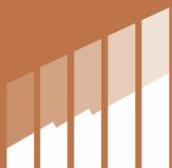# Managing Up:
Developing Future Leaders in the Workplace

MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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SESSION OUTLINE

I.   Defining managing up

II.   The employment relationship

III.   Identifying success factors for future leaders

IV.   Nurturing success through behavioral and tactical means

DEFINING MANAGING UP

WHAT DOES **MANAGING UP** MEAN?

"**Managing up** by definition means being the most effective employee you can be, creating value for your boss and your company." (Harvard Business Review, 2015)

An effective career begins with this fundamental concept. Employees who routinely change the chemistry of their workplace for the better, are in fact, your most valuable assets.

Managing up is focused on the employee expending effort to make the employment relationship work, gain valuable opportunities and identifying ways to grow beyond their distinct position while completing their key work.

These employees are often dubbed top performers, overachievers, key-employees, difference makers, and the like.

Employees who do not **manage up** are likely expending organizational capital. Investment in professional development activities, recruitment, retention and a career are some of the most expensive employer costs.

Employees who are singularly focused on their career without recognizing their impact and opportunities, are tourists within the organization and they create side effects that impact the culture of the organization.

EXERCISE ONE

How do you define successful people in your organization?

Think about the most effective people in your organization. When people hear their name, what do those people think?

List under the characteristics – their actions, their beliefs, what do they value? How do they communicate? What do they do that demonstrates effectiveness?

Name of #1 Staff	Characteristics

Now, transition: Name the most difficult staff person.

List under the characteristics – their actions, their beliefs, what do they value? How do they communicate? What do they do that demonstrates effectiveness?

Name of Most Difficult Staff	Characteristics

THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

Experts in human resources often put the crux of the employee – manager relations on the manager. Many popular management magazines attribute the culture of the environment on the management team; their actions, lack of action and simultaneously leave out the employee accountability factor.

A RELATIONSHIP IS A TWO-PARTY ENDEAVOR

POPULAR HUMAN RESOURCE MYTHS

True	False	The employment relationship is Management's responsibility.
True	False	Bad employee-supervisor relationship is management's fault.
True	False	Employees have no control of their relationship with their boss.
True	False	Managers automatically know how to create relationships with subordinates.
True	False	Feelings of the employees are what are most important.
True	False	The culture of the organization is determined by the employee's feelings of acceptance and support.
True	False	The manager controls all dynamics in the workplace.
True	False	Managers are responsible for creating a small part of the relationship of the employee and the organization.
True	False	Managers are stressed about deadlines and multiple priorities.
True	False	Managers have challenges in the workplace.
True	False	Employees have pressure to perform.
True	False	There are only absolutes in the work place.
True	False	Nothing is unmanageable.

Relationships are tricky in the workplace – establishing a rapport and an effective relationship is essential to the short and long-term goals of the organization. Understanding communication styles is as important when dealing with managers as it is when dealing with employees.

Like a tree falling in the woods; your boss has stress whether he or she shows it to you or not.

CREATING A RELATIONSHIP

Creating a relationship in the workplace follows many of the established norms of society. Although rules, regulations and policies ensure a diversity among organizations, high performing organizations find that by defining the fundamental relationship initially through values they can hone into an effective culture focused on production and success.

Fundamental relationship components include:

- ◯ Similar values, beliefs, interests
- ◯ Mutual respect
- ◯ Similar goals and means to acquire those goals
- ◯ Communication
- ◯ Balance and understanding of power
- ◯ Defined roles and responsibilities

HOW TO CHANGE THE APPROACH

Approach the relationship with "I want to be effective for you and the organization."

Have empathy – consider being in your boss's shoes; look at the decisions he or she has made; consider their communication style; where they are comfortable and uncomfortable.

Consciously think about strategies to assist your boss with their week.

Be visible, but not constantly in your boss's space. Do not be stand offish or aloof.

Adjust your communication style to meet your boss's communication on a neutral level, and look for opportunities to communicate where they are comfortable.

Be "of service".

Help your boss achieve wins and be successful; when opportunities arise for quick wins and operational efficiencies, point them out with a strategy – allow the boss to launch the initiative, act and be a part of the team to find solution. The faster this happens in the work place, the better off the cohesion of the work place will occur.

Engage your boss in the process; connect them, be connected as an employee.

EXERCISES ON HOW TO SET THE TONE

Ask your boss – "what is on your plate this week and what one thing can I take that will make a difference and free up some time for those unexpected items?"

What does this say?

What does this not say?

Report back – "hey, I completed X – and this is what I found _____ and this is what I learned_____."

What does this say?

What does this not say?

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ASSISTANCE

Helping the fiercely competitive, independent, and successful can be very difficult. Assistance as a word, has a connotation in the workplace that indicates subservient and in need.

= helplessness

= unable to do it

Can a manager/boss do all things on their own?

Can an employee do all things on their own?

Do not start with demands and expectations that the boss will meet all the individual personal and professional needs.

Your needs are your responsibilities

Have a good understanding of your boss and of yourself – your strengths, weaknesses, work styles, goals and pressures.

Build a healthy working relationship leveraging that information with shared expectations, mutual respect and critical needs are met.

IDENTIFYING SUCCESS FACTORS FOR FUTURE LEADERS

There is a perception that people are tough to manage; if we set the tone, recalibrate action, activity and rewards, we can better manage expectations, results, and create a synergy with our teams.

To create opportunities for growth for future leaders, time must be spent consciously discussing those elements that will lead to organizational and individual success.

◯ Define success.

> What does success mean to the organization?
> What does success mean to the employee?
> What does success mean to the manager?

◯ Look at the job description and understand it.

> Employees and managers alike have a primary responsibility to the organization.

◯ Understand the parameters and the expectations.

> Employees know their lane of work, the scope of their job and where others intersect with their job.
>
> Employees understand the influence of their work on the big picture, their colleagues, and understand the short and long-term impact of their actions.
>
> They understand the big picture and how they fit into that big picture.
>
> They understand how to navigate land-mines and obstacles within their work environment.

◯ Participate in the performance management process.

> Employees at all levels should not be surprised by their performance reviews.
>
> Tracking of accomplishments, issues, training and development is a mutual process.

◯ Demonstrate control of your work and yourself.

> Demonstrate an understanding of purpose and value to your position in the organization.

> > *Statements like "I'm just a xxxx are not reassuring to leadership that you know what it is that you are supposed to be doing or how your position influences the vision of the organization."*

> Create self-comfort and confidence in your work.

> Execute tasks, examine impact of the work, and bring levity within appropriate professional boundaries.

> ***The individual's definition of success is a pre-determinant of their actual effort and impending success.***

◯ The good and bad is unspoken.

> Employees know what you want and how you want to see it.

> Each party can say the toughest things – in a manner that is received well and resolved.

> Employees understand the scope of their mistakes and yours and how to resolve the issues and minimize the damage.

> They know what is right and wrong without constant reminders.

> Examples:
> - Absenteeism
> - Tactical business mistakes
> - Operational mistakes
> - _____
> - _____

◯ Demonstrate appropriate levels of energy.

> Employees understand how to enter a room and not dominate the conversation or focus the attention on themselves.

> Employees bring the appropriate amount of enthusiasm to each event and respect the lines of authority.

◯ Move the organization forward (with) in step with your leadership.

> Employees can push the envelope with support.

> Employees can deliver constructive feedback for leadership.

>> They can diplomatically deliver the bad news to your partners and adversaries and ensure the relationships are maintained in the process without selling you out.

> Employees know/anticipate support or resistance.

>> Employees who are engaged and understand their scope, understand whether the items they bring to the table will garner support or engender resistance.

◯ Be present.
(Not just in attendance)

> In meetings, physically, mentally, and whole heartedly. They enter the room to participate, to learn, to engage and to be a part of the solution.

◯ Follow rules and demonstrate commitment to the organization.

> Hours – are not personal. Business hours are built for organizational function.

> Dress code – the image of the organization.

Business casual is the fault line of rebellion

◯ Participate in organizational social activities.

> Promote your work.

> Demonstrate commitment.

> Gain a new view of the organization and your peers.

◯ Do something out of the ordinary to demonstrate connectivity to your peers.

> Water the plants.

> Cook at social functions.

> Bring value to the office that is unique to you and "not in your job description".

◯ Be forthright about issues and problems.

> Identify issues early.

> Come with idea for solution – not just "complain".

> Be willing to be part of the solution.

NURTURING SUCCESS THROUGH BEHAVIORAL AND TACTICAL MEANS

Success and leadership development are long-standing propositions. Ensuring you have the right staff, in the right positions, mentored and lead by the right people creates opportunity, not a guarantee.

Failure and disappointment as well as long-standing challenges impede the growth of the employment relationship and the individuals involved and incumbers the organization's success. Defining an understanding of failure, as well as a mechanism to manage failure can foster a better relationship.

1

The first element of an effective strategy is to recognize that nothing is personal.

> When someone acts, or takes action it is not necessarily about the people he or she is influencing.

2

The second element of an effective strategy is to recognize that everyone fails.

> When you fail, bring it forward with a plan of action – use that failure as an opportunity – lessons learned.

> Ask for support for future action.

> Demonstrate success next time.

> Express gratitude for opportunity to be successful next time.

> Return the same courtesy to those that fail and report to you.

>> Give them an opportunity to bring it forward.

>> Ask them for their solution.

>> Help them create a solution.

>>> Don't do the work or take action for them but rather work to give them opportunity to be successful.

>>> Express gratitude to participate in being a part of the solution.

3

The third element to a successful strategy is to be understanding.

> Everyone has finite capacity and numerous challenges.
>
> In a close-knit team, there are ripples of impact that touch everyone.
>
> How you handle other's failings is a direct reflection on you.
>
> How you make others feel has more influence on your success than how you feel.
>
> Everyone feels something and thinks something and has opinions.
>
> What you do with your feelings thoughts and opinions is your brand.

EXERCISE FOR ONGOING GROWTH

QUESTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT	
How do you like to be seen as a leader/what is your leadership style?	
What are your goals for this team	
What are your priorities for this team	
What is your definition of top performer?	
What does success look like for us?	
How do you expect me to contribute to the goals of the organization?	
How do you like to be approached with issues and challenges?	
How do you like to communicate?	

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEE	
What are your greatest strengths and how do you plan to apply those to your role and to the organization?	
Where do you think you need assistance and growth to improve?	
What are your priorities for this team	
What is your definition of top performer?	
What does success look like for us?	
How do you expect to contribute to the goals of the organization?	
How do you like to be approached with issues and challenges?	
How do you like to communicate?	
What do you think I should expect of you?	
What excites you most about this job?	
What motivates you to do a good job?	