

Command and Control;
is there another way?

MANAGERS

“The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.”

Ralph Nader

The contract between employer and employee has changed. Management has been about control – providing procedures and systems that combat people having to think things through. These procedures managed to the lowest common denominator and mean that work functions are mostly compliant. But they certainly don't allow staff to sparkle.

Today we have an incessant discussion about customer service and how we attain increasingly higher levels of service. We often look to the service providers (general staff) to improve the way they talk to customers. Is that the answer? Could we look more to ourselves to create the change?

Today's world is one governed by technology that increases speed and information available. People provide the link between the technology and products and services with their customers – it is the relationships that mark out the differentiators in today's world. Relationships need to start with us – as managers. If you are unable to connect with your staff, how can you expect staff to connect with customers? You are their role model.

Activity

Use this short activity to work out how you can lead by example and build teams that truly care about the people they are dealing with; People who notice when something isn't right or doesn't sound right; People who notice when someone is struggling or there is litter on the floor; People who are aware of their environment and the relationships they develop. You become the person who notices first and wants to do something about it – it is your job as a manager to get the best out of people and you will only do that if you ...

Move away from your computer, your emails and your project plans... make and spend time understanding, noticing and questioning – be the example to others

Action

About You - Simply my role

This challenge will help you to consider your own ability to take a complex idea (the purpose of your job) and break it down into a simple course of action. Simplifying ideas for effective communication is no easy thing. It's easy to think that because we understand something in our own heads, it will be clear to those around us.

Getting something to happen in any kind of organisation is hard. If you can't explain the subject and gain support, it's impossible to make progress. Sometimes job titles do not convey the essence of your work. This is an opportunity to think about what you really need to do.

Action

Use a side of A4 to describe your current job. Take it to 2 people in another department to discuss your current role and its focus. In doing so focus on:

- What is the purpose of your role?
- What actions would make you exceptional in your role?
- What actions do you need to avoid to ensure success?

Imagine you have been tasked with the job of being the single role model in the company by the MD or CEO – what would you have to do?

Ask your team what actions you could take that would make a positive difference to them in their job... if some of the ideas are frivolous ask them to tell you how you doing x will help them achieve improved results – this open communication helps to redefine relationships.

In a sentence sum up what the purpose of your role is (if it helps, try to think of it as a slogan as if you were advertising your job on telly);

and/ or, create an image that describes your role.

When people ask you at a party what you do – think about your ‘new’ definition compared to before – is it more compelling? – does it fill you with pride? – it should!

For interest – take a few minutes to guess what these people do....

Here are some jobs that have been described by the people doing the job – see if you can guess what they are. Once you have guessed take a look at the list on the bottom of the page for the answers – these are really inspiring because they appreciate how what they do makes a difference to others!

‘I help to put men into space.’

‘I save the lives of premature babies.’

‘I create a sense of civic pride.’

‘I ensure people have healthy hearts’

‘I help couples put the romance back into their lives.’

Top tips

Essential behaviours of today’s successful managers

- **Review your own performance** and accept that you are always in a position to learn from your experiences.
- **Ask your team for feedback** and find out what they want from you.
- **Develop high self-esteem** and self-confidence. As an effective manager you will need to be able to recognise your good points and your successes.
- **Ask questions and listen.** Develop the technique of asking open and probing questions to get to the root of issues.
- **Give people your full attention** when they are speaking and you will earn their respect as well as learning useful information.
- **Acknowledge the efforts of other people.** Individuals learn best in environments of high expectation and positive feedback not by being told what they have done wrong.
- **Build close and dependable relationships** founded on mutual respect

- **Monitor performance** and check that everything is on target. Encourage people to monitor and evaluate their own performance
- **Resist the temptation to complain and blame.** If something isn’t right see what you can do to fix it
- **Deal effectively with criticism.** Ask for clarification and specifics and identify what needs to happen to put the problem right

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Toilet cleaner at NASA 2. Production line worker making valves for special care baby incubators 3. Graffiti remover 4. Mackerel gutter 5. Rose fertilizer packer |
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