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**Leadership**

**and**

**Engagement**

**Best Practices**



**Leadership and Engagement Best Practices**

**Leadership**

* Use positive language – say what to do vs. what not to do
* Validate before you communicate – rumors can sound just like facts
* Ask questions and use employees as a sounding board
* Listen to employees:
  + Use your ears and eyes
  + Let employee finish (no interruptions)
  + Respond to show you are engaged
  + Ask questions to clarify
* Encourage employee communication by facilitating discussions and conflicts
* Ask for feedback from employees about your leadership
* Solicit new ways of doing things
* Be open to new ideas
* Ask for solutions, not just complaints
* Encourage employees to submit innovative ideas
* Over-communicate, especially in times of stress
* Conduct a better practices brainstorm session
* Set a good example – know who you are and live your 3 lives (business, personal, and family) with passion
* Encourage employees to balance life and work
* Demonstrate empathy, especially in times of personal hardship
* Keep a positive attitude – your staff will mirror your behavior
* Respect others’ time
* Communicate, communicate, communicate

**Vision and Building Alignment**

* Understand the vision of the organization
* Define your vision for your department that ties directly to the vision of the organization
* Communicate your vision to your employees with emphasis to the connection to the organization vision
* Clearly articulate cascading goals
* Routinely remind your employees of the vision
* Define and communicate your strategy for reaching the vision
* Discuss with your employees how to best execute the strategy flawlessly
* Measure progress (create “balanced scorecards”)
* Review performance against the goals – modify if needed
* Commit to semi-annual review and discussion of goals with your team
* Share performance results on a micro and macro level quarterly
* Manage profitability, not billability
* Regularly set and recalibrate priorities – make sure your effort is spent on the most important issues
* Recognize and reward achievements

**Self and Staff Development**

* Start by hiring the right people (remember that the “intangibles” – personality, attitude, motives, group chemistry – are indelible; knowledge/skills can always be acquired)
* Assign a new hire an informal “mentor” from your group to help show them the ropes, learn the resources, etc.

1. Take new hires to lunch their first week... Request that each staff member schedule a time to have lunch with their new colleague
2. Set clear objectives – for new hires, for newly promoted, for new task assignment
3. Follow up on objectives/expectations via informal feedback, regular project reviews, “MBWA”
4. Ensure proper assessment of progress toward objectives

* Conduct REGULAR and TIMELY performance appraisals
* Seek their perspective on their own situation

1. Provide challenging work – and as much variety as possible
2. Cross train (within your group and between departments or disciplines)
3. Share knowledge – set up regular brown bag “Lunch and Learn” sessions

* See formal communications/meetings for ideas (such as regulation expert assignment)
* Best way to learn is to be asked to teach

1. Shared knowledge is facilitated by shared access – encourage common e-filing on the network
2. Make sure each junior staff is an "understudy" to an account manager or project manager
3. Bring employee to upper level management or client meeting with a specific role or assignment to fulfill
4. Hold a “re-energizing meeting” to focus on identifying “productive work” vs. “non-productive work” – which should be eliminated or reduced or altered
5. Ensure staff are properly equipped with resources and tools
6. Encourage professional registrations; professional memberships; external involvement in professional associations (great for professional development as well as potential for client development and staff recruiting)
7. Use succession planning tools, such as:

* 360° feedback
* Individual development plans
* Electronic management system
* Training (formal and informal)
* Mentoring and coaching
* Stretch and special assignments

**Creating a Motivational Culture**

1. Set clear expectations
2. Ask employees about their goals and objectives in the job – where do they want to grow?
3. Remember – you can’t motivate employees, but you can create an environment that inspires and supports employee motivation
4. Be proactive regarding deserved promotions (don't wait for the counteroffers...)
5. Frame and display client letters of recognition or praise of work well done
6. Frame and display interesting or significant project work
7. Celebrate birthdays and service anniversaries
8. Bring junior level staff to client visits (with a role) and/or include on key project team
9. Display newspaper clippings featuring employee or employee’s family member
10. Keep a positive attitude – positive energy is contagious. Never forget that your staff looks to you to keep them up!
11. Make it FUN!
12. Feed them! Plan an ice cream social to celebrate good news (e.g. recent win, above plan performance, new hire, etc.)
13. Provide employees with challenging and diverse work – during performance appraisal time, ask them what they would really like to work on. be prepared – it may be something entirely different than what they're doing
14. Address problem employees quickly before they de-motivate the group
15. Seek employee’s advice
16. Don’t hide your praise behind criticism, the employee will remember the criticism and assume the praise was included only to soften the blow.
17. Praise staff immediately
18. Praise staff often (though don't cheapen praise – know the difference between praise and thanks)
19. Be very specific about your praise – “You brought in 3 new clients this quarter – that’s terrific!”
20. Give public praise whenever possible and appropriate
21. Involve staff in task teams and in regional or national initiatives
22. If regional management or senior management visit an office, invite deserving employee(s) to lunch or dinner with them
23. Recognize good efforts

* At department meetings
* Via email with cc to manager or next level manager
* Interoffice memos
* Simple thank you notes – even right on the work product
* Host a lunch

1. Send employees to seminars and/or conferences
2. Arrange for exposure to management
3. Reward via:

* Training opportunity
* Plum project assignment
* National involvement
* Incentive pay – **personally** deliver bonus check with a thank you, while reminding employee of the behavior you're rewarding

**Team Development**

* Ensure interaction and involvement of all team members
* Maintain individual self-esteem
* Create environment of open communications
* Emphasize mutual trust
* Respect differences
* Solve problems and conflicts immediately
* Teach self-directive techniques – the team members are responsible for the team

*Forming*

* Establish the common purpose of the team and make it clear how people fit in
* Roles
* Skills
* Experience
* Map out the journey of the team’s life – what are the predictable highs and lows

*Storming*

* Frame storming as a natural part of team development
* Welcome debate and encourage different views
* Handle disagreements immediately and encourage team members to do likewise
* Balance individual needs with overall team needs

*Norming*

* Find areas the team agrees on and focus on the positives
* Develop self-esteem and confidence in individuals and in the team
* Celebrate successes
* Encourage open feedback
* Involve all team members in decision making

*Performing*

* Share decision making and accountability
* Watch for overconfidence in the team – discuss
* Watch for team bonding at the expense of other outside groups