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Bad Managers Are Costing You 73% Of Your Employee Productivity

By Amy Potavin

This may come as a surprise but it is, unfortunately, the reality. According to a recent Gallup study,

only 29% of the workers polled were actively engaged in their work. And what, you're probably asking, exactly IS employee engagement? That is a very good question, and simply stated, it is the level of connection your employee has with you, your company, and the work you have him perform.

The really scary information about this poll is the fact that a full 59% of the workers polled by Gallup stated that they were simply sleepwalking through their day. They were showing up to work to put in their time, but felt no connection with their companies, and therefore no remorse over the fact that they were not performing to their full ability.

On top of that, 14% of the workers polled actually said that they were not only unhappy in their jobs, but that they were **ACTIVELY WORKING TO SABOTAGE** the efforts of their colleagues. These workers are actually showing up to work just to **COST YOU MONEY!**

So, why is this happening? Well, according to Gallup studies, a full 84% of people polled stated that they believe business executives have, at best, mediocre ethical standards (rating just above politicians, car salesmen and telemarketers.) In addition, 20% of people polled were dissatisfied with their immediate, front line supervisor.

So it seems that the largest problem, by far, is **BAD MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS**. Now it's your job to go find them. To assist you in this quest, I have assembled a list of the most common culprits. I guarantee you, there will be at least one of these characters floating around your workplace.

ARE YOU READY TO RUMBLE???

First up on the list is, of course, the "Bully." We all remember this person from school, if not from the desk right next to us. This manager is loud, obnoxious, over-bearing, often angry, and leads only through intimidation. The "Bully" has no respect for you, or your employees.

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This creates an atmosphere of fear and suspicion. Your employees do not know where they stand, and are probably spending more time trying to cover their tracks (simply to avoid getting yelled at) than performing meaningful work for your organization.

E=mc²

Although the hallowed halls of science have a place for the "Professor," the speed of business does not allow for such analysis paralysis. This manager simply can not make a decision unless ALL facts are accounted for and unless ALL the information is perfect. It is impossible for the "Professor" to trust anyone other than himself. Therefore, he forces your employees to re-do their work over, and over, and over.

This does absolutely nothing except demotivate your employees. They lose their autonomy and creativity. Worse still, your employees begin to lose faith in their own abilities because they can not seem to get anything right for this manager. The question your employees start to ask themselves is

"Why am I even trying? I'm just going to have to do it over anyway!"

YEE HAH!!! IT'S THE WILD, WILD, WEST!!!

Yessir, ladies and gentlemen; it's the "Gunslinger." As the name might suggest, this manager shoots from the hip, and once you are in his sights, your days are numbered. This manager shoots to kill based only on gut reactions; without regard to the consequences, or to the facts at hand. Interestingly, this manager also ACTIVELY seek out evidence to support his gut reactions, whether or not his opinion is correct.

The problem with this manager is that your employees never know who is next in his sights; so they have absolutely no sense of stability. Therefore, your employees are more apt to be working the rumor mill, rather than their actual work, just so that they can create some sense of stability.

I WANNA BE A REAL LIVE BOY!

The favorite expression for this manager is "He's the Boss!" therefore earning this manager the title of the "Puppet." Typically, this manager is subservient to the "Gunslinger" or the "Bully" but can be subservient to anyone in authority if he is actually wimp enough.

The sad fact for this manager is that he will ATTEMPT to make their opinions and observations known, but will unflinchingly back down in the face of righteous confrontation. This creates distrust and uncertainty among your employees because this manager will SPEAK what he thinks, but will DO what the boss wants, whether or not he agrees. Therefore, your employees, again, do not know where they stand and will spend time, and energy, trying to figure that out rather than working.

GOT BAIT???

The "Worm" is the hardest to find, and probably one of the most dangerous. This manager is an expert

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manipulator and rises up through the ranks not through their own expertise and good works, but rather through the alliances they make. Unfortunately, those alliances are usually made through personal connections; such as being friends with the boss' wife.

This manager will have literally wormed their way into every faction of your organization. And because the alliances ARE personal in nature, the entire management team will have lost their ability to be objective about the "Worm's" talents, abilities, and contributions; leaving you all vulnerable to the "Worm's" manipulations.

Unfortunately for you, your employees are smart. You see, the truly dangerous aspect of this manager is the fact that your employees SEE THAT YOU ARE BEING MANIPULATED!!! So, why on earth would they want to follow a leader who can so easily be lead astray? The answer is simply, they DON'T; and they WON'T follow you. Oh, they will show up and collect their checks, but their energies, ambitions, creativity, and innovations will be spent elsewhere.

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH!!!

Welcome to the big tent because this is the domain of the "Ringmaster." This manager is the diva of the corporate world and believes that EVERYTHING centers on him. Because of this, the "Ringmaster" simply can not tolerate competition in any form; even if it comes in the form of the success of one of his

subordinates. Rather than see a colleague or subordinate successful (aka competitor) this manager will sabotage that worker's efforts; even if it means sacrificing that employee.

Unfortunately, this creates a sense of drama, distrust, and anger among your employees. They see that their work is sabotaged, or outright stolen, and are instantly demotivated. Instead of trying again to get their inspirations and ideas in the spotlight, your workers will simply shut down and begin operating on auto-pilot.

WHO'S ON FIRST???

This manager could have given Lou Costello a run for his money. The "Clown" has truly been promoted to the maximum level of his incompetence. The sad truth about this manager is that he could not lead a group of people out of a paper bag with two hands and a flashlight!

Your employees need (and will) only ask one question: "WHY?"

Now that you have identified the culprits, you need to determine are these qualities the predominant qualities of your managers? If so, then you have some hard decisions to make about your management team, and some drastic actions to take. Are you ready to do anything about your bad managers?

The simple fact is that most people (84% of people polled in fact) believe that you will do NOTHING! That is why most people do not have faith in the ethical standards of business executives. And though it might be easier for you to avoid the confrontation and the disruption a change in managers will

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cause, doing nothing will only serve to compound and validate the majority opinion.

The bottom line is can you afford to loose 73% of your employee's productivity? What do you think your stakeholders would say?

Then what are you going to do about it?

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For more statistical information, see the Gallup Study at

<http://gmj.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci770&pg=1>

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Setting Performance Standards for your Employees

By Megan Tough

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The success of your business is directly related to the commitment and productivity of the people who work in your business. And yet it is generally recognized that 60% of employees, or more, are underutilized in their roles at work.

So what are the factors that contribute to low performance standards and expectations?

Communication, or mis–communciation, is one of the major sources of low productivity. The messages that move between the owner, employees, managers and even customers are not understood in the same way. One classic example is that business owners tend to assume that employees and managers see things the same way they do.

Managers tend to lower their expectations (unconsciously) so that they will not have to confront employees. Most people dislike discussing declining performance with their employees, and so actively avoid having to do so by reducing heir expectations of what's required.

Employees have a tendency to protect themselves from possible failure by pushing back on what is expected. They will often negotiate/bargain the job down to a more comfortable level.

Business owners often have difficulty separating what they want done from how they want it done.

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Telling employees exactly how to achieve a certain goal leaves no room for the employee to think or use their own initiative. Consequently they often stop trying to contribute and become "sheep" - just doing what they are told. In this catch-22 situation, the owner is forced into a position where they must constantly be telling everyone exactly what to do.

Some owners may not understand the concept of person/job matching, and so have the wrong people in the wrong positions. This situation can be extremely demotivating for the employee.

So how do you go about setting performance standards and expectations?

The owner and employee must collaborate together.

They must work together on the fact that the role the employee is performing can be improved in a way where everybody wins – the employee, the owner, and the business. When you teach the owner to collaborate with the employee, not only does the performance go up, but so does the morale.

Short term goals, or wins, must be established. 90-days is the ideal.

Set specific goals for the employee in 90-day increments so that there will be ample opportunity to monitor systems and progress, as well as to experience wins on a routine basis. Ideally, involve the employee in this goal setting process so they experience some control over their work.

Determine the strengths required to do the job well.

If the employee is going to be successful, the owner and employee must decide jointly what strengths

are required, and how the employee is going to be able to apply their strengths. This is where having a good match between the employee and the job is so important. The boss doesn't have to figure this out on their own – the employee will probably already know what's necessary.

Set standards, and determine HOW they will be done.

Decide the standards that will apply to each activity, as well as how the standards will be achieved.

Understanding the level of performance required gives the employee a sense of achievement – which is one of the key ingredients to achieving performance standards. This is true for employees at any level.

Establish communication agreements.

To ensure success, the owner and employee must decide at the outset how they are going to communicate progress (and challenges) along the way. Will it be day-to-day? Week-to-week? The minimum time frame is week-to-week. Less frequent than that and it all falls apart.

The employee decides how to achieve the desired results.

The owner will be present and participating for this part, but it is essential that the employee be leading the process in order for them to have ownership. Help the employee take responsibility for deciding how to accomplish the results. You may need to determine if the employee has the skills and development to do this. If they don't, provide maximum guidance to them.

Get it in writing.

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If it is not in writing, within one to two weeks everyone will be confused and uncertain. The focus, responsibility, resources, constraints, timetables and measures all need to be in writing. The purpose of doing this is to make sure the owner and employee are so clear on the goals and process that there is no confusion whatsoever. It sets everyone

Establish a monitoring method.

Make sure you get agreement on how the performance will be monitored and how frequently. In order for the process to go forward, the employee needs to agree to monitor their own performance, and the owner must agree to sit down and review it with the employee on a pre-determined schedule. Let them know upfront that if they get busy and start canceling meetings, performance will not improve and expectations will not be met.

I recommend having the employee keep track of their progress in writing and advise the owner weekly. A simple weekly progress update is a win-win solution and can take as little as 5 minutes. A monthly sit-down, face-to-face meeting is a must also.

What are the benefits of setting effective performance standards and expectations?

Employees are energized and empowered to take ownership of their positions.

Owners become energized and inspired, ceasing to lower expectations in order to avoid confrontation.

The productivity of the company goes up.

Everyone knows what is expected of them, which provides certainty to move forward.

This process, itself, opens new channels of communication between owners and employees.

Megan Tough, director of Action Plus, works with small business professionals who are ready to do more than 'just get by'. Increase your income – decrease your stress! To learn more and to sign up for more FREE tips and articles like these, visit www.megantough.com



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