Few people in our careers can have as much impact as our managers. When they are good, they propel us forward and make us feel good about our work and contribution. A bad one makes us wonder if we can call in sick again so we don’t have to show up for work.

Indeed, Gallup has found that one of the most important decisions companies make is to select their managers. Yet their research suggest this selection is wrong 82% of the time.

This means wasted resources and missed opportunities for the company. Moreover, it means great people get disengaged from work.

In fact, this research says managers are the reason for at least 70% of variance in employee engagement. Gallup reported in 2012 that only 13% of employees worldwide are engaged. Wow.

But what does it mean, to be a good manager?

Different people will have different opinions. Google, a golden standard in employee engagement*, identified 8 different key factors. The number one is, you guessed it, being a good coach.

Often, managers are not prepared for this role as a coach. They may have just started influencing and supporting others. Having training and coaching to support them through this process is a very helpful way to set them up for success.

Good coaches don’t just happen, it takes time, effort and passion. The latter may be more difficult to control but managers can proactively manage their time and effort.

For these, they can focus on three main areas, the 3 C’s of Coaching:

**Competence**

Being a coach while being a manager requires focusing on some key aspects:

- Actively Listening to your team. Not just asking the right questions but truly listening to the answers and understanding the intention behind them.

- Giving timely feedback, that is actionable and driven towards recognition & appreciation (positive feedback) and towards growth (constructive)

- Career Development. Spending time understanding how the person can and wants to grow (it might not be what you think!). Next, collaborating to create a path for growth. As a manager, you are also uniquely positioned to provide opportunities. For example, by introducing people and approving trainings, etc.
Curiosity

Being curious is fundamental to being a good coach. This results in several key benefits:

- Being present and making sure the other person is also present. You are not just going through a checklist on the agenda or a script in your mind. You want to know, and you want the other person to have the space and attention to talk and share.
- Because you are present and curious, you end up enabling trust and honesty. This is a wonderful basis for a good relationship.
- Understanding what motivates someone. Knowing what they need to prosper and how they can take the most out of their potential. This is good for them, for you, for the company. Only then, you get to support them.

Continuity

Being a coach doesn’t happen only during the performance evaluation season. Or when someone is about to leave the company. It’s also not a one day thing, where you shower someone with attention. It’s about an ongoing relationship that the person can rely on and knows what to expect. For this, consider:

- Regular meetings, with time reserved to talk about the person, not just their projects
- An agenda that is mostly driven by them, not by you. They are the drivers of their careers and work. As a coach, you are there to support them.
- An open door policy, where they can reach out to you when they need to. No need to wait for the next meeting to connect.

Investing in being a good coach is key. You get to focus on the number one factor to being a good manager. This, in turn, is a decisive driver in the performance of your team and their engagement. A real win-win situation. Enjoy the journey!

* Won several times the first place in the Great Place to Work awards.

Sources:


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