

The SuperSTAR Leadership Model

HOW TO REVOLUTIONIZE PERFORMANCE!

BY RICK CONLOW | RICK CONLOW INTERNATIONAL



People want to be great, and if they aren't, oftentimes, their leader is the obstacle. This may sound harsh, but it's only because I know people can achieve amazing results. The role of leaders is to show their employees all of the possibilities and to bring out the best in each person. The possibilities for astounding performances are endless. For example:

- › Erik Weihenmayer, a blind man, climbed Mount Everest!
- › Mackenzie Brown, a young girl, pitched a perfect game in boy's baseball, striking out 18 players!
- › Cliff Miedl survived 30,000 volts and became an Olympic athlete!
- › Cliff Young, a 61-year-old farmer, won the world's toughest ultra marathon!

At the presentations, meetings and seminars I conduct, the number one question I get from both new and experienced managers is: How do I motivate my people? If employees aren't motivated, their productivity is negatively affected, which is bad news for managers and companies. Employee morale today is questionable. The Conference Board reports that more employees are unhappy with their jobs than at any other reported time in the past and is at all-time lows with nearly 9 out of 10 employees disengaged. Over 70 percent of employees are looking for a different job. Employees report that they get little recognition and appreciation at work, and too many employees don't like their boss. These work environments don't inspire employees to deliver their best at work. In fact, these attitudes lead to more sick time, more workers' compensation claims, more on-the-job accidents, fewer sales, lower levels of productivity, and poorer quality and customer service levels.

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After studying 100,000 managers across the globe, in more than ten industries, I've identified **ten key strategies** that separate the SuperSTAR leaders from the others, which are reported in my book, *SuperSTAR Leadership: A 31-Day Plan to Motivate People, Communicate Positively, and Get Everyone On Your Side*. Our basic tenet is - if you want your people to be better, you have to be better as a leader. Considering the fact that management derailment studies report that 82 percent of managers today fail, these strategies are necessary and needed. See below:

- > **Clear Goals & Expectations – Locke & Latham – 16% improvement!**
- > **Training – ASTD Study – Companies in top quarter of training expense (\$1,500 per year or more) average 24% higher profit margins!**
- > **Communication – Wyatt Study – 30% increase in market value!**
- > **Coaching – Personnel Management Association – 88% impact!**
- > **Leadership Flexibility – Blanchard, Hershey, Goleman – 15-20% more results!**
- > **Recognition – Jackson ROI Study – Triple return on equity for companies with more recognition than companies with less recognition!**
- > **Promotions/Incentives – Performance Improvement Institute – 22% impact on results!**
- > **Customer Loyalty – Bain Research – a 5% improvement in customer retention improves profits by 25% or more!**
- > **Hiring – Personnel Policy Service – the wrong hire costs 3 times the annual salary amount!**
- > **Integrity & Trust – World's Most Ethical Companies – organizations are most admired, and managers outperform competition by 6%. Leaders. This ties all the competencies together and amplifies results.**

As a result, I designed a three-dimensional **SuperSTAR Leadership Model**. See the illustration to the left.

Do they each work? Sure, but they work in tandem. It's not a menu to pick what you like. We found that managers fail because they only use bits and pieces of these strategies. Superb results require consistent and passionate execution. Let's explore each one individually.

CLEAR GOALS & EXPECTATIONS

All great performance starts with clear goals and plans. While this idea isn't new, the way it's currently practiced leads to three problems. First, much work is put into strategic plans, but rarely are they updated or reviewed. Second, very few of the goals that are made reach every manager and/or employee. Two-thirds of managers don't set goals or plans with employees, but employees need to know WIFM (What's in it for me?). According to research by Frederick Herzberg, challenging work and job recognition motivate employees the most. The third common problem is that when goals are identified, managers often lack the ongoing commitment and reinforcement needed to sustain the progress.

TRAINING

In this day and age when services, technology and products are so similar from one competitor to the next, people are the primary differentiator. For employees to be at the top of their game, they need ongoing, engaging learning opportunities. The training must be interactive and relevant. If done consistently, training will increase productivity. We believe managers are the best trainers because they are closest to the employee. To master training methodology and delivery, most managers need to learn adult-learning principles, as well as professional training techniques. While not everyone will become an expert, most can learn

the basics, which can put them in a position to reinforce skills, techniques, and attitudes through coaching. So, how often should you train? Well, top athletes train between games and in the off-season. Business shouldn't be any different; however, most employees are lucky to participate in one session each year. Ensure your team is different. Provide monthly tools, resources and training classes, so they "sharpen the saw" as Steven Covey says in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

We use the word three times to emphasize its importance. Overall, it indicates that it's crucial to be positive, helpful and motivating. It doesn't mean yelling, screaming and threatening. Employees want to do well. By communicating about goals, plans, outcomes and problems, we can work together as a team to do better. One company did an employee survey and found one department had poor communication scores. Further review revealed that what employees wanted to know was quite simple: vacation schedules in advance, meeting notices in advance, and a more timely receipt of customer-survey data. Dr. Daniel Goleman coined the term Emotional Intelligence, which is defined in terms of social and personal competence; needless to say, it's a powerful indicator of success in business. Social competence includes the ability to relate to people and to communicate effectively with people. Positive communication establishes trust, and if you give trust to your team, oftentimes, your employees will go the extra mile and treat customers better.

COACHING

The rewards of passionate and diligent coaching are increased productivity, higher sales and better service! Some managers don't think they have the time, but those that make the time reap the best results, and in fact, they leverage their time to its fullest potential. Effective coaching is when a manager conducts a one-on-one meeting with each employee. It should be a positive process of mutual dialogue, rather than a silo-driven monologue. Managers must build rapport, make the time, follow through, ask questions, give advice and genuinely be helpful. A good

coach ensures that each team member receives regular feedback and understands specific areas of performance efficiencies and deficiencies. According to research, ongoing coaching dramatically influences results.

LEADERSHIP FLEXIBILITY

Each person is unique. You don't rubberstamp great performance; you treat each employee as an individual by finding his or her hot buttons. Top performers need challenging and creative options. The performers that are struggling the most need specific technique direction and adequate role models. Some employees are single, others are married with five kids; some love books, others are into sports – the point? Know your team. The better you know your team, the more insight you will gain into their inner motivations and desires. Flexible management involves two questions: What is the employee's skill level? What is the employee's will level? Your answer for each person will help you tailor your approach. Someone with little skill needs on-the-job training. Highly skilled employees that deliver poor results need coaching to build their commitment levels, so that they feel they have more ownership over their goals. It's about adjusting your approach to enhance their abilities.

RECOGNITION

80 percent of performance problems are related to a lack of clear goals and expectations and a lack of recognition. Many managers avoid this easy fix. Every time we communicate with employees is an opportunity to recognize them. Do it informally and often; for example, "Pete, great job completing your report on time and under budget!" And do it formally, "Let's all give Dave a round of applause for exceeding his top priorities. Dave, please accept this gift card for your accomplishment." Recognition works when it is done consistently because it demonstrates to employees that they are valuable and important. It also drives their inner spirit to keep striving for new heights and performance goals. Employees don't need recognition for every little thing, but they do need to be appreciated for the right things.

PROMOTIONS/INCENTIVES

“Always have something going on!” This is the mantra of a highly successful manager in the Midwest. His team performs three times better than his competition. He is always creating contests for his team. Why? He wants to change their routine, in order to keep things interesting and exciting. He also hopes to fan their competitive spirit. While not every manager can execute contests or have the budget for it, any manager with a little creativity can boost the work environment. One company made chart visuals to track this year’s progress versus last year’s; for every month they outperformed the previous year, they held a luncheon. Another manager personalized awards in Microsoft Word, and she distributed them to deserving team members on a regular basis. All in all, incentives are incredible resources, but you must first lead enthusiastically, execute consistently, and generate energy, in order to really maximize the potential benefits of incentives and promotions.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The best managers and leaders are those who remain students of the game. Good can always become better, which can always become the best – and great leaders believe this. Great leaders don’t stop learning, developing or pursuing the better way to do something. Improvement is not optional today, it’s essential just to keep pace, let alone get ahead. A SWOT analysis is a very helpful tool that we recommend managers use in order to maximize their strengths, minimize their weaknesses, explore their opportunities and deconstruct their threats. Other ways to continually improve include problem solving, innovating, creating and brainstorming. All of these require a manager to take initiative and to think outside the box, both are vital if managers want to be great leaders.

RECRUIT & HIRE WINNERS

Your success as a manager is inevitably (for better or worse) tied to those you hire and recruit. Not all managers have control over the hiring process, but if you do, you must take advantage of that position; and if you don’t, you must make the best of it. Spend a lot of time on the hiring process because it will reap its own rewards, time and time again, if you hire right. Research candidates thoroughly, prepare for a professional interview, evaluate candidates objectively, and create a positive working environment.

INTEGRITY & TRUST

A manager with integrity builds trust in their team. How? Through honesty, authenticity, and helping the team win with the above approaches. They balance applying genuine “people skills” with a focus on results. They care about each individual team member’s success. At the same time they have backbone of steel driving towards high standards, values and achievement. The team experiences these managers as fair and firm. Employees want to excel and become high performers.

When leaders execute these ten leadership strategies with consistency, passion, integrity, and a genuine approach to their team’s success, they quickly realize and experience what it is that separates the SuperSTAR leaders from the run-of-the-mill managers. More importantly, they soon achieve dramatic performance gains in their personal performance, as well as their team’s performance. Why not become a SuperSTAR Leader?

ABOUT RICK CONLOW

I’ve been in your shoes, I was a manager just like you may be now. I wanted to succeed like everyone. I wanted to make a difference. The first company I worked for believed in training, with this opportunity and my desire to learn, I attended over 100 training programs and conferences in a little over fifteen years. My results improved and I moved from training and selling to executive, with five promotions. I learned leadership success and learning are interconnected. Eventually, I founded Rick Conlow International. Our purpose is to bring out the best in others while achieving great results. Throughout the years we have partnered with many fine companies and leaders to achieve:

- 48 quality service awards including JD Power, Ford’s President Award, and Canada’s Consumers Choice Award.
- Record-breaking sales year after year: 30%, 48%, 52%, 75%, 122% gains in sales.
- 15-20 points on customer experience surveys.
- 12-14 points on employee engagement surveys.
- Author of 21 books, including the best seller, SuperSTAR Leadership.

Exceed your leadership potential today.

POSITIVELY,



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