

Managing People for Performance – Alan Trunnell, CDBG Winter '18 Conference.

Based on my experience and the school of hard knocks.

For me it is about change and making a difference. Making an impact and in this case, through performance management.

There is much in our lives to manage. For me managing is the **how** of reaching goals, goals meant to make an impact. Easily attainable goals are generally less impactful and likely require less performance based management.

What do, or might, we manage?

- People
- Time
- Tasks
- Projects
- And Programs, mostly work related only

This conversation is focused on people in the work place.

I would argue that performance management requires both willingness and ability. And while willingness may be in our DNA the ability to effectively management seldom is.

To manage less effectively you need at least one. Your willing, you do not have much in the way of experience or training, but you push on. You have the ability, but not interested in making an impact through managing, yet here you are. Having neither removes managing all together, a baby, a person on life support come to mind.

Having less or inadequate ability does not indicate, to me, that one is a poor manager. Maybe your abilities are somewhat lacking, but you a well-liked manager. If that is your goal I have less to offer.

Managing others in the work place;

- As a supervisor
- Managing a team, but you are not a supervisor
- As a project lead or coordinator, involving (kind of managing), but not directly managing, others. Many cross departmental efforts are tackled this way.

Supervisors in the room?

Staff reporting to any supervisors that are in the room?

How about non-supervisors that have or are likely to be asked to lead a team effort?

Anyone with experience leading a project, not a team, requiring the help and support of others?

Managing people for performance is only as difficult as building TRUST. To do that requires these trust builders. Being;

- Consistent
- Fair
- Watchful

- Embracing conflict and eliminating fear
- Protective
- Proactive
- Willing to follow from time to time, open to delegation up from staff
- A sharer of information and where the work fits in the bigger picture
- An effective business communicator
- Professional and leading by example
- Having an open door/close door policy
- Understanding of the reality that your time is not more important than others, although it may be more critical.
- Knowledgeable of each staff members experience and knowledge.

I have found that individual performance requires fewer trust builders, while teams and staff working together require more. High functioning high performance teams require all.

Consistent - You are your own Brand without the selfie stick! Put simply, your “brand” is what your staff, peers, coworkers, and leadership think of when he or she hears your name. It’s includes the factual and emotional. Your brand exists only in someone’s mind. While this is new thinking it makes sense to me and should help shape our approaches.

Fair – treat all equally, respectably, of course, but in addition have a clear understanding of the other departments and divisions around you. For example dress code, long breaks, texting, and chatting

Watchful – to be fair you must take note of what is happening day to day around you and elsewhere in the organization. It will be hard to be as fair as you might be if you are not paying attention.

Embracing conflict and eliminating fear – This is more of a lift then I can take here. It is a course or web-based research one should do if they want to improve how they manage. I will touch on a couple of things.

- Evidence asserts that managers tend to place conflict resolution at the bottom of their to-do list.
- The problem almost never works out itself.
- A team plagued by conflict will eventually stop delivering, and your meeting deadlines and productivity checks won’t be much help. On the contrary, your position as a leader means you can make crucial interventions on the level of conflict to keep your team on track.
- Every team has conflicts. A good leader guides their team through the creative process while avoiding destructive negative conflicts.
- Are you dealing with a desirable or undesirable sort of conflict? Might it lead somewhere productive? Or does the situation just promise to be destructive? There isn’t always a clear-cut separation between the two. The stakes can be high: sometimes if a positive conflict is left unattended it can easily develop into something more sinister. But an initial assessment will help you choose whether you need to exercise your power as the leader to put on the brakes, or to facilitate a tough conversation through to a better end.

Helpful Team Conflict

- If things get a little tense while your team is hashing out an idea session, it might be productive, and in that case you may even want to gently stoke the discussion and encourage your employees to argue

their positions – it might unleash some creativity and uncensored honesty that otherwise wouldn't surface.

- Additionally, this kind of productive friction might move your team beyond the space of innocuous and pleasant but superficial 'chat' into the more challenging but equally more rewarding space of 'dialogue' – a crucial communicative transition that will likely come with notable yields.
- Prominent scholar Alan C. Amason states that "there is mounting evidence that effective top management teams engage in cognitive conflict but limit affective conflict."

Protective - I have your back.

Proactive – Be ahead of the curve. Promote meaningful team decisions from time to time. Meaningful kudos.

Willing to follow from time to time, or open to delegation up from staff – It is empowering to ask your boss if they might help with a particular task and shows willingness to participate.

A sharer of information and where the work fits in the bigger picture – political, direction we might be heading, impactful decisions being made that will touch or impact our work.

An effective business communicator – expectations, timeline, milestones, reporting, sources

Professional and leading by example – Ties to your branding. Realistic expectations, if being at meeting on-time is required, be on time. If you ask others to meet deadlines, meet your commitments to them.

Open door/close door – When expectations are high accessibility is critical. If office, let people know what the door open and door closed means. Don't set behind a closed door. It is likely you want staff to be accessible to you. If cubicle there are other ways to message.

Understanding of the reality that your time is not more important than others, although it is generally more critical. – Staff must feel important and if you make them feel that their time is as important as your time, performance will improve.

Know your people your knowledge base. Do not get tied to title. The more people are allowed to participate in the discussion the more buy-in to work and outcomes are likely to result

I want to add here the IMPACT OF TURNOVER. Ask for audience's experience in terms of disruption

- Desk guide
- Succession plan
- Training Plan
- Staff interview and your people pickers
- Get on it
- Open the transition discussion for feedback

And Financial responsibility – the budget process, exercise or meaningful. Tracking against the budget as a team.

Easy? depends on where you are now and the changes you are willing to make. The benefits will far outweigh the effort, by increasing staff performance, reducing turnover, eliminating fear, improving communication,

reducing problems and need for help, once TRUST is built. Organic performance is what you seek not top down directives.

Last add - the Performance Evaluation – touch on the ultimate goal of the evaluation and how to get there, if you have the ability to get past HR.

Couple of situations to touch on:

Managing at team, but not a supervisor.

Project lead or coordinator, involving people, but not directly managing. Many cross departmental efforts are tackled this way.

- If only two people know who the lead is, then there is no lead

At the end of the day high performance will be the result of high trust and I believe as the level of trust is reduced so is the level of group performance.