Why leaders should pay attention to character

Running a business can feel a bit like an action movie at times, full of fights and huge crises, but the best bosses know that leadership is actually character-driven, writes Art Petty. Look closely at those around you, figure out their abilities and weaknesses, and determine how to help them improve.

Source: SmartBrief on Leadership

Feedback should be encouraging and supportive

One of the reasons why feedback seems to be so ineffective is because we tend to focus on using it only to draw awareness to those things our employees are doing well and where we see there needs to be some improvement says, Tanveer Naseer, Leadership Coach, Speaker and Writer, http://www.tanveernaseer.com/. Naseer adds that the most effective form of feedback doesn’t simply inform employees of what to keep building on and what they need to adjust or correct. Effective feedback also provides a source of encouragement to employees that they have the ability to achieve these goals being mapped out, along with the support they’ll need to be successful in their efforts.

Source: http://www.tanveernaseer.com/

Giving employees a sense of ownership at work

Nothing conveys a sense of ownership like having your name on the office door. So if you want employees to feel like owners, give them a sign— literally. By presenting new employees with a personalized nameplate, you let them know they belong and suggest a level of permanence that business cards alone can’t match. If workers don’t have an office door to adorn, you can still provide nameplates that insert into cubicle walls, easelbacked plates employees can keep on their desks, or a list of employees and job titles at their entrance to their workspace.

Source: http://www.managebetter.biz/

Beware of first impressions when hiring

Disastrous hires can happen when managers are fooled by first impressions. But how can you get beyond the superficial during a brief interview? The key is to focus on behaviors rather than traits. For example, if the interviewer describes themselves as a “team player,” do they credit other people when discussing their work? Look beyond what the candidate is saying and focus on how they are they saying it. Watch for nonverbal cues that signal contempt, superiority, and disrespect: eye contact when speaking to another person but not when listening to them or invading another’s space. Another telling question: Ask them to describe their least preferred coworker. Listen for whether they reduce the person to a one-word label (e.g., “difficult” or “micromanager”) or reveal a more complex view of the situation (e.g., “we disagreed about how to get the job done because we were trained in different ways”).


Eliminating stress in the workplace

Poor health habits can contribute to stress, according to www.managebetter.biz. When workers don’t get enough sleep or over-indulge on certain substances—unhealthy foods, tobacco, alcohol, etc.—that sap their strength, stress levels will increase. Do what you can to counter their bad habits by coming up with healthy workplace practices: walking, stretching, or meditation programs; machines that dispense juice as well as soda; or even a staff nap room, it adds.

Source: http://www.managebetter.biz/

Great culture starts with these values

The building blocks of good relationships and a positive workplace include trust, inclusion and recognition, Sue Bingham writes. Also important is assuming good things about others. “Embracing positive assumptions creates a high-trust environment in which employees know you don’t think they’re lazy or lacking in good ideas,” she writes.

Source: SmartBrief on Leadership
10 thinking habits to avoid dysfunctional leadership

If you’re thinking the wrong way, it’s hard to lead well, writes Marcel Schwantes. Whether your thought patterns are too extreme, too judgmental or too perfectionistic, it’s important to recognize when your mental habits are holding you back. “These common thought patterns hold leaders back, destroy their self-esteem, and damage relationships in the workplace,” Schwantes writes.

1. Very extreme — seeing things in black and white, and blowing things out of proportion.
2. Very broad — generalizing from a specific; labeling people rather than their behaviors.
3. Very negative — seeing the glass as half empty and dwelling heavily on the worst possible outcome.
4. Very demanding — wanting things their way and having expectations that cloud a sense of reality.

5. Very judgmental — condemning others for their shortcomings and being unable to forgive.
6. Very obsessed — getting on a track of being unable to budge or view things differently; persevering about something that is out of their control.
7. Very confused — having pictures in their heads that do not match the “real world”; feeling that they don’t get what they think they’re “supposed to” get; having a hard time seeing things without denial, blame and negativity.
8. Very intolerant — having a need to have things the way they “should be”; finding it difficult to have patience and tolerance for differences that don’t fit their needs and expectations.
9. Very perfectionistic — having a need to be “right” and not make mistakes, as that would mean one is inferior or is a failure; having permeating low self-esteem.
10. “Shoulding” on self and others — placing expectations of how one “should” be, thereby limiting their ability to accept self and others without judgment, leading to negativity and tendency to criticize.

Source: Marcel Schwantes

Creating a successful infographics

Infographics are the combination of text and images to create maximum impact. There are two core activities to infographic success—Great design, Successful promotion and marketing. Designing an infographic that isn’t marketed properly is like building a great car but not telling anyone about it. It remains parked and hidden in the garage. Here are the 7 key elements to creating successful infographics that has been put together by Donna Moritz at Socially Sorted.

#1. Story. Tell a story that isn’t about you but your audience. You need to work out what is an area of interest that will be relevant to your audience. Listen to what blog posts resonate, what gets shared the most and what drives the most traffic. Don’t make it about your product!

#2. Style. Style is subjective but a good designer will know from experience what works. Chunk it down so you are capturing the main points. It needs to be hierarchical and digestible.

#3. Simplicity. Minimalist design is an art form that limits the types of fonts, shapes and image styles. It means avoiding confusion by creating flow and connection

#4. Size. Optimizing for size means considering the number of pixels (735 pixels is best width for Pinterest) and also the size of the file. You don’t want the infographic to take a long time to download. In terms of length you don’t want it too long. Try creating an infographic that is 1,500 to 2,000 pixels in length.

#5. Statistics. If you want to create impact about growth and have lots of stats then infographics are perfect for that. Make sure they are factual and reliable, current and helpful.

#6. Shareability. Make your infographic easy to share. Provide an embed code. You also need to make sure it gets shared by letting influencers and your fans on social networks know about the “awesome” new infographic that you have just created.

#7. Source. Make sure you attribute and let your audience know where you got the facts and figures from. Credibility is an important factor for a successful Infographic.

Source: http://www.jeffbullas.com/2013/11/29/the-7-key-elements-to-creating-successful-infographics/

A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, a little less than his share of the credit.

--Arnold H. Glasgow

Source: http://www.brainyquote.com

Re-igniting growth

Most successful companies eventually face a predictable crisis called, “stall-out”, a sudden large drop in revenue and profit growth or a collapse of once high shareholder returns to well below the cost of capital. Stall-out occurs when the growth engine that powered a company to success stops working. Here are some ways to prepare your team to reignite growth.

Create a “founder’s mentality” scorecard. Manage it as a strategic asset. Does your mission keep you fighting in behalf of your customers? Does your company focus on the front line of the business? Do employees embrace an owner’s mindset that eschews bureaucracy, is focused on speed, and demands personal accountability?

Benchmark against your most successful upstart competitors. Are they winning on speed and cost? Commit as a leadership team to closing the gap.

Launch a campaign against bureaucracy. Look for management layers and processes that have outlived their usefulness. Eliminate them.

Get the leadership team out of the office. The front line is where the answer to a growth stall-out is most likely to reside.

Re-examine the precepts and practices of your founders or early leaders. When was the company at its best? What has been lost along the way that needs to be restored?

Look outside for help inside. You might reach out to retired founders or acquire fast-growing, founder-led young companies.

Source: Chris Zook and James Allen, Harvard Business Review

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