



TOP TEN TOOLBOX ARTICLES OF 2018

Looking to get your business off to an inspirational start in 2019?
Check out our "top ten" tips from the past year of Business Link.

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5 TIME MANAGEMENT SECRETS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

PROVIDED BY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK OF CANADA

THE GREAT MANAGEMENT THEORIST Peter Drucker once said: "Time is the scarcest resource and unless it is managed nothing else can be managed."

It's critical for entrepreneurs to organize their days to make sure they're doing the right things at the right time. That takes discipline—but the payoff will be less stress and a better managed, more successful company.

"As an entrepreneur, time is the one element you can't buy or borrow," BDC Business Consultant, Rony Israel says. "It's a resource you have to manage very carefully."

Israel, who was a successful entrepreneur for many years, offered some tips on how business owners can more effectively organize their days.

PLAN YOUR DAYS AHEAD

Before leaving the office in the evening, take the time to create a detailed to-do list for the next day. You should assign blocks of time for working on specific tasks and activities on your list. The next morning, you'll be ready to hit the ground running.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

You know they're coming: Those unforeseen events that eat up your time. Israel recommends reserving one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon for putting out fires. But to make it work, you have to resist the temptation to drop everything to deal with emergencies and wait until the time you've set aside to attack them.

BLOCK OUT TIME FOR STRATEGY

At the beginning of the year, you should reserve time in your calendar for weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual planning sessions.

Friday afternoon is a good time to look at what you've accomplished during the week and look ahead to next week's activities.

Monthly and quarterly sessions are for digging progressively

deeper into the company's finances looking to understand the reasons for variances from budget and planning how to adjust. You should also be reviewing operations, product development, customer feedback, employee performance and competitor activities.

Semi-annual sessions are for updating the strategic plan and once a year it's budget time.

"It's important to block those times off," Israel says. "Because if you don't, when the time comes for that activity, there will be an emergency and you will postpone it and procrastinate."

GET TOUGH WITH DISTRACTIONS

Email and the telephone are a constant source of distraction and temptation. Checking your inbox or calling an associate are often procrastination disguised as work. These activities break your concentration, interfering with the important work you have to do. Israel recommends you reserve 10 to 15 minutes an hour for email and phone calls.

PROFIT FROM LUNCH TIME

Many entrepreneurs, especially those with an introverted nature, prefer to eat their lunch at their desk or slip away for a solitary bite. Israel says that's a mistake. Lunch is a time when you can learn and deepen relationships with people who are important to your business. Israel says entrepreneurs should make the effort to break bread each day with a varying cast of people including employees, customers, suppliers, competitors and potential partners.

The bottom line is that to be successful, entrepreneurs have to become good managers and that starts with managing one's self.

"The business becomes successful when you transform yourself into a professional manager," Israel says. "And that means you have to change your attitude and focus on what you need to do, not what you like to do." **BL**

4 ACTIONS TO HELP YOUR SALES TEAM SUCCEED



LISA VON MASSOW

Very often, sales managers are promoted into leadership positions because they have demonstrated the ability to be successful in the role of salesperson. Management's logic is we'll just get them to teach others how to be successful like them. While on the surface, this concept may seem logical, I've seen time and time again that the skills required to lead and motivate a team of sales reps are quite different than those required to manage your own pipeline.

Are you responsible for the outcomes of your sales team? If so, consider five key improvement areas that are essential to achieving sales success in any industry.

1 HAVE A WELL-DEFINED, EFFECTIVE SELLING PROCESS

If you haven't already done so, install a step-by-step selling process that identifies exactly what your salespeople are expected to do. Then, hold them accountable to doing it.

Ideally, the process should emphasize qualifying, so salespeople are investing their time and resources in opportunities that have a high probability of closing. Stringently qualified opportunities progress more quickly. And, they produce better-fit solutions, more focused presentations, and higher closing rates.

2 FOCUS ON SALESPeople'S ACTIVITIES

Salespeople are experts in the art of constructive avoidance—engaging in contrived activities to avoid doing the real work of selling. Some, for example, will waste an inordinate amount of time updating, categorizing, and alphabetizing a prospect list to avoid actually picking up the phone and calling one of the prospects on the list.

Hold your salespeople accountable to the activities defined by your selling process—activities that keep the process moving forward. Those activities should be focused on moving opportunities into or out of the sales funnel—identifying and qualifying prospects; developing and closing opportunities.

3 ENSURE THAT SALESPeople HAVE THE NECESSARY SKILLS

Having an effective and efficient selling process is of little consequence if your salespeople don't have the essential skills to implement it. Working hard is not an appropriate substitute for working skillfully. It leads to frustration, lackluster performance, and below-average sales results.

Monitor the actual results of sales-process-directed activities against the intended outcomes. Where there are shortfalls, identify the deficient skills responsible for the result, and make sure your salespeople receive the appropriate training.

When you arrange for training, it's important for you to be involved in it. After all, you are responsible for seeing that the content of the training is applied, and for helping your salespeople refine their newly-acquired skills. Finally, training and coaching are interconnected. Support the training with regular pre-call briefings, post-call debriefings, and ongoing coaching.

4 HELP YOUR SALESPeople ENHANCE THEIR SELF-ESTEEM

Learning new strategies and developing new skills will have little positive impact if your salespeople don't have the confidence to implement those skills. Lack of confidence (fear of failure) is perhaps the biggest roadblock that prevents salespeople from achieving greater levels of success. Providing encouragement, support, and positive feedback to your salespeople is as important a function in your management role. BL

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GASPER PAUL

FORGET TOUGH – TODAY'S competition is fierce! Now, more than ever, your commitment to establishing a true "team" culture is not just important, rather it is a vital component to your company's future success, because when your team is strategically aligned, your organization is positioned with a stronger competitive advantage.

However, it is not easy by any means to establish highly effective and proficient work teams and it is also not easy to get everyone in the organization to work toward common goals. Many companies and organizations that aspire and are committed to reaching such levels, focus, train and coach their people on a continuous basis. In the sports world, this is what is known as training and practicing which ultimately leads teams to championships and dynasties.

However, there are two major challenges when it comes to creating a true team culture. The first is assuming that teamwork is voluntary. One cannot "force" anyone to be a team player. You need to make them "want" to be a team player. The second is that it just doesn't necessarily come naturally. Teamwork requires consistent training. Here's why. Most individuals have been conditioned from childhood to excel as individuals and not as team players. Unless a person has had experience on a sports team under the direction of that rare dynamic coach, he or she does not know how to perform effectively as a member of a team.

In spite of these obstacles, it is absolutely critical to develop teamwork within your organization. Establishing a highly effective and proficient team of professionals who can perform together in an environment of open communication and idea sharing—both internally and externally—is critical. It is the only way to ensure that your company can perform at the highest level of quality service. And it is

certainly the only way you can win the competitive battle securing business growth and stability in the long term.

Without teamwork, disharmony, dissen-tion and dysfunction will creep into and sabotage an organization's environment. This is not healthy in today's highly competitive and stressful work climate. Harmony within your team is critical to job satisfaction, customer retention, and business growth.

When your people lack the capacity to understand each other's pressures and the concerns of your customers the following will most likely occur:

- **Barriers can develop among people.**
- **Walls are built and people will work in silos.**
- **Territorialism will manifest within your team.**
- **Quality can be compromised.**
- **Personnel issues and employee disengagement will rise.**
- **People will create separate agendas.**
- **Customers will not receive exceptional service.**
- **Generally, things will deteriorate and be unproductive.**

No business can afford any of these situations. On the other hand, when there is a true team culture, positive outcomes are achievable.

Effective teams develop fragments of ideas and mold them into positive change. Ideas build one on top of another. Individuals, working as a team, take these scattered bits of information and structure a wide variety of options and solutions to the problems an organization continually encounters.

Consequently, teamwork promotes creativity and innovation. Relationships are strengthened—inside and outside your organization. Issues are uncovered, conflict is resolved, and people all pull in the same direction. Individuals are effectively becoming solid team players, and strong leaders emerge.

Sound too idealistic? It's not. All ef-

fective, successful organizations operate at this level and there is no reason why yours shouldn't. To begin, follow the steps below to move your company forward to take its place among the best:

- 1.** Sit down with your team and describe what you would like to see within your organization. Let them know that you want to involve them in this important team building process and that you will help them get where they need go. People tend to promote what they help to create. Asking for their ideas and input in this initiative is the first step in effective team building. Keep in mind that people tend to promote what they help to create. Employee involvement is critical to the success of your team.
- 2.** Work together to establish team competencies specific to each job role.
- 3.** Set high standards for performance. Do not settle for mediocre performance.
- 4.** Ask for ideas on how you can modify or eliminate any procedure that does not allow for flawless execution.
- 5.** Create guiding principles for the way the team will communicate and operate, and how all customers will be treated.
- 6.** Set a solid process to realize rigorous but achievable goals.
- 7.** Have the courage to remove anyone who might prevent the team from performing at the highest possible level. You can't afford to have a weak player.

Take a good hard look at your team and begin these steps as soon as possible. Just as successful sports team practice to prepare for competition, start teamwork training to help your team become a truly effective entity.

Remember, businesses don't do business, people do. Start building your team today. This will help you create your strongest competitive advantage and if you need help, seek out an experienced and reliable source. You will find that it will be well worth the investment. **BL**



EIGHT WAYS TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS MORE PROFITABLE

BY TRACEY MACKENZIE

There is a lot of conflicting information out there to tell you how to become more profitable. Just Google it. Worse than that ask friends and family members and the information gets even more confusing!

The domain of profitability and how to impact it seems about as muddy as a puddle that a three-year-old just stomped through. Is there even an answer? And if there is, is there a way to do this without killing yourself and spending long tedious hours away from the ones you love?

The answer is "yes."

I've been working in the discipline of driving profitability for about 25 years. During this time, it has become very clear that there are eight key areas to drive profitability. These are:

1. *Decrease fixed costs* – The costs that don't change, regardless of the business you do (or don't do) daily.
2. *Decrease variable costs* – The costs that fluctuate with each sale, typically in direct relation to the cost of making the sale.
3. *Increase leads* – The number of conversations you have.
4. *Increase conversion* – The percentage of yes's you get for each conversation.
5. *Increase revenue per conversion (upsell / cross-sell)* – The amount you sell to each person that says "yes."
6. *Price modification* – How much you charge – are you charging the right amount?

7. *Strategic Investment* – Where are you spending your money to grow your business?

8. *Emancipate working capital from operational holdings* – How much money are you tying up in the running of your business (e.g. inventory) that could be better allocated?

There is science and theory behind each one of these eight points; which ones will work for you and how they will work for you is dependent on your personal business dynamics. Over the upcoming weeks, I will expand into each of these key areas to drive profitability.

Being profitable is important. Being profitable in smart ways is even more important.

At the end of the day, we have limited time. What we do with that time affects our quality of life. When we take the time to figure out more effective ways to be profitable that are not draining time away from the important things in our lives, then we can be more effective with our time. This can give us time back for our families and friends, and allow us to grow the business we have always wanted. **BL**

Tracey Mackenzie is the lead principal at Tracey Mackenzie Consulting. With over 25 years of experience making companies more profitable, Tracey and her team can help you find those extra hours in your days while increasing your profitability. Find out about her newest program at www.powerprofits.ca.



THE OTHER WAY ROUND

BY DENNIS O'NEILL

WE'RE BEING SHOWN AN upside down picture. Marketing generally shows up as a cost on the ledger sheet. But...marketing doesn't cost, it produces. Marketing generates sales. Marketing makes money. What else multiplies your dollar? Yet on every P&L sheet, marketing shows up as a cost.

Upside down picture

Let's say a firm spends \$20,000 in marketing. Then it yields \$500,000 in sales. Accountant-think says that marketing amounts to a cost of 4% of sales.

Right side up picture

The dynamic of the picture says that \$20,000 marketing produced \$500,000 sales. That's a return of \$25 in sales for every dollar in marketing investment. A fabulous return! Where else could you get that kind of return?

Your marketing informs people what you offer and why they should buy from you. That produces customers and sales.

If one dollar in marketing returns \$25 dollars in sales, why would I want to reduce my one dollar? Wouldn't I want to know what happens if I increased the one dollar to \$1.25 or more?

Investment not cost

Marketing should not be considered as a cost, ever, ever, ever. Marketing acts as a dynamic investment. It pays you back many times in its value.

Cutting real costs

If you need to cut costs find a real cost. Don't cut the item that feeds you.

Sales to marketing ratio

It's time to stop the accounting system that calculates marketing and advertising as a percentage of sales or of total costs. Start calculating your sales to marketing ratio.

$$\frac{\$500,000}{\$20,000} = \frac{25}{1} = 25 \text{ to } 1 \text{ Return}$$

Think of your marketing as your multiplier. Now put your effort on making your marketing even better. **BL**

Dennis O'Neill, The Business Growth Coach is located in Niagara-on-the-Lake. For more information on how to grow your business, please call 905.641.8777, email dennis@dennisonneillcoach.com or visit www.dennisonneillcoach.com



The Three Roles of a Sales Manager

BY BRETT MEADOWS

As a sales manager, you will take on many roles like friend, boss and even therapist! However, the three most important roles you will take on are: The Manager, The Coach and The Leader.

The Manager – As the manager, your role is to help your team to be efficient and stay on task. You will monitor your team's pipelines, lead generation, new opportunities, etc. You will also be looking for obstacles that are slowing your team down and help remove them for your team so that your salespeople can stay focused on their high payoff activities that create sales. Managing also includes measuring, tracking and reporting useful sales data.

The Coach – As the coach of the team you are the developer of talent always working to grow the quality of the team. A coach's main job is to build individuals into stronger performers by identifying what is working well and what is not, and what improvements can be made for better performance and how to execute it. They also need to be able to connect with each salesperson one-on-one and understand that it's their responsibility to push – and grow their people outside of their comfort zones and push them to be more productive.

The Leader – An essential role of you the sales manager. It begins with you being able to create the vision for your sales team that aligns with the company's one, two and three-year vision and even beyond. As the leader, where do you want your team to go? How do you see them growing in the next quarter, six months from now and over the coming year? What do you need to put in place to get them there?

Having your team as part of the vision building process and showing them how they are needed to accomplishing the team's goal will give each salesperson a stronger reason to help with the team's objectives.

An effective sales team stays on the same page and works together. But if there's no clear leadership the rest of your job will be that much harder.

As the sales manager, you set the tone for the culture, energy and pace for the team. As the sales manager, you can energize, motivate and build excitement within the sales team by making work fun and turning them loose in their territory allowing them to show you what they can do. Give them the opportunity to be a positive contributor to the team's bigger picture. It takes a strong leader to allow a team to grow this way, but in the long run you will reap the rewards of an energized team with a strong drive to succeed.

You, the sales manager, are in fact dealing with the same things your salespeople are but your perspective is much different. The salesperson is out on the road making sales happen while you are building a plan and strategy for the team's season and beyond. As the leader, you want to ensure you have the right people doing the right activity. If you can accomplish this, you will have a winning team. **BL**

Brett trains, coaches, and speaks to salespeople all over the country. For more information on seminars and training, please visit www.brettmeadows.com or contact the friendly folks at Meadows Performance Sales and Strategy via email at info@brettmeadows.com or by calling 289.696.3605.



The Theory of Why

Life isn't about asking How. Life is about knowing Why!

BY GERRY VISCA

We emerge into this world whole and complete yet somewhere along the way we begin to complicate our lives. We de-evolve from “human beings” into “human doings” - always pursuing, climbing and chasing more. Throughout our quest for power and control we seem to have lost sight of who we truly are and more importantly, why we are here.

Each one of us exists with a defined reason for being. Every human being that has ever walked this Earth has a profound stitch to sew into the fabric of life. We've lost sight that we're all connected at a deeper level and it's through this awareness that we will discover mankind's true reason for existence.

The past 11 years of my life represent my most fulfilling chapter. I have learned the art of simplicity. While my inspiration has reached deeper levels of understanding, the way that I live my deeper Why has become simplified.

Your Why ignites the way. - The way is the inspired means of experiencing and living through your Why. So, what is this Why? I define it as the World Helped by You. I'm not talking about the “surface-based” Why that changes with the seasons or the pursuit of some shiny new object. Your deeper Why is not some goal, financial metric or even your kids for that matter. Your Why is your soul's way of realizing its deeper impact on the world. It's your true reason for being and it's time you remember who you are and why you're here.

So, why even write about it? It's quite simple. For mankind to truly thrive and realize all that we are meant to become in this universe then we need to collectively reach out and inspire others with a deeper understanding of why each one of us is here. This is the new ROI that I'm on fire to inspire. Contrary to what you might think, building more shopping malls isn't going to get us to the “promised land.”

Where do we begin? - I've become a big fan of simplified processes. There is a theory to everything. Einstein's equation for energy is:

$E=MC^2$ and my simplified version for igniting your deeper Why is: [Passion + Purpose = Outcome].

Years ago, when I had the privilege of rebranding organizations I focused on getting to the heart of the matter. “Why do you exist?” served as my foundation for reconnecting the human beings that sit day in and day out within the cubicles (the employees) and the ones they serve (the clients and customers).

A human being is quite simply a being not a doing machine. We have allowed ourselves to become defined by doing more. The inner peace, happiness and fulfillment that we truly seek is only achieved through a deeper sense of being and it's time we inspire one another to reconnect to it.

If you've chosen to pause and read these words then you've accepted the invitation to a deeper sense of awareness for why you're really here. Igniting the deeper Why begins with remembering who you truly are.

What is your joy? What lights you up?

I call that “Your passion.” It's your inner GPS that keeps you on course and trust me, it's easy to lose yourself in this noisy and disconnected age. The late Steve Jobs said it best: “If you're not passion about who you are and what you do then others won't feel it.”

What are your unique gifts? What service will you give freely to others? - I call that “Your Purpose” and every human being has a profound verse to contribute to the world. Most of us are simply unaware that we're even unaware!

What do you want others to experience? - I call that “Your Outcome.” Here's the thing. If you don't love the Outcomes in your life then you're not living your Passion and Purpose.

So, why does it even matter? The average human being will experience around 70 summers. That's not a lot of time but then again, what is time? I define it as the awareness of the gift of life through the present moment and the more time you devote to being human, the more you'll come to realize that the outcomes you are truly seeking are aligned with what you want for others.

The theory of Why is the World Helped by You. **BL**

Gerry Visca is the #Why Guy, a contributor to The Business Link, one of Canada's top inspirational speakers, and the author of 18 books

LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS AND THE WORKPLACE – A GAME CHANGER?

The Federal Cannabis Act and the Ontario Cannabis Act, 2017 (the “Ontario Act”) changed the legal landscape of the use and possession of recreational cannabis on October 17, 2018. Effective October 17, 2018, the Federal Cannabis Act permitted individuals 18 years of age or older to possess up to 30 grams of cannabis. Ontario’s government passed legislation to increase the minimum age and individuals must be 19 years of age and older to buy, use, possess and grow recreational cannabis. In addition to determining age limits, provinces have also been given the authority to determine where individuals are permitted to smoke and vape cannabis.

The Ontario Liberal government proposed restrictions on the use of cannabis in public spaces. On September 27, 2018, the Progressive Conservative government announced Bill 36 (the “Bill”) to relax the restrictions on the use of cannabis in public places. As of October 17, 2018, Ontario residents are able to smoke and vape cannabis wherever the smoking of tobacco is permitted (with certain exceptions). While the legalization of cannabis and the relaxed restriction on public use has received varied responses, one thing is for sure. Ontario employers are concerned about how legalization and the anticipated trend of increased use will affect the workplace. The foremost concern expressed to our labour and employment lawyers relates to workplace safety, decreased productivity and performance, attendance and testing for impairment. So how will legalization impact the workplace?

Let us be perfectly clear. After October 17, 2018, there is no absolute legal right to use cannabis at work, even with a prescription or medical authorization. The Ontario Act will still prohibit the consumption of cannabis in a workplace as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Employers have the right and obligation to ensure a safe workplace and are also entitled to expect that employees will be productive while at work. At the same time, employers are required to respect and comply with existing laws including the Human Rights Code regarding the accommodation of disabilities.

The law currently requires and will continue to require employees to report to work fit to perform their duties. The law will continue to require employees attend work and perform their duties competently.

Where an employee reports to work impaired, due to the effects of alcohol, medication and/or cannabis (medical or recreational), the employee most likely has violated their

employment contract. Depending on the circumstances, an employer may be entitled to perform drug testing and/or impose discipline including termination.

The legalization of cannabis on October 17, 2018 was not a gamechanger. The fact remains that employers will continue to treat cannabis impairment in the workplace in the same manner they have historically dealt with concerns of impairment due to alcohol and/or medications. The legalization of cannabis is not a license for use and impairment in the workplace.

The legal landscape of drug and alcohol testing also continues to apply. Employers are currently entitled to conduct reasonable cause, post incident, and in some cases post treatment return to the workplace drug and alcohol testing. Random drug testing has not been fully endorsed in Canada, save for those workplaces considered inherently dangerous and even then, only where an employer can satisfy certain criteria. Random drug testing may also be imposed in certain industries, for example in transportation where employees conduct cross-border runs and are subject for example to the New York State, Department of Transportation regulations.

Employers are permitted and required to take measures to ensure a safe workplace. With the exception of medical marijuana, it will be perfectly acceptable for an employer to outright prohibit the use of recreational marijuana, illicit drugs and alcohol in the workplace subject to consideration of human rights laws.

While we compare the management of the legalization of cannabis in the workplace to the management of alcohol, the detection of cannabis impairment is likely more complex and uniquely difficult to detect and/or measure consistently.

Employers are encouraged to review the status of their current workplace rules, policies and employment contracts. Create a policy that incorporates cannabis use and addresses the unique treatment of medical marijuana and proper use of prescription drugs.

Policies should include reference to cannabis, alcohol, medical marijuana, medications and/or other intoxicants that may cause impairment and affect your workplace. Consider a protocol for disclosure of dependency/addiction issues and non-disciplinary protocols where it is suspected that an employee is struggling with dependency issues. Identify employee assistance plans available to accommodate employee needs through a rehabilita-

tion/treatment program.

Consider questions regarding possession of cannabis at the workplace even if it is inaccessible and out of sight. Some employers may prohibit possession of cannabis at work where the workplace is one that is safety sensitive. Others will prohibit possession on the basis that possession makes access and use easier.

Consider that legalization will likely normalize cannabis in society. Will your policy permit the gift giving of cannabis similar to the gift of wine or alcohol? Will it prohibit the gifting of cannabis paraphernalia?

Several workplace policies may have an exemption to possession and consumption of alcohol during social events. Will your policy permit consumption of cannabis during social events? Consider the balance of obligations under health and safety and human rights laws. Consider any impact that it may have on others in the workplace with scent sensitivities or allergies to cannabis that must be accommodated under our human rights legislation.

Several employers may permit a dress down day or “casual Fridays.” Are employees currently permitted to wear clothing containing alcohol logos at work or outside work when representing the company? Will the same apply to cannabis?

Consider on-call policies in the context of remaining fit for work.

Ensure that your testing policy, if any, is clear as to process and procedure. Most importantly, given concerns over existing testing technology, keep track of the latest updates in testing technology and case law around drug and alcohol testing in Canada.

Of course, workplace education and training on these issues is key. Ensure that all employees, particularly managers, are aware of identifying the signs of impairment and that all employees understand your policy and their joint responsibility in facilitating workplace safety.

The use of drugs and alcohol and the impact on today’s workplace has been and will continue to be a complex issue. Understanding the legal implications of legalization on your workplace is imperative. **BL**

Leanne Standryk is a senior partner at Lancaster Brooks & Welch LLP and works within the Labour & Employment department. If you require her assistance on a labour or employment issue, she may be contacted at 905.641.1551.



BY TIM ARNOLD

Have you ever heard a senior leader say this before: “I can’t believe how much that person is struggling since I put them in a leadership role. They seemed to have management-material written all over them.” Or have you ever heard a person who is relatively new to management say something like this: “I waited for my whole career for a leadership opportunity like this. But now that I’m managing people, I’m starting to question if I have what it takes.”

All too often, the careers of new managers fall apart to the surprise of themselves and to those who put them into their role. They seem full of leadership potential yet fail to deliver on this potential once given the opportunity to lead. There are a lot of reasons why this can happen, but in my twenty years of experience working with organizations that range in size and scope from high-tech start-ups to divisions of the United Nations, the most predictable reason that the careers of new managers fail to launch is due to three unavoidable tensions: Control vs. Empowerment

- Being a Boss vs. Being a Friend
- Focusing on My Part of the Organization vs. Focusing on the Whole Organization
- Control vs. Empowerment

Managers are responsible! This means that they need to hold on to some sort of control over the work and behaviours of their team. They need to ensure things are done properly and in a way that’s effective and efficient. At the same time, managers need to empower their team members so they have the freedom to develop into their full potential. This means giving them space to thrive, and at times, to make mistakes. The problem is the values of control and empowerment are

often in unhealthy tension with one another.

If a manager over-focuses on control to the neglect of empowerment, team members feel micromanaged and believe their passion and potential is being diminished. Beyond this, overdone control kills productivity because the manager must be connected to everything that happens.

At the same time, if a manager over-focuses on empowerment to the neglect of control, they set team members up for failure because they don’t provide them with the development and support they need to succeed. These managers also live in a state of perpetual anxiety because they never truly trust in the abilities of their team.

Stay tuned for the second installment of this three-part series, where we’ll dig deeper into the tension between Being a Boss vs. Being a Friend, and Focusing on My Part of the Organization vs. Focusing on the Whole Organization.

In the first installment of this three-part series, we identified the three tensions that will make or break the career of a new manager, and looked specifically at the first tension, Control vs. Empowerment. Now we’ll go deeper into the other two tensions:

Being a Boss vs. Being a Friend

Once a manager is given a team to lead, they need to assume the responsibilities of being a boss. This can mean holding people accountable, having uncomfortable conversations, and ensuring there’s consistency and fairness throughout the team. At the same time, the best bosses are also seen as a friend to those they lead. This doesn’t mean they have to go for drinks after work and be “friends” on social media. But it does mean they truly know and care for each team member. They believe in each person and everyone on their teams knows this is the case. Unfortunately, being a boss and a friend can be incredibly challenging and result in a lot of tension.

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Being a Boss vs. Being a Friend

Once a manager is given a team to lead, they need to assume the responsibilities of being a boss. This can mean holding people accountable, having uncomfortable conversations, and ensuring there's consistency and fairness throughout the team. At the same time, the best bosses are also seen as a friend to those they lead. This doesn't mean they have to go for drinks after work and be "friends" on social media. But it does mean they truly know and care for each team member. They believe in each person and everyone on their teams knows this is the case. Unfortunately, being a boss and a friend can be incredibly challenging and result in a lot of tension.

Over-focusing on being a boss to the neglect of being a friend results in team members not feeling cared for and seen simply as a tool being used to get things done. This often leads to high turnover, an unpleasant team culture, and people only living up to the minimum expectations of their job description.

Over-focusing on being a friend to the neglect of being a boss is just as dangerous. Crucial but uncomfortable conversations around performance are often avoided in order to preserve the friendship. Decision making is often skewed because the leader is thinking too much about "How will this impact my team relationships?" instead of "What's the best option for the organization?"

Focusing on My Part of the Organization vs. Focusing on the Whole Organization

One of the biggest challenges a new manager will face is they're now responsible for their part of the organization. This means they need to be incredibly focused on the productivity of their division and the culture of their team. At the same time, they need to ensure their part is connected to, and working in alignment with, the whole organization (i.e. all the other parts). This means they need to be communicating and collaborating with other teams, departments, and divisions. It also means they need to make decisions that don't only benefit themselves, their bottom-line, and their team members, but benefit everyone in the organization. Similar to the tensions above, focusing on their part while at the same time focusing on the whole is often easier said than done.

When managers over-focus on their part of the organization to the neglect of the whole, they start to create divisions within the company. Regardless of how well their part of the organization is doing, they're not aligned with what's going on in the rest of the company. When this happens, teams become divided from other teams, and the company develops what's often referred to as a silo mentality, where the benefits of collaboration, communication and innovation are stifled.

When managers over-focus on the whole organization to the detriment of their part, their team often feels neglected and believes their unique needs are not being understood and fought for. This can also lead to unnecessary bureaucracy and red-tape because managers require too many meetings, consultations and approvals before they give their team the freedom they need to get things done in an effective way.

In the first two installments of this three-part series, we took a look at three tensions that will make or break a new managers career – Control vs Empowerment, Being a Boss vs. Being a Friend, and Focusing on My Part of the Organization vs. Focusing on the Whole

Organization. Now for the good news! Learn how managers can leverage these tensions as a competitive advantage.

There's Hope!

The bad news is these three tensions – Control vs. Empowerment, Being a Boss vs. Being a Friend, and Part vs. Whole – are unsolvable and unavoidable. Similar to the tension found in breathing between inhaling and exhaling, it's just a part of life. And believing that you can choose one side of any of the three tensions (i.e. choosing to just be a boss, or only focus on empowerment, or simply focus on your team) is as futile as waking up in the morning and deciding that today you're just going to inhale. It won't work!

The good news is these tensions can be managed and even leveraged. There are three easy steps every new manager can take to ensure these tensions are working for them, and not against them.

Step One – Identify

In my book, *The Power of Healthy Tension*, I say that "seeing is relieving." When a new manager can identify and name the key tensions they're already feeling and potentially wrestling with, they experience a huge amount of relief. It becomes clear they aren't dealing with this tension because they're doing something wrong, or because they don't have the skills to succeed. Instead, the opposite is true. These are foundational tensions to effective leadership, and the more they can get used to them, and even comfortable with them, the more they'll have the wisdom and resilience they need to thrive.

Step Two – Assess

New managers should constantly be checking in with the health of these tensions. How close do they resemble the metaphor of breathing, where the tension between inhaling and exhaling happens in a healthy and almost effortless way? This assessment can be done through ongoing personal reflection, and deliberate conversations with both supervisors and team members.

Step Three – Leverage

Leveraging something means to take advantage of it. The energy that comes from these three tensions is something new managers can tap into in a powerful way. This comes from seeking out conversations with team members and colleagues who have a different point of view than your own; fostering a team culture that embraces tension and diverse opinions instead of avoiding them, and decision making based on the whole truth as opposed to just part of the truth that's aligned with my bias or point of view.

Tension as a Competitive Advantage

Unfortunately, the careers of high-potential emerging leaders often fail to launch because they aren't able to recognize and manage three unavoidable tensions. This results in new managers giving up and giving in, and companies failing to have the leadership they need to scale and win. But it doesn't have to be this way.

In his groundbreaking book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins found that leaders who were truly great, and organizations who out-performed their competition decade after decade, did not accept "The Tyranny of the OR but instead embraced The Genius of the AND." This means that instead of avoiding these key leadership tensions, great managers need to embrace the power of Control AND Empowerment, Being a Boss AND Being a Friend, and Focusing on My Part AND Focusing on the Whole.

Leaders who achieve healthy tension between these conflicting values outperform those who don't and possess a competitive advantage that's rare and powerful. **BL**



How to Move Customers Past Price

BY JEFF MOWATT

Do your team members ever give you this excuse when your company loses a customer? "Our competitors are hammering us on price. That's why we're losing business." It's a convenient excuse that puts the blame on those nasty competitors. But the truth is, most customers don't buy based on price alone. If that were true we'd all live in the cheapest homes, buy the cheapest vehicles, and every time we went out to eat, we'd always eat fast food. As you know, customers buy based on overall perceived value. The question becomes, what do today's customer value to such a degree they will willingly pay a premium? The answers may surprise you.

WHAT CUSTOMERS REALLY WANT

Having worked with over 400 client organizations and conducted surveys of over 11,000 of their customers, we discovered there are some 35 factors that customers consider (often subconsciously) when they decide to pay a premium. Here are two that I talk about in my training seminars and speeches.

SELECTION IS OVER RATED

Today's customers suffer from decision fatigue. It begins first thing in the morning when they decide what to wear, which lane to drive in, and which of the hundreds of emails or posts on their portable devices are worth their attention. So when it comes to buying something, the last thing customers want is a large selection that makes choosing complicated.

What customers really want in today's world of too much clutter is what I call A.I.D. - Analysis, Interpretation, and Direction. Customers want you to analyze the various options available for that customer, interpret those options based on the customer's individual needs, and direct the customer to a maximum of three choices. In other words, for complex purchases, customers don't want to work with an order taker.

What they value is a trusted advisor.

DON'T BE BETTER, BE DIFFERENT

When it comes to discussing your offerings with potential customers, claiming your product or service is better than the competition, won't likely motivate them to switch to you. Chances are your established competitors are not selling junk. In customers' minds, if what they're currently buying is reasonably good, then it's not worth the risk and hassle of switching over to you for a slight improvement in quality. Unless you're offering something that provides a different - as opposed to better - way to achieve an outcome, customers often stick with the devil they know.

That brings us to how you communicate your uniqueness. After listening to the customer's specific needs, describe to them the conventional solutions to their particular problem. Then explain that given the customer's unique needs, conventional approaches won't achieve the desired outcome, and how they may instead create unintended negative consequences. Then reveal how you are bringing a different type of solution; one that addresses their unique needs while avoiding undesirable consequences. Now the customer sees you as significantly different and price becomes less relevant.

BOTTOM LINE

Trying to beat your competitors' prices is rarely a profitable strategy; especially if you're not a huge organization with massive economies of scale. Instead, remember that what customers really want is greater overall value. Often getting your customers to move beyond price simply means training your team members to change the way they talk with customers. To boost your profits and market share, could it be time for a tune-up of your team's customer communications skills? **BL**

*This article is based on the bestselling book, *Influence with Ease* by Hall of Fame motivational speaker, Jeff Mowatt. To obtain your own copy of his book or to inquire about engaging Jeff for your team, visit www.jeffmowatt.com.*