The TOP 5 HABITS of HIGH PERFORMING LEADERS

And how your leaders can embrace them
Contents
Click each title to view

Introduction

1 - Aligns to organizational direction

2 - Communicates effectively

3 - Empowers others

4 - Manages performance

5 - Helps others

Summary

How can we help?
People are often promoted based on their excellent job performance or technical skills, but do not have a comparable degree of competence in their “people skills”. Today’s workplace demands that leaders at all levels be able to build strong relationships with others, especially in motivating and developing employees to drive better business results. So what do high performing leaders have that others don’t? High performing leaders possess habits that drive performance and results. We’ve put together the list of the Top 5 Habits!

What’s a habit?
A definition of habit is that it is an acquired mode of behaviour that has become nearly or completely involuntary. It’s something that ‘happens’ every day, over time, often without reminders or other coaxing.
ALIGNS TEAM and INDIVIDUAL WORK to the ORGANIZATION’S DIRECTION
Effective leaders are able to align their team and the work of each member to the direction the organization is going. They review their own work objectives to ensure they are in line with the organization’s goals, then enthusiastically monitor team activity to keep efforts aligned. They stay current on advances and trends in their industry or field, proactively keep themselves up-to-date on organization decisions, then engage their team to achieve those future plans.

We have participated in many strategic planning sessions only to see the PowerPoint charts filed away and dusted off when reviewed the following year. Without leadership commitment and drive to create the day-to-day linkages between the strategy and execution of the company, it can be wasted effort. The strategy must be held together with commonly understood processes and culture that reinforce the goals of the organization and the accountability required of its business leaders.

Colleen Kelley
President, Stratford Management Consulting
Stratford Group
From blog post "Business Execution – Getting Things Done"
USES EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION METHODS
to
SHARE THOUGHTS & IDEAS
Communicates effectively

Effective leaders are able to communicate well and put across thoughts and ideas through a variety of communication methods. They are effective at choosing the appropriate method of communication for a situation, then share information in a clear and concise manner. They present written communication in a way that is easy to understand, know how to listen actively without interrupting, and when communicating verbally, know when and how to express emotion.

3 STEPS TO COMMUNICATING STRATEGY

1. Gather strategy-related information: During the strategic planning process, keep a record of how you developed your strategy that will be relevant to employees. This might include anecdotes, challenges you struggled with, how you came to conclusions, etc.

2. Create a learning “narrative”: Remember that your employees haven’t been involved in your lengthy strategic thought process. So you need to bring them up to speed.

3. Use visual graphics to tell the story: Create a standardized, visual storyboard to communicate the strategy narrative across the organization.
3
EMPOWERS OTHERS
with the
RESOURCES & AUTHORITY
they need
TO SUCCEED
Effective leaders lead a team using knowledge, experience and expertise to make rapid and effective decisions. Leaders learn to adapt their leadership style to ensure those around them are empowered with the resources and authority they need to succeed. They recognize and respond to how their team is feeling, acknowledge and adjust to change when new information in presented. They remove barriers to team productivity and success, and praise the team and its achievements to others.

Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid. – A. Einstein

THINGS THAT MANAGERS CAN DO TO KEEP THEIR EMPLOYEES MOTIVATED

1. **Delegate** – assigning work to someone for the purpose of their development, or as recognition of their expertise, is motivating.
2. **Ask for help** – employees want to have an impact on how things are done. They want the ability and responsibility to affect change. So seek their ideas, feedback and advice.
3. **Encourage initiative** – high-performing organizations empower their employees to be creative and take calculated risks.

Dean Fulford
VP, Leadership Development
Stratford Group
From blog post “3 Ways to Manage for Motivation”
4

MANAGES INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM PERFORMANCE
Manages individual and team performance

Effective leaders have the ability to understand people and their motivations, build good relationships with those around them, and achieve results through the efforts of others (as well as their own). They ensure that the team have clear roles and responsibilities, hold people accountable for their work and behaviour, then actively manages difficult employee performance issues. They hold timely performance discussions, use constructive and developmental feedback, appropriately, and recognize and reward people for excellent performance.

Becoming an effective coaching manager is achievable. Create a coaching mindset by continuously asking:

1. Are objectives realistic and ambitious? (Clarify)
2. Is there potential to do better? (Improve)
3. What can I do as a leader to create an environment in which people are engaged and motivated to be successful? (Support)

Dean Fulford
VP, Leadership Development
Stratford Group
From blog post “Coaching for performance”
5 HELPS OTHERS

ACHIEVE more through

FEEDBACK, INSTRUCTION

and ENCOURAGEMENT
Effective leaders are effective at coaching others, able to help others achieve more through feedback, instruction and encouragement. Leaders willingly help other people develop their skills and knowledge, enabling people to fulfill the development of their career. They coach others regardless of their performance level, highlight strengths and weaknesses by giving specific examples, and offer praise and recognition as improvements are made.
Today’s workplace demands that leaders at all levels be able to build strong relationships with others, especially in motivating and developing employees to drive better business results. Effective leadership habits create an environment for individual and team success.

1. Effective leaders align their team and the work of each member to the direction the organization is going. They enthusiastically monitor team activity to keep efforts aligned, and stay current on advances and trends in their industry or field.

2. Effective leaders communicate well, able to choose the appropriate method of communication for a situation, and share information in a clear and concise manner. They write well, know how to listen actively, and know when and how to express emotion.

3. Effective leaders use knowledge, experience and expertise to make rapid and effective decisions. Simply put, they ensure those around them are empowered with the resources and authority they need to succeed.

4. Effective leaders understand people and their motivations, build good relationships with those around them, and achieve results through the efforts of others (as well as their own). They actively manage performance, and recognize and reward people for excellent work.

5. Effective leaders help others achieve more through feedback, instruction and encouragement. They willingly coach other people to develop their skills and knowledge, and fulfill the development of their career.
HOW DO YOU DEFINE LEADERSHIP?

At Stratford, we see that leadership can reside in anyone – at any level – in an organization. It’s not about authority or power. Leadership is the practice of influence, to harness and maximize the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.

Need a little help instilling these habits in your team?

Stratford works with organizations like yours to provide a customized leadership development programs to suit the needs of your leaders and your organization.

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Stratford Group Ltd. has been helping companies solve their business challenges since 2008. Our dedicated team draws on years of practical business experience and takes a collaborative, cross-practice approach to help organizations and their leaders grow, improve and transform. We work with companies that need more than a 'consultant' — who are looking for a partner ready to live their business with them through thick and thin. We’ve been where you are. We can help you succeed.

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