



Effective Management Development for Leaders in Education

The People Paradox, and
Getting Top Performers to Manage Successfully



Gallagher

Insurance | Risk Management | Consulting

Management Development - IASPA – January 25, 2018

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Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
2850 Golf Road
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
630.773.3800
www.ajg.com/locations/illinois/rolling-meadows

Keith A. Friede
Area V.P., Talent & Organization Development
3600 American Boulevard, Suite 500
Bloomington, Minnesota 55431
952.356.0700

keith_friede@ajg.com
[@keithfriede](http://www.linkedin.com/in/keithfriede)



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Introductory Group Discussion

What is your organization doing now to develop the managerial skills of those who are responsible for the work of others?

What are some of the key challenges and barriers to managerial skill development in your organization?

Superior Leader Characteristics

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, award-winning authors and leadership consultants for more than 30 years, authored two seminal works on leadership that emanated from their in-depth research and study of leadership, entitled, *The Leadership Challenge*, and *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*. Their initial research identified four specific “superior leader characteristics” that then, and now, people consistently and overwhelmingly identify as the characteristics that they most value in a leader that they will willingly follow. *Can you determine what those characteristics are?*



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Managerial Context & Transition

1

Management vs. Leadership

There are thousands of definitions of leadership and management. Joseph C. Rost, in 1991, offered what may be one of the best sets of definitions ever of these two terms:

Joseph C. Rost

Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.

Management is an authority relationship between at least one manager and one subordinate who coordinate their activities to produce and sell particular goods and/or services.

Management and leadership are different. Both are honorable. Both are important and necessary to the success of an organization. Make sure you – and any vendor with whom you may work – know what skills you’re trying to build. Make sure the intervention is appropriate to reach your objectives. (Many vendors say they deliver leadership development when they’re really delivering management development – “leadership development” sounds way sexier and “management” better.)

Question – did Kouzes and Posner address leadership or management?

In our work with assessing and measuring employee engagement, we confirm what you have probably known for a long time – that the ***single greatest driver of employee engagement is effective management***. In particular, our statistical analysis identifies these factors as paramount:

- Managers explain success measures
- Managers enable employees to use their skills and abilities
- Managers manage effectively so that employees work well together
- Managers help employees understand how to excel
- Senior executives keep employees informed and influence positive change

Further, our engagement statistics verify that the presence of “job passion” with employees ***doubles*** the predictability of key organizational performance outcomes such as outstanding customer experience, low turnover, and exceptional financial performance.

Developing managers with the interpersonal skills necessary to build shared responsibility teams and work groups, and inspire internal commitment for exceptional performance in direct reports (and passion in some!) is without doubt “job one” for any organization wishing to perform at a high level.

Managerial Context & Transition

2

Beyond “Hero” to Effective Interpersonal Skill Set

A lot of managers are brought into the managerial realm/ranks based on their demonstrated individual contributor excellence. Management is a **way** different skill set. Make sure you are building the capacity of managers to develop employees’ internal commitment and shared responsibility – not the capacity to be better “heroes.”

New managers are particularly susceptible to several challenges in the transition from individual contributor to manager. The manager’s organization needs to address these challenges with the manager, or risk a downward spiral in managerial effectiveness. **(Note – these same challenges are often experienced by employees who have been in a managerial role for a long time.)**

Fear Set #1 -- **Control**

- Fear of losing stature
 - “Will my boss see the value that I am adding?”
 - For a former top individual contributor who is used to getting accolades for accomplishments, it is a big change to watch others gain greater visibility
- Fear of abdicating control
 - “Will tasks be accomplished by others at the same high level of expertise I achieved?”
 - The manager may respond to this fear by taking back tasks, supervising too closely, and/or rescuing employees
- Fear of overburdening staff
 - “Will employees resent me for assigning tasks?”
 - The real resentment is likely to come from employees who feel over-controlled, micromanaged, and limited in opportunity

This is not just a delegation issue. If a manager is pushed to delegate without strong managerial skills, the situation could backfire and get worse.

Most managers actually have a mix of management and individual contributor responsibilities. Former star individual contributors who are now managers will usually prioritize individual contributor responsibilities ahead of managerial ones, with predictable results.

Fear Set #2 – **Vulnerability**

- Fear of being vulnerable, appearing weak, not having all the answers
 - “Will employees trust my judgement and will my boss question my capabilities?”
 - The manager may undermine his/her own credibility by invoking the boss’s authority
 - The manager may operate “under the radar” and self-censor discussions with the boss rather than engage in honest discussion and coaching that would build managerial skills
- Fear of confrontation
 - “I hate confrontation – maybe the problem will self-correct.”
 - Most managers wait far too long to address performance problems, doing so only when the situation has reached crisis stage

The antidotes to these problems are to build the skills described on the next two pages, and for the manager’s boss to engage in true shared experience coaching – see #12.

Management Development Content

3

Managerial Flexibility

Important keys to effective management include the abilities to:

- Keenly observe situations
- Assess what is necessary given the situation, the individuals involved, and the intended objective
- Employ behavioral (skill) flexibility to do what will be effective, rather than what is comfortable or habitual for the manager (or what the famous sports coach did to win the championship)

Make sure you are building this managerial flexibility in your managers.

4

Managerial Communication

Managing is all about communicating – most any skill development not focused on communication is individual contributor work (even very high-level individual contributor work), and is a distraction from *management* skill development. Make sure that nearly 100% of your development initiatives in pursuit of management development are focused on things like listening and influencing others. If “it” is not largely about managerial *communication*, then ask yourself why you’re spending time on it if *management* effectiveness is your objective. These are, in our opinion, the key types of skills that should be the focus of management communication skills development:

- Developing and communicating expectations
- Developing internal commitment to, and shared responsibility for, specific skill/task execution and organizational objectives
- Listening actively to confirm understanding and promote better communication (as opposed to listening to interject/talk)
- Confronting performance and behavior challenges to influence changes in behaviors and outcomes

5

Conflict Management

One of the major challenges of many managers is dealing with conflict in the work group. This is not about eliminating conflict – that’s not possible, nor would it be healthy for the work group were it possible. Part of this is facilitating/managing the resolution of potentially damaging conflict issues in the workplace. Part of this is helping the work group to be comfortable with, and participate actively in, healthy conflict. Make sure your management development initiatives address both these issues.

Management Development Content

6

Performance Management

Performance management is a staple of management development initiatives. Unfortunately, it is often presented without first building sound, foundational, managerial communication skills (#3 and #4, on the previous page). Once these skills are sound (and *only* then), can we build strong performance management skills on that foundation. These would include:

- A *developmental, situation-specific* approach to delegation that emphasizes the assessment of task-specific employee readiness (competence and commitment)
- Diagnosing and correcting performance problems in *partnership* with employees.
- Consistent, *continuous* performance feedback
- *Shared experience* coaching.
- Performance appraisal – this is the *last* skill to address, not the first or only

7

Interpersonal Styles – The Right Focus

Understanding diverse interpersonal styles is good. It's fun. It's popular. And it can be very tangibly helpful to the developing manager. It can also be a detour into “managerial narcissism.” How do you know which is which? If it focuses mostly (or exclusively on the manager's style) and it doesn't ultimately build the skill of the manager in influencing and getting action through others, then it's probably popular and a lot of fun, but it fails to address the fundamental challenge of style diversity. Make sure the ultimate focus is on how the manager engages with others given their differing styles – not on managerial self-reflection.

8

WorkStyle Patterns®

With the simplicity of and infatuation with interpersonal communication styles, many organizations never address the more complex, but far more important “style” issue of *work style orientations*. Some organizations may not even be aware of this issue. When a manager's preferred work style orientation is out of synch with what the managerial position requires, managerial effectiveness deteriorates or fails. It is also important to address the degree of alignment between the manager's view of what the job requires, and the boss's; also consider addressing work style alignment between the manager's direct reports and the manager. Improved work style, or work approach alignment, is critical to the effectiveness of the manager and everyone around him/her.

McFletcher Corporation's **WorkStyle Patterns®** inventories and alignment processes are an incredibly powerful and largely unknown resource that can help your managers and teams dramatically improve productivity, reduce stress and improve outcomes. See Keith for more information.

Management Development Process

9

Offer Multiple Sessions, Separated

Developing managers need time and opportunity to apply what they learn, and work through the challenges of that application. So unless you have no other choice, avoid the “all at once” approach (whether this is a formal classroom-type initiative or an individual coaching process). Offer multiple sessions, separated by time – anything from a couple of weeks to three months, depending on various situational specifics. At the beginning of each session, review and discuss what has happened – effective and ineffective – since the last session. (See also #14.)

10

Practice Real Stuff

Effective skill development requires practice. Much of that practice needs to occur on the job. Still, it is also important to do some practice *not* “on the job.” This presents a challenge. Many management development programs, in an effort to provide that practice, ask participants to engage in contrived and unrealistic “role-play” situations. (Asking participants to practice skills in contrived situations, and calling it “experiential learning” is a disservice to the developing manager and his/her organization.) “Make believe” is not usually a sound methodology for practicing and mastering interpersonal skills. Whenever possible, make the practice of skills as *real* as you can. This is tricky, but it can usually be accomplished. (Keith frequently uses a “peer consulting” approach.)

Management Development Process

11

Create an Environment for Successful Application

The Centre for Applied Leadership (where Keith is an advisor), as well as various studies, have observed that about 20% of a manager's professional development comes from classrooms, books, online training, etc. About another 20% comes from observation. The remaining (approximately) 60% comes from on-the-job application and trial-and-error efforts. The manager needs to *discover* in actual application what it "feels" like to effectively apply learned skills. Therefore, a critical piece of effective management development is creating an environment for successful on-the-job application and experiential learning. This should include briefing the managers' managers on what is going to be learned, involving them in the learning and application processes, enlisting their commitment to shared experience coaching, and working with them to make the management development program an "action learning" process (see also #12 and #13).

12

Ensure Shared Experience Coaching

Without active coaching of learned and developing management skills, your management development program will fail – period. Further, effective coaching requires that the coach observe actual managerial behavior, and coach *with* the manager, not *to* him/her. We call this *shared experience* coaching. Coaching behind closed doors without actually having observed how the manager employs his/her management skills is like coaching a swimmer without having watched him/her actually swim. The coach needs to "get in the water" *with* the developing manager. This can be very difficult for both parties, so it needs to be effectively handled/facilitated by senior management and HR. The coach shouldn't be a "hero coach" any more than the manager should be a "hero manager!"

Strategies & Situations

Discuss with your colleagues possible strategies through which you can champion management development in your organization, including identifying opportunistic situations within the context of educational organizations to actively develop management skills.

The Critical 80%

If only 20% of a manager's professional development comes from classroom experiences (and books, online learning experiences, etc.), then what will you do to ensure that the remaining, 80% of management development is also appropriately leveraged? This includes observation, on-the-job application, and shared experience coaching.

As for coaching — what can you do to make the management skills coaching truly *shared experience* coaching? How will you overcome the challenges to this?

Management Development Process

13

Use an “Action Learning” Approach

“Action learning” is the process of incorporating into learning and development initiatives the organization’s key objectives – ensuring that the application of what is being learned is being focused on actual organizational goals. Enlist senior executives in developing this aspect of your initiatives.

14

Assign Participant “Application Presentations”

For many years, we started each session with a review and discussion of progress made on applying management skills since the previous session – a very important design feature. But we found that participants weren’t really taking this seriously. There was a lot of “I didn’t really do much . . . did you see the football game last night?” going on. So we started making program participants present formally to the cohort at the beginning of each session on what had happened since we’d last been together. Suddenly they began taking the exercise seriously (something about having to stand up and talk about it to peers . . .), and they then took the actual on-the-job application more seriously as well. We now hear routinely about great successes, abysmal failures, and everything in between – extraordinarily important to the learning process. So whether your management development initiative is a classroom program or a coaching program – make public “reporting out” (if possible, to peers) a key element.

