

Stop Doing and Start Managing

Manage sales and service people.



by John Baldoni

ARE YOU DOING EVERYONE else's work for them? Do you spend hours helping your people do what they were hired to do? Do you spend nights and weekends at the office, trying to make sure your team meets its goals?

It's a common mistake of sales and service managers—acting like players or employees rather than the person in charge. You must learn the first rule of management: managers do not do—they enable.

Management provides the help and resources to others to enable them to do their jobs. What managers do all too often is think and act like employees instead of managers. The results are worse than cuts and burnout—they are often the cause of lower production, weak performance, poor morale, and career burnout. Often the problem lies with a manager not understanding his job. After all, you were promoted into management by being a gifted salesperson with a talent for problem solving and creative thinking. You were never trained to be a great manager.

This shortcoming occurs often. Men and women are thrust into management positions for which they are ill-prepared, and the results can be disastrous.

Becoming a manager requires a letting go of everything you have been doing in order to move into a role that requires you help others do what you have been doing. Instead of being a salesperson or service provider, you become a sales or service manager with management responsibilities. You have to think and do differently.

What You Can Do

So what can you do to prepare for management? Here are 10 key things:

Develop. Grow your manager as you grow your employees. Managers are the linchpins. While they may be adept at their core competency, they need to learn the skills of management—such as planning, delegation, and evaluation. Keep them learning, and they will pay for their salaries many times over. Forget them, and

they will cost their organizations many times their salary.

Educate. Most business schools have executive education programs. If those are not practical, check out the local community college. Many run programs for first-time supervisors.

Train. While training and development are used interchangeably, management training refers to the basics of the administrative discipline. Depending upon the field, the basics may include courses in accounting, database management, and inventory control as well as ethics and business law.

Mentor. Successful mentoring programs often begin before the manager



assumes a supervisory position. The mentoring need not involve a senior leader; it could involve someone in another department one level above the new manager. Allow a relationship to develop.

Think. No matter what your intention, no matter what your drive, you could only be as good as what you planned. And if you want to plan, you need to think. Think ahead. And as a manager, think of the consequences of action (what will happen if I do this?) as well as inaction (what will happen if I do nothing?). That's turning thinking into an action step and, by extension, a sound management practice.

Communicate. People need to know what they are supposed to do and what is expected of them. That is why managers must become relentless communicators who speak clearly, listen always, and learn from what they see and hear. Be seen as well as heard. Walk the halls. Eat in the company cafeteria. Learn to ask questions as a means of finding out what is going on

and also demonstrating that you care.

Administer. Administration combines the dexterity of a pianist with the deftness of a magician. *Minister*, from which the word derives, manages the details of projects. The discipline of management is getting things done through a series of transactions.

Support. The role of a manager is akin to that of a coach. Managers cease to do the "actual work," i.e., the accounting, the engineering, the purchasing, or whatever. They enable their people to do it. It requires great self-discipline to stop doing something in which you have excelled in order to take on a support role. In other words, you stop playing the game and you stand on the sidelines. The difference is you are not a spectator; you are a coach, helping the others to play the game to their very best abilities.

Reflect. Managers are evaluated by their accomplishments. "What did you do today" is the mantra to which most managers adhere. So much so that they do not take the time to reflect on what they have done and how they got there. The late former president of Saturn, Skip LeFauve, an engineer turned executive, suggested that managers make time for reflection by scheduling it.

Lead. Managers must incorporate elements of leadership into their managerial practice. The most important of which is a sense of personal leadership; that is, the feeling that "I can make a positive difference." From that mindset springs the sense of leading others. Leadership is about doing what is right and good for individuals and the organization. It is about moving people forward to a better place. Leaders, like managers, will make hard decisions about people issues: hiring, job assignments, promotions, and terminations. They must also look over the horizon at what is coming next. Most importantly, leaders lead from a people point of view, helping people do their work and achieve their potential. You can't have effective leadership without effective management. And often the reverse is true. Managers should aspire to lead, and leaders should respect the discipline of management.

With the right preparation and mindset, management can be a fulfilling career option—one that leads to powerful self-awareness and a greater ability to get things done through the efforts of others. All it takes is a willingness to learn, grow, and develop. **SSE**

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