

5 bad habits that snare new leaders by Mark E. Van Buren and Todd Safferstone

New leaders must prove themselves quickly, but the quest for rapid results is risky. A few years ago, a group of executives sponsored a research project to discover the keys to success for a leader transitioning into a new role. They surveyed 5,400 new leaders and their managers, asking what they were focusing on, what behaviors they were exhibiting, and how they were doing in their first months on the job. The group then looked for the patterns that distinguished the new leaders who were thriving in their positions from those who were struggling. Five behaviors separated those thriving in their roles, to those for whom it didn't work out:

Focus too much on detail

In looking to quickly prove herself, the transitioning leader becomes overly fixated on mastering a single aspect of the new job. Overly focused on this goal, she doesn't pay enough attention to her broader responsibilities. The end result is the exact opposite of the confidence she sought to instill in her employees, as well as management.

React badly to criticism

Based on success in a previous role, a manager may believe he has carte blanche to do as he sees fit. He may also presume that some employees are reluctant to change. As a result, any criticism may be viewed as aggression, possibly leading him to seek ways to retaliate. At the very least, an inability to deal with criticism means that the leader takes much longer to improve in areas of relative weakness—if he improves at all.

Intimidate others

Some leaders begin new roles convinced of their brilliance and the inevitability of their rise in the organization. Such leaders can be intimidating to those around them. Confident of their plans' success, they can mistake their employees' compliance for agreement and endorsement.

Micromanage

Leaders new to their roles often make the mistake of meddling in work they should trust others to do. Unwilling to take the time to get direct reports on board with an overall vision or goal—but afraid their decisions and actions won't align with it—they second-guess and micromanage.

Jumping to conclusions

Some leaders hoping to prove immediately begin implementing changes. To the people around them, it feels as if they have arrived with the solution already formulated instead of engaging others in its design.

Adapted from:

<http://www.smartbrief.com/news/leadership/storyDetails.jsp?issueid=47397086-FA66-4894-85EE-CD20F4873E7D©id=F46008FD-A008-4EE9-BC15-4245585A3076>

Quick Hit: Tips for Building Meaningful Work Relationships

Source: http://www.workshopexercises.com/leadership_tips.htm

1. Write a thank you note or "job well done" memo everyday for a week. Be certain your notes are sincere and specific.
2. Offer at least one sincere compliment a day.
3. Practice common courtesies: apologies, hallway greetings, thank you cards, get well messages, sympathy notes, etc.
4. Increase visibility by maintaining a visibility log. Use this log to keep track of the percentage of your workday that you are out of your office and talking to team members.
5. Make a point to ask team members more about themselves, not only about work related interests but also about their outside interests.

10 New Year's Resolutions to Motivate & Encourage Employees

By David Javitch

As a manager, the responsibility for the success of your organization falls on your shoulders—but the burden is not yours alone. You hired highly skilled employees. They are your most essential assets and are fundamental to the prosperity of your company. Fortunately, the arrival of 2009 presents an excellent opportunity for revitalizing employees' commitment to your organization. Consider meeting with staff to discuss the following New Year's resolutions. The goal is to encourage employees to reflect upon their performance and find ways to integrate themselves more fully into the success of the business—which then generally evolves into their personal success, as well. So here they are: 10 New Year's Resolutions and discussion topics—suggestions you can offer your staff to guide them toward a higher level of productivity:

1. I will work smarter. Can you identify 3 things you can do to be more efficient and effective in your current job? If job inefficiencies can be identified, they can be eliminated, increasing productivity—which often improves work satisfaction, too.
2. I will increase my professional network. Can you encourage your staff to get to know more people? Can you meet more people not just to say hello, but to find out what they do, how they do it and what skills they use to be productive?
3. I will find three things that I can do to make myself irreplaceable. Why should the company continue to employ you? Why are you good at what you do? Does the company know this? What else should the company know about you?
4. I will find ways to get along better with my boss and colleagues. If your boss is not managing you well enough or to your liking, then find positive ways to change the situation. Do you need more (or less) direction, supervision, freedom, responsibility or authority? Speak up and make sure your voice is heard.
5. I will join at least one company-wide task force or committee. Do people outside of your immediate group know your interests and skills? Do you know what is happening in other sectors of our company? By joining committees, you gain a broader view of the company's goals and issues, while also improving your own skills and networking impact.
6. I will join a professional organization in my area. What have you done for your personal development lately? Have you met like-minded colleagues who share some of your hopes, dreams, and goals? Do not miss this important opportunity to learn more about your profession while increasing the breadth and depth of your network.
7. I will take a job-related self-improvement seminar. Are there new techniques and concepts that you need to know about to make yourself a more valuable employee? A seminar may help you re-energize and increase your job satisfaction.
8. I will develop 4 goals to help me grow and develop as a more achievement-oriented employee. Stagnation is the kiss of death in today's economy. Think seriously about what you can do to be more achievement-oriented (in addition to taking a seminar and joining a professional group). Do you want to assume more responsibility in your job? Form or chair a task-force? Rethink and improve a product, policy, or procedure? Be creative!
9. I will evaluate my personal contribution to this organization. List 3 strengths and 3 limitations to your overall progress. Identify ways to improve on all 6, including what you will need from administrators to help move you succeed.
10. I will try to improve my relationship with at least one person with whom I do not get along. Take the initiative; meet with him or her to discuss the issues, whether overt or subtle, that prevent you from having more positive interactions. Remember that your goal is to make the best of your talents and create synergies with colleagues to increase the productivity of the company. How can you minimize interactions that are obstacles to success?

Adapted from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/humanresources/employeemanagementcolumnistdavidjavitch/article199248.html>

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