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What Middle Managers Need to Lead Winning Teams in 2024

Middle managers are struggling.

While it's been an ongoing issue in the workplace for some time, middle managers were really brought to their boiling point last year. In the words of Emily Field, partner at McKinsey & Company: "There has been this widespread view that 2023 was supposed to be the year of the manager. Where have we been? 2024 has to be the year where we make it happen."



These folks have to get things done on their own checklist while also managing and mentoring subordinates – all at the same time as feeling pressure from the top. Middle managers rise to the challenge through of keeping employees informed and engaged, but they're often facing an uphill battle.

And many surveys have painted this picture. Zeno Group's recent study, "Middle Managers at Risk" Companies Overlook the Communications Imperative," found that nearly nine in 10 middle managers believe that clear and timely communication is vital to their success. However, only 54% of managers say senior leadership is effective in meeting this need. And Culture Amp's new research on the state of the manager found that when an employee has a great manager, one who they see as a role model, they score 27% higher on motivation.

"Managers, particularly now, are the strongest tether that an employee has to their organization," said Fresia Jackson, lead research people scientist at Culture Amp.

This is a great resource for middle managers – read the complete article for more insights.

Source: Cloey Callahan, WorkLife

[Read Full Story](#)

The Importance of Mentorship and How to Get it Right



January is an exploration of the Italian Way of Wholeness on chef Giada De Laurentiis's lifestyle platform, Giadzy. It centers on simplicity, a "more integrated way of living," and the belief that we can discover pleasure by focusing on what matters to us.

Holistic well-being is the thread that captured me in our conversation the month prior,

particularly when De Laurentiis used the word "cherished" to describe how she hopes her team feels.

Three decades into her illustrious career, the renowned chef, author, TV personality, restaurateur, and entrepreneur's intention is "to help the new generation do a better job of balancing." She achieves this by consciously "pivoting the work-life" of her team. "Your work life should supplement your personal life. If things aren't working, how do we make them work for you? So, you can be your best self and a great role model to everybody around you," she shares.

"You have to find people you trust and mentor those relationships through the ebbs and flows," she reflects, referencing a leader who, after working together for a decade, considered stepping down due to the demands of her position as a parent. "I said" 'Let's not do that. How can we pivot and create a job that you will love? So, you can still be with us and have that time off as well.' It's being flexible in business, seeing the potential in people, and figuring out that the model can be turned on its head; so, we can keep the

important people in our lives and invigorate them, and they can have their home life as well.”

Check out the complete conversation by clicking on Read Full Story below!

Source: Jenna Abdou, *Fast Company*

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I'm an Owner. How do I Recruit a Manager as Committed as I am?

Dear Advice Guy,

I opened a restaurant with other partners and have been working every night since we opened on top of my day job. The plan is to replace myself with a maître d/manager who can take over, at least most nights. But anyone I've interviewed wouldn't bring the same energy and commitment to the position that I do. How do I get a manager who will care as much as I do?



Don't miss the answer to this important predicament!

Source: Jonathan Deutsch, Ph.D., *Restaurant Business*

[Read Full Story](#)

Why Resolving Conflicts Within Teams is a New Must-Have Skill for Managers

Personality clashes, disagreements, and other conflicts between staff are bound to happen in workplaces. But whose job is it to resolve them? More often than not, it's falling on managers.

Some 56% of managers said they are fully responsible for managing and resolving team conflicts – whether or not they feel prepared to do so, found a Gartner survey of over 3,000 managers from around the world taken last year.

Most managers aren't properly trained in de-escalating and resolving conflicts on their teams. Those in HR roles are typically more experienced, but bringing in HR often only escalates the situation, experts say. Managers will have to get better equipped as the skill becomes essential for them to run functioning teams, and as personal viewpoints around



political and social issues continue becoming more polarized and harder to keep out of workplaces.

Read on!

Source: Hailey Mensik, WorkLife

Read Full Story

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SOS Super Article from Hub International How QEX Might be an Rx for Wisconsin Restaurants' Worker Shortage

At one point during the COVID recovery, 83% of Wisconsin restaurant operators had job openings. Today, for all the talk of post-COVID normalization, the industry is still struggling for workers – if not quite to the earlier extent.

The industry is paying for a larger shift the pandemic brought about, a reshuffling as employment in professional and business services explodes, leaving leisure and hospitality jobs begging.

As employers search for solutions, one likely place to start is by re-evaluating their offer. It may not be just a matter of hiring bonuses; better base pay and general money are at stake here. Increasingly, it's in seeing them as individuals dealing with different life experiences at different life stages.



Understanding and responding to the nuances with the right benefits can shape a quality employee experience that creates a winning culture and is effective for winning recruitment and retention.

Throw the benefits cookie cutter out.

An increasing number of employers are departing from the one-size-fits-all approach to benefits to one that delivers an individualized and quality employee experience – or QEX.

A QEX benefits strategy reflects the tangible and intangible factors that shape the employee workplace experience. Think of onsite claims, insurance costs, payroll, and the physical environment as tangible ones. But also at work are intangibles such as social environment, communication, educational opportunities, and mental wellness.

The challenge is to influence those factors by planting human resources and benefits solutions at the point where an individual's life experience intersects with the employee's experience.

Learn about your people.

An effective QEX program is based on developing insights about employees and leveraging them. Various tools can make this happen.

One is employee persona analysis, which explores different employee groups' characteristics, experiences, and behaviors. This can reveal where employees are in their careers, whether they are married with young children or looking forward to retirement, and the distinct pressures they face. This can also uncover their relationships with benefits, leading the way to offerings that are valued and most likely to be used.

Snapshot demographic data, like age and gender, can strengthen this understanding. Of course, it doesn't hurt to ask what matters via surveys. Data analytics can also inform the strategy by tracking which benefits are most utilized and by which employee groups.

Ultimately, a QEX program requires the grounding that such analytics provide so employers stop making assumptions about what employees need and value – on the job and at home. This is fundamental for contributing to experiences that employees will embrace and remember when they're considering other employment.

Why it matters.

This expanded focus transcends typical life experiences such as marriage, divorce, children, schooling and its costs, and aging parents. Think about experiences that don't regularly rise to that same level of impact for everyone: the loss of a family pet, the stress of a promotion or transfer, the death of a family friend, or a change in childcare.

The individual may only live through such situations once a year, but it's a different story collectively when hundreds or thousands of employees are involved. The employee's life and work experience are positively affected when HR can step in with the right resources.

We know one manager who, in one year, used these QEX-style benefits: Emergency childcare. Adult caregiver support. Mental health resources. Legal and identity theft services. Without those employer solutions, this manager would have spent nights and weekends away from work trying to address these issues.

That could easily represent 100 hours or more of her time, underscoring the value of QEX for employers, too. Determining a quantifiable return on investment for instituting such a

program can be a challenge. However, the vast majority of QEX benefits are no cost or low-cost for the employer to offer. And getting it back in improved productivity, reduced turnover, and heightened loyalty?

Priceless.

Source: Justin Randall, Hub International

[More Info on Hub International](#)

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