as engaged and connecting with me as I thought was possible. I eventually figured out the best way to engage her was to provide extra "atta girls" via e-mail and face-to-face and help meet her need to feel esteemed.
6. **The Need for Safety and Security.** There are people that have an above average need to feel safe and secure. In today's ever changing corporate environments that we live in this can be challenging to meet that need. But we can address concerns as they arise, and provide realistic hope and accentuate the positive when helping those that struggle with feeling safe and secure.
7. **The Need for Equity.** Some team members have a strong need to feel that equity and fairness exists within the team and organization. It's good to have at least one person on the team that we can use as a barometer on how we are doing as managers to have equity and fairness in our work environment.
5. **Invest in them.** Our employees are truly our most important assets so let's invest our time and other resources in them.
6. **Develop them.** Give employees opportunities to develop in their current roles and help them be prepared for future roles.
7. **Challenge them.** Give employees new opportunities and help them grow to the next level.
8. **Recognize them.** Recognize both team and individual performance.
9. **Celebrate them.** Celebrate successes and strive to create a fun and positive work environment that makes it enjoyable to come to work.
10. **Respect them.** We all like to be respected, and to be respected by your boss is very motivating.
11. **Compensate them.** Pay people for a job well done as best as you can.
12. **Promote them.** Whenever possible, promoting from within will be motivating and shows that there are opportunities and that good performance is appreciated and rewarded.

The level of employee engagement on our teams can be positively influenced by those of us in management roles. It takes intentional effort to increase engagement levels — but the benefits are worth the effort. I wish you success in striving to better tap into the power of engagement! ■

Proven Approaches for Engaging Employees

I recently ran across an article by Donna Fluss in *Connections Magazine* where she shared a dozen approaches that can help engage employees. I liked her list and wanted to share with you:

1. **Listen to Your Employees.** Invite employees to share their ideas and really listen to what they have to say. Act upon the ideas that are doable and make business sense.
2. **Involve Them.** Goal is to create an environment that welcomes innovative ideas and actions.
3. **Support them.** Be there for your employees — and treat them like adults (not children) and valued family members.
4. **Excite them.** Communicate your department's direction and plans to your employees. Be the upfront cheerleader and help them see the positive opportunities that the future holds.

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