

*Hudson Valley*

# BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## Aspire Higher

### Leading Today's Organizations

We have moved away from the former traditional definition of a leader as one who is responsible for measuring, monitoring and demanding production or results. We now require our leaders to be mentors and coaches. It may be difficult for some internal managers to transition to this model as old habits die hard. Let's look at the differences between a traditional manager and a coach manager and the differences in their behaviors:

#### ***Managing merely for results - versus - Developing the strengths of the employee***

Employees do their best when working in their areas of strength. Things come naturally and are easy and a joy to complete. How hard they work is not an issue as work is almost like play.

#### ***"You report to me" - versus - "Tell me how I can help"***

No longer do employees look to us to tell them what to do but rather they look for ways to be supported in the things they do best that are aligned with the organizational goals.

#### ***Babysitting the employees' smallness - versus - Challenging the employees to be great***

This is easy. ASK your employees what they love to do in their work and let them do more of that.

#### ***Creating adrenaline through deadlines -versus - Fostering a culture of early delivery***

Model this behavior. No one performs at their best with a gun to their head. Find ways to support ongoing results rather than last minute outcomes.

#### ***Manager saying, "I'm watching you" - versus - Manager saying, "You're my customer"***

This creates a valued relationship with your employee. Most people want to do their best. Use your creativity to find ways you can support this. Set the tone for risk taking and problem solving. Constraints limit creativity. If your workplace must be constrained, for whatever reason, don't expect out of the box thinking in a world of lines and boxes.

#### ***Pointing out failures or errors of staff - versus - Endorsing effort and growth***

We do our best working in our strengths, rather than against our weaknesses. For example, if deadlines are a component of a job and an otherwise valuable employee cannot fit the model, regardless of what you do, find out why and then consider whether you can restructure the job.

#### ***Meeting the needs of the company - versus - Contributing significantly more than was asked***

You can only move to this level when you have engaged your employees in the work they do. When they are engaged, they will do more because they love what they do.

***Solving all the problems - versus - Help staff solve and prevent problems***

Employees know the answers. We should ask the questions, and then allow them to be creative about the answers.

***Asking an employee to change behavior - versus - Asking an employee to learn new ways to do things***

This aligns directly with supporting your employee's strengths. You might need to admit they have one in an area you do not!

***Tiptoeing around staff problems - versus - Asking the straight questions no one is willing to address***

When you are aligned with and know your employees, this will no longer be a problem.

***Succumbing to apathy, disappointment - versus - Creating opportunities in the face of none***

Our current economic environment offers this in abundance. What can you do to view these as opportunities and then convey that to those who work for and with you?

***Tolerating staff performance - versus - Substantially raising new standards***

Ongoing improvement in results is the goal. How can you play on your own and your staff's strengths to get there? Everyone enjoys meeting and exceeding goals. How can you set this up?

***Trying to figure out how to manage - versus - Asking staff how they are best managed***

One of the simplest suggestions...ASK, and then LISTEN to the answers.

***Not having a life outside work - versus - Having it all, with work in perspective***

Specifically, there is not a "balance" but a perspective that allows for our world of changing priorities.

***Asking everyone to look like the company Mascot—to celebrating individuality***

This is the ultimate and often most difficult part of a manager's job. Ideally, you would start with the tasks that need to be completed in your organization, and a similar list of talents your employees have. Match tasks with talents for tasks. Watch productivity and retention grow.

Not everyone has the skills needed to be a manager and leader. That is not bad. Recognize if it is not one of your skills and move into a job that supports what you do best. You might also consider finding others within or outside your organization right now who can do what you cannot.

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