



Team Leadership Development: The Missing Piece to the Employee Engagement Puzzle

BY BOB MOORE, CMC

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The Engagement Problem

According to the most recent Aon Hewitt “Trends in Global Employee Engagement” study, global employee engagement levels in 2014 were up just 1% from the year before. Despite this very modest increase in engagement, the study further shows that employees’ net satisfaction with their work experience plummeted 28% in 2014. The report noted that a 5% increase in employee engagement can be linked to a 3% increase in revenue growth in the subsequent year.

Ken Oehler, Aon Hewitt’s global engagement practice leader said, “There has been significant emphasis on increasing engagement over the last several years, but many organizations are overly focused on diagnostics and not on the holistic solutions that address the specific challenges they are facing.”

“Engaging leaders who engage others are not just nice to have – they are the key ingredient to creating a culture of engagement that sustains business results in an ever-changing and complex global environment.” –Aon Hewitt

The Implications

Gallup has studied performance at hundreds of companies and measured the engagement of 27 million employees and more than 2.5 million work units over the past two decades. These studies discovered significant links between employee engagement levels and higher profitability, productivity and quality (fewer defects); lower turnover; less absenteeism and fewer safety incidents. When a company raises employee engagement levels consistently across every business unit, everything gets better.

The Root Cause

Regardless of industry, size or location, companies are struggling to unlock the mystery of why performance varies from one workgroup to the next. The research is very clear that a bad boss or a firm that refuses to invest in leadership development is the root cause of employee disengagement. To accomplish increased

employee retention, productivity and job satisfaction, companies must have a great manager leading every team in their workforce. Teams are composed of individuals with differing needs related to morale, motivation and clarity -- all of which lead to varying degrees of performance. Nothing less than great managers can maximize them.



But first, companies have to find those great managers. Unfortunately, only one in five (18%) of those currently in management roles demonstrate a high level of talent for managing others, while another two in 10 show a *basic* talent for it. Combined, they contribute about 48% higher profit to their companies than average managers do. To consistently realize these returns, it is essential that companies invest in coaching and development programs for their managers.

Assessing Learning and Development Needs

What’s your current management development program? A set of old VHS tapes? Maybe you have a new system, but you’re not seeing results. Unless your teams are thriving and meeting performance expectations, look to your management development program to diagnose the problem.

First, let’s look at some common reasons courses for team leaders, supervisors and managers fall short.

- Participants leave with bits of knowledge but no real-world application.
- The training program is too broad, with little or no relevance to a specific job.
- The program lacks rigor and participants aren’t challenged.
- The program is too advanced or theoretical, making it hard for participants to benefit.

- The program is simply not interesting – outdated videos, lack of interaction.
- There is no follow-up training or chance to touch base and evaluate the success of the program.

Does any of that sound familiar? If so, it's time to invest in the right learning and development process for team leaders and managers. The payoff is improvement in employee retention, increased productivity and satisfaction.

The Essential Leadership Skills



Managers and team leaders are on the front line of your business. They deal with the day-to-day operations of your company and directly impact the productivity of your employees. You need a team of effective leaders running your organization, and providing them with proper management training is the key to achieving that. The most effective leadership development curriculum you can provide for your team leaders, supervisors and managers include the following seven essential skill areas:

1. Leadership Skills

Are your team leaders and managers able to guide a well-oiled, motivated, high performing team? Are they consistently achieving optimal results? Implement a leadership skills program that teaches managers the basics of being a leader and how to enlist team member participation and loyalty.

2. Communication Skills

So many problems in the workplace are directly linked to poor communication, creating a need for a culture of transparency and open

communication. Implement a communication skills program that teaches your managers how to master the skills they need to communicate with clarity and professionalism and to create a culture of open, direct and concise communication.

3. Delegating Skills

Are your managers spread too thin? If so, it could be a sign that they need to learn how to strategically delegate their workload. Learning delegation skills will help managers use others' skills, increase productivity and involve the entire team.

4. Motivation Skills

Motivated workers are more productive and engaged in their jobs. Learning how to motivate team members can give your team leaders and managers the tools necessary to instill confidence and increase energy consistently throughout their team.

5. Conflict Resolution Skills

Conflict is inevitable in any workplace. Conflict resolution training provides managers with the ability to recognize conflict and address it immediately. When facing "he said, she said" scenarios, you need managers equipped to cut through the gossip and get straight to the source of the problem. It is essential that your leadership development process teaches your team leaders and managers to master conflict resolution strategies.

6. Coaching Skills

Numerous employee surveys reveal that team leaders lack highly developed performance improvement coaching skills. In today's knowledge-based economy, team leaders and managers must know how to identify and optimize the strengths of their team members. To be highly effective, team leaders and managers must be able to create improvement plans and coach employees to fully utilize their job skills.

7. Change Management Skills

Change isn't easy. But there's always change in business. Whether it's a new organizational structure or a new project management system, change must be handled strategically and effectively. It is essential that team leaders and managers have a leadership development program to teach them how to mitigate resistance and better prepare and support their team for change.

NEXT STEPS

Effective leaders drive high performing teams as well as successful organizations. The Talent Management Institute offers **leadership courses** to help managers and team leaders maximize their effectiveness and better understand what it takes to build, develop, and maintain an exceptional team.

Learn more about **Essential Skills of Leadership** – the first step in your Leadership Development process.

Click the button below to review the course offerings and to request a course preview.

COURSE PREVIEW

About Bob

Bob Moore, CMC, is founder of www.Effectiveness.com, an internationally recognized resource to executives and professionals who want to accelerate their progress to sustainable growth. Bob is a talent development specialist and founder of www.TalentManagementInstitute.com, a resource center for improving selection, alignment and development of top talent. He is the author of Turning Good People Into Top Talent (www.TopTalentBook.com) and a CMC®, Certified Management Consultant, the globally recognized certification mark of consulting competency, professionalism and ethics awarded by the Institute of Management Consultants.

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