51 Tips for More Effective Leadership Training
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Section 1: Employee leadership training tips

Avoiding common mistakes

Train leaders to avoid these 7 mistakes

Effective leadership is easier said than done. Even great leaders can make costly mistakes. In this tip, we get expert advice on seven leadership mistakes that can stifle employee empowerment and the will to win.

Leadership expert John Hamm, author of *Unusually Excellent: The Necessary Nine Skills Required for the Practice of Great Leadership* (Jossey-Bass/A Wiley Imprint, February 2011, www.unusuallyexcellent.com), has spent his career studying the practitioners of unusually excellent leadership via his work as a CEO, venture capitalist, board member, high-level consultant, and professor of leadership at the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University. In his powerful back-to-basics reference book, he offers both seasoned and aspiring leaders a framework for understanding and a guide for applying the battle-tested fundamentals of leadership.

According to Hamm, the following are the seven leadership mistakes that put your team in danger of failing elegantly—along with some remedies to get them back into the winner’s mindset.

1. **Setting impossible goals.** Leading the goal-setting process to arrive at objectives that are perfectly sized is very tricky work, but this effort has never been more important to success than it is in today’s geographically dispersed, virtual organizations. Taskmasters and pacesetting leaders need to learn the fine line between an invigorating challenge and a wholly deflating expectation. They also need to realize that everyone on the team may not share their level of maniacal commitment.

   “While top performers are inspired by ‘stretch’ goals that seem slightly out of their reach, smart team members will not waste their time training for a ‘three-minute mile,’” says Hamm. “Goals that are clearly beyond any reasonable confidence of achievement are worse than easy goals—they actually disengage your team’s energy. The predictable and natural response is ‘Why bother?’”

2. **Letting people get pseudo-wins by “majoring in the minors.”** Very talented people can and do lose focus on the critical path problems that must be solved to transform an idea into reality. Those are often the knottiest problems, and sometimes we resist them for a period of time, preferring to create some satisfying momentum on simpler tasks or tasks that are simply more fun.

   “Leaders must develop an eye and ear for this weakness—and must try to listen for it in every conversation and look for it in every ops review,” notes Hamm. “They must relentlessly redirect energy to the hard problems, realizing that it is human nature to drift from the tough stuff in favor of more emotionally fulfilling and easier project modules.”
3. **Tolerating “The dog ate my homework” and other common excuses.**

In an organization, too much tolerance can be a dangerous notion, mainly because without a clear line in the sand defining acceptable and unacceptable, a blurred line between success and failure follows. When you're failing elegantly, for example, you tolerate “The dog ate my homework” and other classic excuses. No results plus a good excuse are presented in lieu of results—and tolerated. Massive amounts of energy are poured into sophisticated justifications and rationalizations for certain courses of action, and there is veiled blame for everything outside the team's control.

“What you want, and what the winner's mindset demands, are insightful explanations for the gap between expected and actual performance,” says Hamm. “These are informed guesses—as informed and objective as they can be, untainted by the effort expended in dodging responsibility. There is tolerance of the simple fact that we don't have control over every variable in the game, so at times—through either forces outside our influence or simply not having run our best play—the results are not as we wish.”

4. **Allowing sloppiness and imprecision.** The nice guy in you wants to avoid the perception of being a hardcore taskmaster and will politely look the other way, or catalog it away with some good-natured humor, allowing a corner to be cut, a report to be incomplete, or some shoddy work to pass as acceptable. Shoddy work and sloppiness almost always stem from being lazy or uncommitted or not having enough pride in the finished work.

“Leaders want to be good people, and they want to show others that they have the wisdom to accept human frailty,” notes Hamm. “So they allow themselves to tolerate a little sloppiness here and a little imprecision there in their subordinates’ work. But high reliability organizations never allow sloppiness, because they know it equals death. Unusually excellent leaders have a zero tolerance policy for sloppiness.”

5. **Encouraging “editorialized” data.** One of the most pernicious points where failure can take hold is in the feedback process. Leaders, being eternal optimists and enthusiasts, also have a dangerous tendency to signal, often unconsciously, their dislike of bad news, their inner revulsion toward failure. When that happens—especially when that leader hasn't regularly established an absolute demand for accurate, objective data—subordinates will begin to shape and color the data to meet the leader's hopeful expectations and emotional needs, rather than the leader's intellectual needs. The feedback data start becoming corrupted, and that in turn, begins to undermine the overall strategy—until the likelihood of success itself begins to plummet.

“Unusually excellent leaders demand that performance feedback data be delivered promptly and be uncolored, objective, plentiful, and robust,” says Hamm. “This data is used to figure out what is working and what isn't, so that corrections to course and speed can be made.”

6. **Failing to measure what matters.** The right metrics will serve you in enormously useful ways. As the Crosby Quality Institute reminds us: You will get what you inspect, not what you expect.

Hamm writes about one CEO who was constantly entertaining requests from his sales force for changes to the company's product line—change orders—in response to “customer requests.” In this case, very few of these requested
changes, which came at great expense in engineering time and cost, resulted in orders from the people who had passionately argued the case. Instead of getting upset about it, the CEO simply asked that the team begin to track the percentage of change orders resulting in sales orders, and—what do you know?—this costly practice came to a screeching halt as soon as the sales force knew their bosses were looking at these data, by salesperson, every month.

“Measuring what matters is perhaps the very highest use of leadership author-
ity in leading the domain of execution,” explains Hamm. “Once the plan is set, the resources and funding are committed, and the action starts, there is mostly just feedback and response to the unknowns of the battle to be managed. The one thing you must have, to make the real-time course corrections that will inevitably be required, is good data. Invest in the design and the machinery required to gather, analyze, and present the data you need—quickly, accurately, and easily. This, more than anything else, will serve your leadership needs in the arena of live ammo—which the score is kept, the winners get to keep playing, and the losers go home.”

7. **Allowing an ABSOLUTE commitment to winning to slip.** A tolerance for excuses, corrupt data that compromise strategy, and a distorted view of what is really happening “out there” are akin to boiling a frog 1 degree at a time. The frog can’t tell how hot the water has gotten until it is dead. But if you put all these factors together and add the heightened sense of urgency that always characterizes the execution phase, you’ll have plenty of the necessary ingredi-
ents in place for systematic failure. The key factor is the resignation and rationalization that occurs when we conclude that winning seems out of reach.

“These are dark moments for any team,” says Hamm. “And yet, we all know that we should leave it all on the field and, as the saying goes, ‘win or die try-
ing.’ But when you’ve already begun to distance yourself from your absolute commitment to winning, you start blaming everything and everyone—your teammates, the strategy, bad luck, crooked competitors, insufficient support, and, most of all, the man or woman in charge. The fact that many people— the honest and secure ones first—see what’s happening and hold the behav-
ior in contempt often proves to be an effective vaccine against the contagion spreading.

“Passive acceptance of failure, and the rationalization that always goes with it, is a cancer that can begin anywhere in the organization, then metastasize to every office, including your own,” says Hamm. “You can prevent it by setting clear and precise standards of behavior for everyone on the team, as well as clear con-
sequences for the violation of those standards. And you can control it through continuous and open communication with every member of your team.”

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**Budget**

**How to maintain training excellence with a decreased budget**

Has your training budget been decreased in the last few years? Many organizations have learned to economize their training without losing excellence. In this tip, we’ll look at how one such company copes.
Like many other companies, the economic downturn forced Heavy Construction Systems Specialists Inc. (HCSS) to reduce its employee development budget over the last few years. But unlike some other companies, the Sugar Land, Texas, company was able to cut expenses without sacrificing learning for its 100+ employees.

**Doing more with less**

With a little creativity, HCSS (www.hcss.com) has been able to continue offering development opportunities, even though its employee development budget was cut in half from 2008 to 2009. The alternative approaches have been so cost-effective that in 2009 HCSS spent only about one-third of the amount that was allocated for employee development in 2008, Organizational Development Manager Sebabi Leballo reports.

HCSS is an employee-owned company that develops estimating, field entry, dispatching, and related software for the heavy/highway/utility construction industry. One of the ways it has saved money is by relying more heavily than usual on its internal expertise.

For example, instead of sending a handful of employees to take the same course outside the company, it might pay for one employee to attend the training. That employee would then teach the material to his or her colleagues, Leballo says.

HCSS relies on subject matter experts to teach other courses as well. For example, executives lead classes on financial literacy and professional development, showing employees how to keep their personal finances in order and how to leverage their strengths and hone their business and professional skills, according to Leballo.

In one recent year, the company's most successful program was its small leadership discussion groups, “where specific topics on leadership and management are taught and discussed,” he says.

HCSS has also found that having employees read books is a cost-effective development alternative, according to Leballo. “We bought a lot of books” that year.

**Unique orientation experience**

In addition to personal development (e.g., financial literacy, personal growth, and wellness) and professional development courses, HCSS offers leadership development courses and a 6-month employee onboarding program through its corporate university.

The onboarding program includes an initial orientation that is unique in that it does not cover policies and procedures, Leballo says. “We figure they can read those on their own.” Instead, “the entire orientation is about the culture of the company, discussing strengths, what the company is about, how to make a difference in the company.”

During onboarding, each new hire is paired with a mentor from a different department, who helps the individual learn about the company and meet a variety of employees, and serves as a “sounding board” for the new hire during his or her initial months of employment, he explains.
New hires and their spouses are invited to dinner with company executives, which helps them get to know the executives and feel comfortable sharing ideas.

HCSS, which was named a Top Small Workplace by The Wall Street Journal, has also been recognized as a top employer by the city of Houston and the state of Texas. The company has been one of The Best Companies to Work for in Texas 10 years in a row.

**Lessons learned**

Companies faced with cuts to their training and development budget should look for creative ways to promote learning, according to Leballo. “You need to be very creative and really think how to run your training.

“Use the resources you have within your company,” he continues. Find out what knowledge individual employees have and ask them to share that knowledge or mentor their coworkers.

**Career**

**Use leadership training to create career paths**

Providing leadership training not only helps attract top talent but it also serves as a valuable retention tool, says Convergys Corporation’s Senior Vice President for Human Resources Clark Handy. In this tip, we’ll look at their leadership training programs.

In recent years, Convergys (http://www.convergys.com), a global leader in providing customer care, human resources, and billing services, implemented two training and development programs, Future Leaders and Emerging Leaders. Training magazine recognized the programs when it named Convergys to a recent Training Top 125 list.

“We are honored to be named to this select list of companies that excel at employee training and development,” he says. “Convergys’ leadership development programs help us recruit and retain the best employees, which translates into superior service to Convergys’ clients.”

**Creating advantage**

The leadership programs were introduced to formalize existing programs, in response to employee feedback, and to “create a sustainable advantage in the marketplace,” says Handy. “We have a very people-intensive business. There was recognition that we could be doing a lot more to prepare people for leadership roles.” The leadership programs also provide internal career paths for employees, he says.

Introduced in January 2003, the Future Leaders program is geared toward existing and potential first-level supervisors. Participants are chosen on the basis of their current and previous contributions to the organization, as well as on an assessment of their future potential, according to Handy. The 10-month program
includes a 1-week seminar that is offered several times each year to about 25 participants at a time.

**Emerging paths**

The Emerging Leaders program, which was implemented in October 2004, is designed to help more experienced managers sharpen and enhance their managerial and leadership skills, says Handy. “It is a 1-week learning experience followed by monthly assignments and facilitated conference calls over 6 months’ time.” About 30 Convergys employees typically participate.

The leadership programs are designed to build on one other, Handy says, and all of the company’s training programs are aimed at “enhancing performance, enhancing capabilities, and preparing people to assume greater and greater responsibilities.

“All of our programs are built on the principle of self-awareness,” he says. “We believe that leadership starts by understanding who you are, how you got to where you’re at … knowing yourself before you can begin to coach others.” As such, the leadership training programs focus on participants’ strengths, as well as opportunities for improvement.

Content in the leadership programs is supplemented by self-paced, online courses, according to Handy. Convergys contracts with a third party to provide a library of course offerings, and it also provides internally developed courses through its Personal Development Center.

In addition to providing valuable information to supervisors and managers, the leadership programs help them get to know their colleagues throughout the company, form personal networks, and “break down walls across business unit lines,” Handy says.

**Coaching**

**Coaching creates competitive advantage, career paths**

Convergys Corporation’s Senior Vice President for Human Resources Clark Handy says the company’s CEO believes that, ideally, Convergys “leaders should spend 50 percent of their time coaching employees for performance.”

Consistent with that philosophy, the company piloted a third leadership program. The day-long Leader as Coach program is geared toward managers at the director level and above.

If you are looking for ways to strengthen leadership training in your organization, Handy recommends creating customized training that addresses your company’s needs. “Find out what the organization really needs and what the gaps are—both now and in the future.”

He also says it’s important to seek feedback on training programs, to make sure the training creates value to the organization, and to be on the lookout for ways to continually improve.
Skills needed for personal and organizational growth change constantly. That means offering appropriate training opportunities is a key professional development tool.

- Group training cannot only provide employees with the essential skills they need to perform well in their current jobs but also prepare them for promotion.
- One-on-one training can narrow the focus to include specific skills an employee needs to advance along his or her particular career path. You can provide the training yourself when you have time or delegate this task to experienced employees. This can also be accomplished by sending the employee off-site to a seminar or a conference workshop.
- Coaching is another excellent way to develop employees on a one-to-one basis. This informal, often spontaneous, daily contact with employees offers many opportunities to focus on professional development. It lets you guide and direct a worker’s progress. It gives you an on-the-spot opportunity to recognize accomplishments and build on them. And it provides a chance to motivate and support employees in their self-development efforts.
- Cross-training is another productive way to build new skills and provide new work experiences. Cross-training also broadens an employee’s perspective, allowing the worker to see how what others do fits in with what he or she does. An understanding of the bigger picture is essential as employees rise to higher levels in the organization.

**Train managers to be winning coaches**

Baseball coaches and players will soon be reporting for spring training, which reminds us of the importance of good coaching for a team’s chances for victory. Do you train your managers to effectively coach their teams to victory in your market? In this tip, we offer an outline for training your supervisors to coach employees to superior performance.

In sports, coaches develop and motivate players. They work hard to bring out the best in each player and then to unify all their players into a winning team. Coaching in the workplace has basically the same purpose and involves similar techniques. To develop a competent, motivated, and productive workforce, your supervisors must be good coaches. Some of them may be natural coaches or have experience coaching from other jobs. But to make sure all your supervisors are effective coaches, you need to train them and teach them proper coaching techniques.

**Legal overview**

There are no laws that require you to train supervisors to coach employees effectively. However, well-trained, knowledgeable, motivated employees help the organization comply with legal and regulatory requirements in general.

Any kind of training that helps supervisors better manage their employees and their department is useful and important. Effective coaching not only makes employees more competent and cooperative but also generally increases job satisfaction, which can reduce grievances, complaints, and the possibility of employee lawsuits.
Training objectives

Training on effective coaching skills requires specific objectives. When the training is complete, supervisors will be able to:

- Recognize the benefits of coaching.
- Identify the role of the coach.
- Understand the techniques involved in successful coaching.
- Use coaching effectively to improve employee performance and help employees grow and develop.

Training requirements

Your coaching for a superior employee performance training program should contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Purposes of coaching
- Benefits of coaching
- Qualities of a good coach
- Elements of effective coaching
- Supervisor’s role as a coach
- Coaching sessions
- Coaching strategies for all employees
- Coaching employees through times of change

Training exercise

This exercise is intended for all supervisors. Its objective is to review basic information about coaching.

Instruct trainees to complete the work sheet below. Then discuss the results as a group and answer any questions. (Use the Guidance below.)

1. Briefly define “coaching.”

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

2. Identify three purposes of coaching.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

3. Name two benefits of coaching.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
4. List three qualities of a good coach.

Guidance

Here is information to use in your discussion:

1. **Coaching is informal one-to-one or small group interaction with employees.** It provides supervisors with an excellent opportunity to encourage, advise, motivate, and develop their employees a little more every day. It is, therefore, an essential supervisory tool. It’s also a philosophy of employee management that leads supervisors to create a climate in their department that encourages and supports professional growth.

2. **Purposes of employee coaching include:**
   - Informing
   - Teaching
   - Guiding
   - Recognizing
   - Motivating
   - Assisting
   - Developing
   - Empowering

3. **Benefits of coaching include:**
   - Improving productivity and quality
   - Boosting enthusiasm and morale
   - Strengthening relationships with employees and promoting more effective communication
   - Increasing employee job satisfaction
   - Improving teamwork
   - Building trust and enhancing employee loyalty

4. **Qualities of a good coach include being:**
   - Positive and enthusiastic
   - Knowledgeable
   - Observant
   - A good listener
Communicating

Stay in touch with employee leaders

Identifying and equipping promising employees is an exciting part of a training professional’s job. In this tip, we look at how one company stays in touch with its potential employee leaders.

Integrated Project Management Company, Inc. (IPM) ensures that its employees are challenged, provided continual opportunities for growth, and treated fairly with respect and dignity. High standards have been set for staff, and the work and environment are motivating, says Jo Jackson, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), who is responsible for the HR function for the 85-employee workforce as part of her job responsibilities.

The company, which provides project management leadership to several industries, has been named a Great Place to Work® in the Best Small & Medium Workplaces category by the Great Place To Work® Institute and Entrepreneur Magazine for the last 3 years. Jackson herself was named CFO of the Year by the Daily Herald’s Business Ledger in 2012.

“You can’t be a consultant without thriving on the challenge of continually reproving yourself and getting that boost when you knock your clients’ socks off,” explains Jackson. To support that environment of continuous improvement and career development, Jackson says, the performance review process is part of regular business operations. “‘Defy complacency’ are two of my favorite words out of [our] Mission & Beliefs Statement. They sum up our whole approach to how to perform and how we look at evaluating that performance.”

Jackson explains that IPM, which has its worldwide headquarters in Burr Ridge, Illinois, hires the most amazing, bright, hardworking people who already have skills most important to the firm. “We make sure that our supervisors and employees are exactly on the same page with the Performance Summary and Development Plan (PS&DP), rolled out in 1997, the details of which are shared with employees during new employee orientation.”
Performance measurement

An annual PS&DP is shared with all employees no later than their specific anniversary date, and it is the culmination of a year of both weekly verbal discussions between supervisors and staff as well as written events, notes Jackson. She says that no employee is ever surprised by something that appears on the annual PS&DP since it would already have come up during a weekly one-on-one conversation.

The PS&DP concept has two primary components. One is a numbering system for feedback. “We came up with a numbering system so whenever feedback is given, there’s a number attached,” explains Jackson. “The numbers are 1 to 10. A 1 and 2 are unsatisfactory; 3, 4, and 5 are satisfactory; 6, 7, and 8 are good; and 9 and 10 are outstanding.

“A new hire or comparatively inexperienced project manager could get feedback/events documented weekly, but as an employee progresses, it should be monthly.” This written feedback is in addition to weekly conversations. The numbering process allows supervisors to be objective in that everyone (most employees are project managers) is held up to the same expectations.

“We encourage employees to ask the question of their supervisors, ‘What would have made this (e.g., report or activity) a 10?’” says Jackson. This assists employees in concretely understanding how they can improve.

“Our annual performance expectations are for the range that we consider ‘good,’” notes Jackson. “The numbers graphed could show a curve that goes up and down as employees have been given new challenges that put them in a learning mode again.”

‘Elements of success’

Key to the development of the PS&DP process was identification of the “Elements of Success.” She explains this other prime component of the PS&DP process as composed of Performance Elements (more technical elements of the work) and Character Elements (inherent traits).

In the Character category, the first two elements are honesty and integrity. Another element is sense of humor. “You can’t take yourself too seriously,” she comments. Others are loyalty, trust, work ethic, dependability, excellence, compassion, objectivity, and confidence. After each group of elements, there is space for supervisors to write a few sentences or a paragraph to share details.

The personal touch

Weekly conversations between staffers and supervisors (including brief updates about what is going on in employees’ personal lives), as well as quarterly all-employee meetings, maintain a personal touch within the organization. The quarterly meetings feature two employees who are given 15 minutes each to talk about anything they’d like about their lives, notes Jackson. The discussions are called “Up Close and Personal.”

Jackson’s advice: “I think what’s most important is to make sure that your people know you think of them as people, that you care enough about them to make their needs [and] their successes a priority to you, to the company, and to their supervisors.”
Furthermore, she suggests that you have to make yourself vulnerable to staff. “If you’re not willing to share what’s going on in your life with your direct reports, they’re not going to share with you.”

To learn more about IPM, which provides services to the life sciences, healthcare, food and beverage, industrial, and consumer products industries, visit [www.ipmcinc.com](http://www.ipmcinc.com).

**Community service**

**Train employees to be leaders in the community**

Training employees to be efficient on the job has immediate benefits for your organization, no doubt. But have you considered taking that training a step further? For example, could you share your successful efficiency operations in the community? In this tip, we’ll look at how one organization has adapted its own efficiency training for an important community institution.

Primary objectives for training employees are always to help them perform their jobs in the most efficient and productive way possible. But once those goals are well in hand, additional objectives can be beneficial to both your organization’s bottom line and its corporate reputation.

Well-known for training its own employees on lean principles, Toyota partnered with the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) in Indiana to teach the school district how to make its process of collecting and distributing 14,000 netbooks to students in grades 6 through 12 more efficient.

Since October 2012, members from the Toyota Production System Support Center (TSSC) have provided free, on-site support to the school district in an effort to ensure that the process “runs as smoothly as the production lines at the automaker’s plant in Princeton,” Toyota explained in a statement.

“It’s been an amazing turnaround,” said David Smith, EVSC’s superintendent. “We knew that training a team of individuals in operational excellence would be beneficial, but this work with TSSC has helped us to see very practically how efficiencies can free up people and money, allowing us to direct resources to our core work in each classroom.”

“In the past, there was no uniformity to collections, and students were out of class too long,” said Janit Market, an English teacher at EVSC’s Central High School. “Now, we have a team of people who are solely focused on collections.”

Immediate improvements reported during the spring collection of netbooks include a 79 percent drop in the amount of class time missed by students during collection, a significant drop in labor needed to facilitate the process, standardized procedures, and accurate inventory, said EVSC Chief Operating Officer Rick Cameron.

“In the Toyota Production System, it all comes down to eliminating waste through solving problems,” said Craig Kelle, Toyota Production System (TPS) manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana. “Before TPS, there was wasted time and duplication of work [in EVSC’s netbook collection and distribution procedure]. For
instance, while the correct number of netbooks was shown by the system to be available, they were not available at the correct locations.”

EVSC Chief Operating Officer Rick Cameron said the school system is now looking for other opportunities to make process changes and save money. “We have already started to look at “Just-In-Time” inventory for our bus-garage service. We are taking TPS (Toyota Production System) and trying to make it our way.”

“In a nutshell, that is why we do this,” said Scott Dickson, TSSC manager. “While business and industry sectors are familiar with lean processes such as TPS, it is encouraging to see a school district thinking in such a way and willing to devote time and effort to becoming more efficient. To see that light come on and for Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp. to carry this to other parts of its operation is fantastic. That is forward thinking.”

Among other initiatives, Toyota also provides free classroom training and comprehensive online resources to promote safe driving among teenagers; offers college scholarships in science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines; and cosponsors Toyota Family Learning in partnership with the National Center for Family Literacy to engage families in learning together—online and offline.

Continuous learning

Make learning an integral part of your company culture

Many companies have a stated goal of “continuous improvement across all operations,” or some similar phraseology. In order to achieve this goal, “continuous learning” must be implemented “across all operations.” In this tip, we learn how one company seeks to make this happen.

Continuous learning and development are high priorities at U.S. Security Associates—a fact that is evidenced by the firm’s many training awards and the accomplishments of individual employees.

Recently, the Atlanta-based firm received an American Society for Training & Development (now known as the Association for Talent Development (ATD)) BEST Award for the second time. The firm, which provides national security services and global consulting and investigations, was ranked 13 out of 30 organizations recognized worldwide.

“We feel that a well-trained workforce plays a significant role in enabling our business,” said Chuck Schneider, president and CEO of U.S. Security Associates (www.ussecurityassociates.com). “From protecting the people, property, and assets of our customers to management and leadership development, learning is an integral part of our company culture.”

The coveted BEST Awards are presented to companies that demonstrate enterprisewide success in training.

“These 30 companies get it,” says Tony Bingham, ATD (www.astd.org) president and CEO. “They excel in creating innovative, vibrant learning cultures that clearly align with strategic business goals. The leadership of these organizations values
learning and knows that having a knowledgeable and skilled workforce drives success.”

Last year, U.S. Security Associates also was recognized for its training programs by *Training* magazine, which recognized the firm as a top training company for the sixth consecutive year. The firm said one of the factors that helped it win this prestigious award is “the ongoing education, training, and field implementation” of employees’ learned skills in real-life settings. The firm pointed to an employee who won a Volunteer Firefighter of the Year Award—in part, because of her commitment to keep her training levels/certifications current.

“We are very proud of all our employees, especially for their dedication and commitment to continuous learning and improvement,” Schneider said. “The training programs we create reinforce our core values—Integrity, Safety, Quality, and Pride.”

In 2012, U.S. Security Associates Vice President of Human Resources Jon Dimalanta was recognized by *Training* with its Top Young Trainers award—recognizing training professionals aged 40 and under—for his critical role in the firm’s USA Training Academy. “Our award-winning training academy is a testament to his leadership and innovation in the areas of technology and continuous learning,” Schneider said at the time.

On its website, U.S. Security Associates describes the USA Training Academy as “the cornerstone of our national training and development efforts. From our state-of-the-art training studio we deliver all levels of training from our Security Officer Basic Training to Administrative and Management and Academy Programs.”

The firm has also embraced the importance of supporting learning and development outside of the company. For example, U.S. Security Associates employees recently served Junior Achievement of Georgia as classroom volunteers. Junior Achievement, the country’s largest organization focused on inspiring and empowering students to succeed, runs volunteer-delivered programs for children in kindergarten through 12th grade on such topics as business and entrepreneurship, personal financial literacy, and workforce readiness.

U.S. Security Associates employees shared business concepts with students and discussed their jobs. “We feel it is important to give back to the local communities we serve, and Junior Achievement’s philosophy is so closely aligned with ours that supporting it is really a natural fit for us,” said Schneider. “Junior Achievement believes that inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy will result in a skilled workforce that will allow the business community to flourish and grow.”

### Development

**Invest in employee training and development**

From paying upfront for employees’ coursework to ensuring that employees maintain cutting-edge skills to finding internal opportunities for employees to grow, Hamilton Sundstrand recognizes the importance of investing in employee development. This tip examines how they do it.
Headquartered in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, Hamilton Sundstrand (www.hamiltonsundstrand.com) is among the world’s largest suppliers of technologically advanced aerospace and industrial products. A subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (www.utc.com), the company designs, manufactures, and services aerospace systems and provides integrated system solutions for commercial, corporate, and military aircraft. In addition, Hamilton Sundstrand is a major supplier for international space programs.

**Soaring to new heights**

“Hamilton Sundstrand is where you can unlock your maximum potential,” President Alain Bellemare wrote in a statement. Combined with a company “focus on continuous learning and development,” Hamilton Sundstrand’s Employee Scholar Program provides opportunities that help employees reach their “fullest potential,” he stated.

Under the Employee Scholar Program, eligible employees are entitled to a number of education-related benefits. For example, Hamilton Sundstrand pays for tuition costs, as well as related expenses (e.g., books, registration, and regular academic fees), according to a description of the program on the company’s website.

In addition, “eligible employees can receive up to three hours of paid time off to study per week.” Furthermore, the program is available to both “global full-time and part-time UTC employees … after one year of continuous service,” according to the website.

Hamilton Sundstrand’s commitment to learning and development was recognized when the company placed first in the “Learning/Career Opportunity” category of Aviation Week magazine’s fifth annual “Workforce Study.” According to a company statement, Hamilton Sundstrand outranked some of its competitors in the annual study, which assesses where U.S.-based aerospace and defense professionals most want to work.

“[A] core tenet of the Hamilton Sundstrand approach, and that of parent company United Technologies, is to pay for any type of higher education coursework up front, not as a reimbursement,” the survey reported. In addition, “Hamilton Sundstrand provides an average 40 [hours] of education/training per year per employee.”

The study also noted a focus among Hamilton Sundstrand’s leadership team “on moving people around the organization in a planned but rapid way to keep pace with a generation that thrives on the velocity of new challenges.”

**Engaged workforce**

The company strives to keep employees engaged and to meet their development needs. “At Hamilton Sundstrand, we believe our success is largely dependent on an engaged workforce,” said Tutch Shirane, former Hamilton Sundstrand vice president, Human Resources and Communications. “Our leadership continually assesses the organization’s learning and development needs to ensure employees are satisfied with the opportunities afforded them, and that they have the necessary resources to be successful in their jobs.”
Aviation Week ranked responses from the 43 participating companies on criteria deemed most important by its readers. Although Hamilton Sundstrand has previously ranked high in the “Professional Development/Learning” and “Technological Challenge” categories, the 2009 study marked the first time that it received the top ranking in a category.

The magazine found that Hamilton Sundstrand best met the “Learning/Career Opportunity” category’s criteria. Those criteria, the magazine reported, include “tuition reimbursement availability and rate of use, average hours of learning/training per year per employee, knowledge management structures, promotion rates, link between employee career/development plans to evaluation process, and clear and available career paths.” Hamilton Sundstrand was also ranked high in the “Valuing the Individual/Diversity” category.

Ethics

Train your employees in business ethics

Business ethics is not just an issue for management; employees can also face ethical questions as they perform their jobs. This tip discusses the importance of ethical leadership training for your employees.

The information in this tip is adapted from a course in the Leadership for Employees Library onTrainingToday called “Business Ethics—What Employees Need to Know.”

HR experts and labor and employment attorneys agree that businesses—regardless of their industry or size—should be concerned about the ethical conduct of their employees. According to a survey by the Ethics Officers Association, a nonprofit organization composed of corporate ethics and compliance officers, in conjunction with the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters, half of U.S. workers have committed one or more illegal or unethical acts. These acts included stealing office supplies, abusing sick days, massaging quality control figures, and using or abusing drugs and alcohol on work time.

Other types of unethical behavior include:

- Conflicts of interest
- Disclosure of personal or proprietary information
- Inappropriate (giving or receipt of) gifts, favors, and extra compensation
- Bribes, gratuities, or padding of quotes in order to unfairly win a deal
- Use of company equipment for private gain
- Illegal copying of software
- Securities violations such as insider trading
- Falsification of records
- Acts of discrimination
Such unethical behavior is the reason businesses across the United States are developing or reinforcing ethics policies and codes of conduct, training employees in ethical decision making, and holding employees accountable for their conduct on the job.

**Training objectives**

As you prepare your training session, make sure you put together meaningful goals. When the training is complete, for example, employees will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of business ethics.
- Understand the requirements of the law and our ethics policy.
- Identify ethical problems on the job.
- Make ethical decisions.

**Legal overview**

Federal law requires publicly traded companies to abide by ethical standards. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act was adopted in the wake of the Enron, WorldCom, and other corporate scandals, as well as reforms led by the New York Stock Exchange. Section 406 of the Act specifically addresses corporate codes of ethics and disclosure requirements in corporations.

A directive in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act required the U.S. Sentencing Commission to amend the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. Those amendments specify seven requirements for ethics policies that apply to corporations, partnerships, associations, unions, trusts, pension funds, unincorporated organizations, governments, and nonprofit organizations.

The seven requirements for ethics policies are:

1. **Establishing ethics compliance standards and procedures.**
2. **Assigning a specific high-level person in the organization to oversee the compliance program.**
3. **Taking due care in the delegation of substantial discretionary authority** to individuals in the organization; in other words, being careful to select an objective high-level person to investigate any violations.
4. **Communicating standards and procedures to all employees** through training and through printed and electronic materials.
5. **Monitoring and auditing the operation of the compliance program,** and establishing a help line to report possible wrongdoing.
6. **Consistently enforcing the policy** and disciplining employees for violations.
7. **Responding promptly to any wrongdoing** and remedying any deficiencies. Whenever an employee commits a criminal act within the scope of his or her employment, the organization as a whole can be held liable under the law for the act of the individual employee. Employers can face hefty fines, be put on probation for up to 5 years, be forced to apologize to and compensate victims, post public notices of the conviction, and face forfeiture of assets.
Training requirements

Your business ethics training program should contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Definition of business ethics
- Importance of ethical conduct in the workplace
- Legal requirements
- Policy requirements
- Ethical values
- Common reasons for unethical conduct
- Ethical problem areas
- How to identify ethical problems
- Ethical decision making
- Questions to ask about ethical issues
- Ethics and relations with customers
- Ethics and relations with vendors

Training exercise

Here’s a useful training exercise you can use to get your ethics training off to an interactive start. The objective of the exercise is to examine key issues involved in business ethics.

Ask trainees to complete the worksheet below. Then use the answers provided in the “Guidance” section to discuss the results as a group and answer any questions.

1. Briefly define business ethics.

   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

2. Briefly explain why ethics is important in business.

   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

3. List three ethical values.

   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

   51 Tips for More Effective Leadership Training
4. Identify two reasons people sometimes behave unethically on the job.

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

5. Name two possible ethical problem areas you need to watch out for.

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Guidance

Here is information for you to use in your discussion of the exercise.

1. Business ethics is a standard of acceptable behavior on the job. It is a set of rules by which to judge decisions and conduct in the workplace.

2. Ethical conduct is important because it not only involves doing what is right and proper but it’s also good for business. Ethical conduct is the basis for long-term success in any organization. Ethical conduct:
   - Promotes a strong public image for the organization
   - Makes the best use of resources
   - Helps maintain quality and productivity
   - Assists the organization to comply with laws and regulations
   - Protects the organization’s privileged information as well as that of customers
   - Ensures that relations with vendors are proper and professional
   - Boosts morale and promotes teamwork because employees feel they can trust one another and their employer

3. Ethical values include:
   - Integrity—being honest, keeping your promises
   - Loyalty—supporting the organization’s mission and policies, protecting privileged information, and cooperating with others in the organization to promote common goals
   - Respect—treating others professionally, with courtesy and tolerance
   - Accountability—taking responsibility for actions and conduct
   - Fairness—acting consistently and impartially at all times
   - Responsibility—obeying laws and regulations and acting appropriately toward the community in which you do business and with the public in general

4. Common reasons for unethical conduct include:
   - Pressure to achieve a result, or even pressure to cut corners
   - Uncertainty about what is actually the right thing to do
5. Possible ethical problem areas include:

- Conflicts of interest
- Relationships
- Communication
- Confidentiality
- Laws and regulations

Introverts as leaders

Extroverts aren’t the only ones who make good leaders

Lawyer-turned-author Susan Cain admits she’s an introvert and has encountered some challenges because of it. But she firmly believes that introverts have important contributions to make to U.S. business that employers usually aren’t aware of. That’s because employers have been trained, says Cain, to seek out extroverts.

*Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking* is Cain’s most recent book (Crown, 2012). In it, she describes the rise of extroverts, in what she calls “the culture of personality.” She refers to earlier examples, like Dale Carnegie, but her most compelling example is the Harvard Business School (HBS), where, she reports, a student told her, “This school is predicated on extroversion. Your grades and social status depend on it. It’s just the norm here.”

As a result, Cain writes, “The essence of the HBS education is that leaders have to act confidently and make decisions in the face of incomplete information.” However, in group exercises that depend on consensus, the loudest voices often prevail when the quieter ones are better informed or have better ideas. And that’s the thesis of Cain’s entire book—that teams, and businesses, dominated by the actions and opinions of extroverts are often less innovative and successful than those that seek the input of introverts.

She writes movingly about Steve Wozniak, an electronic genius who pioneered word processors and computers for Hewlett-Packard, beginning in the mid-1970s. Wozniak says in his autobiography, “Most inventors and engineers I’ve met are like me—they’re shy and they live in their heads.” Many if not most introverts prefer to work by themselves and have their best ideas when they’re allowed to do so.

If we understood the importance of this, Cain says, “We’d want to teach our kids to work independently. We’d want to give employees plenty of privacy and autonomy. Yet increasingly we do just the opposite.” We’ve become convinced of the value of what Cain calls the “New Groupthink” to solve problems and spawn new ideas. Many workers spend huge amounts of their time on teams, and they have less and less privacy in increasingly smaller personal workspaces.
Let's look at brainstorming. Cain admits that generating ideas as part of a team, often called “brainstorming,” is a corporate process that's still very popular. But research shows that, by and large, it doesn't work as well as other methods. Psychologist Anders Ericsson has experimented with what he calls Deliberate Practice, which is best conducted alone.

His experiments showed that individuals who practiced their craft by themselves far excelled over those who practiced in groups. The reason is that, as Ericsson explains, when you practice deliberately, you identify the tasks or knowledge that are just out of your reach and strive to continually upgrade your performance.

By the same token, group brainstorming is less effective than many leaders believe. The earliest research to show this goes back to 1963(!), when psychologist Marvin Donnette found that people got more and better ideas by themselves than in groups as small as four.

Researchers usually suggest three reasons for this:

1. Any group is likely to contain “social loafers”—people who sit back and let others do the work;
2. Only one person can speak at a time, forcing others to sit and listen passively, which is called “production blocking”; and
3. Some group members fear looking stupid in front of their peers, which is called “evaluation apprehension” and holds back some potential contributors.

Let's look at introverts and leadership. Good leaders must have charisma, right? Meaning they must be extroverts, right? No, as it turns out, that's wrong. Cain notes that the ranks of effective CEOs are full of such introverts as Charles Schwab, Bill Gates, Sara Lee CEO Brenda Barnes, and former Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu CEO James Copeland.

One study of 128 companies and their CEOs showed that extroverted leaders made more money than their quieter counterparts, but their companies didn't do as well as those led by introverts.

Jim Collins, author of Good to Great, profiled CEOs who were known not for their charisma but for extreme humility combined with intense professional will. Their companies generated higher stock returns than those with flashier leaders.

Wharton management professor, Adam Grant, told Cain about one outstanding—and outstandingly introverted—leader. He is a U.S. Air Force wing leader, one rank below general. Being with people too much makes him lose focus, so he has trained himself to find time for thinking and recharging. He speaks quietly and is more interested in listening and gathering information than in asserting his own opinion. Introverted leaders draw the best from their subordinates.

The whole world doesn't talk too much. The subtitle of Cain's book is, according to her, misleading: It is Europe and North America that can't stop talking. Asia, by contrast, tends toward a very different, much more respectful, culture, in which people listen much and speak little. Cain believes we Westerners
would do well to take a page from the East’s book and tone ourselves down a bit. Who knows, we might learn something.

Leadership lessons

Train your employees to be leaders

Employees can be leaders even without a title. Leadership qualities are needed at every level in every department. In this tip, we learn some leadership lessons from former UCLA men’s basketball head coach, John Wooden.

At the start of each basketball season at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Coach John Wooden used to personally demonstrate for his players “how to correctly put on sweat socks to avoid folds, wrinkles, or creases that cause blisters,” he recently told BLR®. Such attention to detail, he says, is critical for success on and off the court.

What do sweat socks and blisters have to do with success? “A blister can cause distraction; a distraction can cause a turnover; a turnover in the last seconds of a game can cause you to be outscored,” he said.

“What if that game is for a national championship? I ask executives, ‘What is your version of putting on socks correctly?’ And that’s just the start of looking for relevant details.”

Wooden led the UCLA Bruins to 10 NCAA basketball championships in 12 years and, among other accomplishments, has been named America’s “Greatest Coach of the 20th Century” by ESPN.

He also coauthored a successful book, Coach Wooden’s Game Plan for Success: 12 Lessons for Extraordinary Performance and Personal Excellence (McGraw-Hill, 2009), with Steven Jamison. Wooden’s leadership advice provides insight for HR executives and other leaders in any organization.

Demonstrate your values

Wooden says leaders need to demonstrate the values they expect others to have.

As a leader, you “can talk about ‘values’ until you’re blue in the face, but whatever you say pales in comparison to the power of what you do—your own example.

“... It’s important to ‘demonstrate’ your values because it gives those under your supervision an important message: ‘This is how we do things here; this is what I expect from you,’” he explained. “How a leader behaves is generally how your organization behaves. Work ethic? Enthusiasm? Courage under fire? Fairness? Integrity? Quality of execution? Even being on time for meetings? The leader sets the standard with his or her own example.”
“Trust is “one of the most powerful leadership tools available to a leader,” Wooden says. Why is it so important?

“There are challenges for a leader when things are going great, but the challenges are much greater when things are going bad—whether it’s a losing streak, a competitor who seems to be taking over the market, or anything else.

“And bad times are a part of what leadership must deal with. That’s when you need the trust of those under your supervision. They have to believe in you.

“Without trust they may cut and run; with trust they will follow you into uncharted waters. They must believe in you… Good values are a fundamental element in creating trust.”

Promote ‘greatness’

“I define greatness as making the effort to do your job for our team to the absolute maximum of your ability,” Wooden says. “You achieve greatness, in my view, when you do that. This is true whether you happen to be Bill Walton, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the sixth player on the bench, the equipment manager, or the head coach.

“Thus, greatness is available to everyone on our team, not just the super star or the high scorer in a particular game.”

As a basketball coach, “I made a very special effort to let the so-called lesser role players on a team know that I valued them and that they were pivotal in our achieving success.

“At the beginning of a press conference following a game, for example, I would intentionally mention a player or two who I knew the reporters wouldn’t ask about, just so that player got some deserved attention.

“In practice, I would acknowledge them more often than the ‘star.’ (I would generally give the ‘star’ my praise privately.)

“In my perspective, some players might be harder to replace—Bill or Kareem, for example—but that didn’t make them greater than their teammates.”

Common leadership mistake

What is the most common mistake that leaders make, and what should they do to avoid making that mistake? “I don’t mean this to sound glib, but the most common mistake leaders make might be fear of making a mistake,” Wooden says.

“My great coach at Purdue, Piggy Lambert, used to tell us, ‘The team that makes the most mistakes wins.’

“He meant that if you don’t make any mistakes, you aren’t doing anything; you’re static, sitting on your hands. You must initiate action to be competitive.

“... Of course, the difficult thing is to understand what kind of mistakes are worth making. If they come from lack of preparation and solid analysis, then you’re making the wrong kind of mistakes.
Let the team know you care

“A great organization in business or basketball is an extended family. At least that’s how it is for me. Strong bonds exist and positive relationships are developed. Not always, but ideally,” Wooden said.

The coach, manager, CEO, or other person in charge “must find appropriate ways to show individuals under his or her supervision” that he or she cares about those individuals.

“Sincere care and consideration for an employee—or player—must be expressed. Otherwise, how will they ever know they’re not considered just a cog in the wheel, expendable?

“People will work harder and better if they know they are valued as a person, part of an extended family, a member of an organization that cares about them.

“… For example, in the minutes before our practice would begin, I’d seek out players and talk to them about something in their lives beyond basketball. ‘How’s Mom? Is she feeling better?’; ‘Are you doing OK in that history class?’

“You can’t fake your interest, but when you have genuine interest you must look for ways to show it that are appropriate … There are many little ways you can show that you care.”

Good leaders teach

When asked what makes a leader a good teacher, Wooden pointed to the “Four Laws of Learning,” which are the same as the “Four Laws of Teaching” (i.e., Explanation, Demonstration, Imitation, and Repetition).

“Assuming you know what your subject matter is, it’s also good to remember a few other fundamentals,” he said.

“Offer information in bite-size pieces; be patient; recognize the different levels of learning ability within your group.

“And, as important as anything, remember that a teacher—the leader—must never stop learning. When you’re through learning, you’re through. I am still learning, and I’m almost a hundred years old. You must never stop learning.”

How to earn respect, trust

“If you give respect, you’ll get respect. The same goes for loyalty and trust and all the other virtues that I believe great leaders have to offer,” Wooden says.

“I also believe the leader, the person in charge, is usually the one who must initiate the process. Don’t wait for an employee to respect you before you’ll respect him or her. Hire good people, respect and trust them.

“I believe the following: ‘It is better to trust and be disappointed occasionally than to mistrust and be miserable all the time.’ I’ve been disappointed a few times along the way, but not enough to change my thinking on that subject.
“A good leader knows and teaches the difference between the good mistake and the bad mistake.”
For more on Coach Wooden, who died in 2010, visit www.coachwooden.com.

Mentoring youth

Consider youth mentoring

In this tip, we recognize National Mentoring Month with an article on youth mentoring from Susan Weinberger, PhD, the president of the Mentor Consulting Group in Norwalk, CT, USA, and an international expert on internal and external business mentoring and coaching programs. Weinberger writes:

“Many companies across America and internationally have embraced the concept of engaging in youth mentoring programs. Larger companies include Eli Lilly, Allstate Insurance Company with its extensive Helping Hands project, and General Electric Corporation. Much smaller companies, such as Webster Bank with branches in CT, RI, and MA, are involved in releasing employees to serve as mentors, in this case, in the schools where their bank branches are located.

“Companies that engage in youth mentoring programs sanction “work release” during the workday for their employees to volunteer as mentors for a youth, known as a mentee, at a specific location or in the community. The minimum requirement is 1 hour each week for a year of mentor/mentee sessions. Youth mentoring programs follow quality assurance standards to ensure maximum protection for mentors and mentees.

“Mentors often:

◆ Help to guide a young person toward completion of high school,
◆ Support postsecondary and employment opportunities, and
◆ Help to improve their self-esteem, academic performance, and peer relationships.

“In short, mentors are helping to prepare our future workforce.

“I have never witnessed a more powerful initiative to make a difference in the lives of young people today than mentoring. Youth mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship. The mentor offers encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. A nonprofit agency partners with a company to initiate and implement the program.

“Regardless of the program design or age of the youth being mentored, a mentor’s primary role is to serve as the mentee’s guide, friend, and advocate. [As noted previously,] often mentors help to guide a young person toward completion of high school, support postsecondary and employment opportunities, and help to improve their self-esteem, academic performance, and peer relationships. A mentor is not a teacher or other professional or parent. Mentors are helping to prepare our future workforce.”
Corporate engagement in mentoring

Companies thinking of designing a youth mentoring program should:

1. Obtain top management approval and get them involved.
2. Identify one person in the company, typically from human resources, community or public relations, or the foundation, who serves as the liaison with a partnering agency.
3. Secure release time from supervisors for employees to mentor.
4. Recruit potential mentors and ask them to complete an application process.
5. Screen employees, including a criminal background check to ensure maximum protection for the program, company, mentors, and youth.
6. Select employees to mentor who possess ideal characteristics. Not all employees make good mentors.
7. Conduct initial and ongoing training in conjunction with the partnering agency.
8. Monitor and support mentor/mentee sessions.
9. Recognize company mentors for their efforts.
10. Bring closure to matches, when appropriate.
11. Evaluate the program to determine its impact.

Kinds of company-sponsored youth mentoring programs

Regardless of location of the mentoring, companies work in partnership with a nonprofit that provides adequate staff to monitor and provide constant ongoing support to the mentoring program.

School-based mentoring programs take place only at a school site. The mentor typically spends a minimum of 1 hour a week during the school day matched with a student for a year.

After-school programs occur at a school or an agency such as the YMCA or local Boys & Girls Club. Programs sponsored by Big Brother Big Sister agencies can take place at school sites but also under staff supervision at the discretion of the mentor and mentee in the community. All matches may extend beyond 1 year based on the strength and success of the match and willingness to continue the relationship.

A more recent form of mentoring is Internet-based. Company employees and their mentees are engaged in sessions via the computer. These include a prescribed curriculum over a safe site that allows mentors and mentees to touch base on a weekly basis but usually also include some interaction in person.

Reverse mentoring

Much like reverse coaching within companies where a junior employee might be engaged in teaching a senior member the latest technology, mentees can often play a role in teaching their mentor a thing or two. Young people today are technologically savvy and often assist their mentor with everything from surfing the Web, including
Facebook and Twitter, to how to navigate their new iPhone, iPad®, computer, or similar device. I confess that some years ago my mentee actually taught me how to text on my BlackBerry® and gave me several lessons about texting abbreviations, such as LOL, about which I had not a clue. I think she got the last laugh!

January—National Mentoring Month

Since 2001, national youth-serving organizations, such as MENTOR, United Way Worldwide, and others, have teamed up with the Harvard School of Public Health every January to celebrate youth mentoring. The effort is aimed at acknowledging the value and multidirectional benefits of mentoring and creating awareness of the importance and need for more mentors in the lives of young people.

National Mentoring Month is a great time to jump on board, provide “work release” for your employees to get involved with a deserving youth, and enjoy the benefits. Socially responsible companies engage mentors who improve their own morale, satisfaction, and improve their job and personal performance. A listing of programs available in your area can be found on Mentoring.org.

Weinberger has a BS degree from Carnegie-Mellon University and her doctorate from the School of Business and Public Management at the University of Bridgeport. She is widely published and is a consultant to numerous corporations, community agencies, schools, and four federal agencies. Weinberger can be reached at www.MentorConsultingGroup.com or DrMentor@aol.com.

Millennials

Leadership training for all ages

Business and leadership blogger Dan Oswald (The Oswald Letter) thinks there’s a lot of potential in young workers if you’re willing to unleash it. In this tip, Oswald writes about seeing the potential in younger workers.

“I’m not much of a golf fan. I certainly can’t play the game and only have a passing interest in it as a spectator. Like the rest of the world, however, I did notice when young Rory McIlroy won the U.S. Open.

“It’s amazing to see a 22-year-old at the top of his profession. But it seems more and more common that young people are reaching towering heights while barely out of their teens—or still in them.

“LeBron James was just 18 years old when he declared himself eligible for the NBA draft and quickly became the best player in the NBA.

“And if you think this youthful trend is limited to sports, think again. Consider the tools you use every day at work, and you’ll likely find a young entrepreneur behind it.

“The software I’m using to write this post comes from Microsoft, whose cofounder Bill Gates was just 20 years old when he started the company. The Dell computer and keyboard I’m using come from a company that was started by a 20-year-old—Michael Dell. WordPress, the Web software our blogs run on, was started by a 19-year-old, Matt Mullenweg.
“Technology is changing the way we live our lives and do our jobs. My 14-year-old was headed out this morning and needed directions to his destination. I told him to do a Google search on his iPhone to get them. Google was started by a couple of guys in their mid-20s, and Steve Jobs was the same age when he started Apple.

“So what’s the point? I certainly don’t have a fountain of youth to take you back to your 20s if they’ve already passed you by. I’m not trying to depress you as you relive missed opportunities of your youth.

“I’m telling you, as a manager, to harness the power, curiosity, enthusiasm, and intelligence of the 20-somethings in your charge. These young people are capable of making a big impact. They want to contribute. They have ideas. They just need an opportunity. It’s up to you to give it to them.

“Many managers want to see the people they manage “pay their dues.” They came up through the ranks before finally getting their big opportunity, so they treat the people they manage the same way.

“Well, it’s a different world. The workplace has changed drastically. People don’t stay with one company for a lifetime, as they once did. Wait too long to give them an opportunity, and it’s likely they’ll be long gone before you do. They’ll trade job security and a regular paycheck for the opportunity to chase those dreams—unless you can allow them to have both.

“I distinctly remember something my boss said to me when I was in my mid-20s. We were talking about my work and career when she said, “Why are you in such a big hurry? What are you going to do when you’re 30?”

“I was a little surprised by her statement. I know it came in the form of two questions, but she was really making a statement about my impatience and my pushing for opportunity at the company.

“I responded as many 20-somethings might: “I don’t know what I’ll be doing at 30, but I’ll figure that out then. Right now, I’m really interested in taking on more responsibility and having an opportunity to prove myself.”

“I didn’t have a life plan that called for me to hit certain milestones at specific ages. In fact, 30 probably seemed like a lifetime away. I’d been in the workforce for 5 years and would have to work that many more just to get to 30 years old. I just knew that I wanted to learn and try new things. I wanted to show what I could do if given the chance.

“I think that’s what all talented, high-potential people in their 20s are looking for. They want an opportunity. And if you want to keep them, it’s up to you to give it to them. It’s obvious that young people are capable of achieving so much, if only we’re willing to let them try.

“Are you willing to give the 20-somethings that work for you that opportunity?”
Servant leaders

11 leadership lessons on being a servant leader

In this tip, we get 11 leadership lessons from author Matt Tenney.

A recent Gallup poll shows that only 30 percent of Americans are actively engaged at work. According to Gallup’s chairman and CEO, fully 20 percent of American employees are actively disengaged because they have “bosses from hell that make them miserable.” In turn, these employees “roam the halls spreading discontent.”

But wait—there’s good news. According to Matt Tenney, author of Serve to Be Great: Leadership Lessons from a Prison, a Monastery, and a Boardroom (Wiley, May 2014), managers can turn this depressing situation around and create the ultimate win-win. By developing both the aspiration and the ability to more effectively serve and care for the people on their teams, managers can become leaders people actually want to follow.

“When the focus is on serving team members, leaders can create a team culture that people want to be a part of, that produces superior results, and that has a positive impact on society as a whole,” says Tenney. “When this happens, leaders win, too, because they get promoted faster and create the conditions for sustainable, long-term success. Perhaps more important, they actually enjoy going to work each day, and the people on their teams do, too.”

Serve to Be Great also includes case studies, research, and tactics to help leaders make the shift to “servant leadership.”

Servant leadership

“Servant leadership doesn't mean that we assume some menial, meek persona; it simply means that our motivation for leading people is to be of service to others,” Tenney explains. “I believe that somewhere inside each of us is the aspiration to devote ourselves to serving others. That said, it can be challenging to effectively serve the people on our teams, even if we want to.

“When we're under stress—like the pressure to hit a goal or 'make the numbers'—we tend to focus more on the short-term and can often sacrifice the relationships that are a foundation of long-term success. With training, you effectively serve team members even when the conditions are challenging.”

Tenney shares these 11 tactics to help leaders achieve higher levels of success by consistently serving and inspiring greatness in others.

1. Focus on developing your influence as a leader. The qualities that make a great leader are quite different from those that make a good employee. An employee’s worth is judged on how well she carries out the different tasks in her job description. But a leader’s worth is judged on how well she is able to influence the behaviors of those on her team. (That’s why Tenney says one of the most common mistakes organizations make is promoting people to leadership positions based on their job performance. Job performance offers little-to-no insight into whether a person will succeed at leading a team to success!)
“The most effective way to build influence with others is to consistently demonstrate that you truly care about them and have their best interests in mind,” he confirms. “Herb Kelleher, founder and former chairman of Southwest Airlines, is a great example of how great leaders develop influence. He consistently showed employees how much he cared by doing things like coming in on Thanksgiving Day to help baggage handlers load suitcases onto planes.

“When he wrote a letter asking employees to find a way to save $5 a day for the second half of a year, he signed it, ’Love, Herb.’ Employees knew that he meant it. And, as a result of the influence Herb had built, employees saved much more than $5 a day on average, helping Southwest keep their then-30-year streak of profitability going.”

2. **Create a culture of servant leaders.** Can you imagine being able to attract the most talented people in your industry, ensure that they’re fully engaged while they’re at work, and feel confident that they’ll stay on your team for the long haul? What would that do for your organization? Clearly, a great workplace culture—which is responsible for all three achievements—is one of the most important competitive advantages you can possess.

“The key to creating a highly effective workplace culture that people want to be a part of,” Tenney asserts, “is to make sure that team members feel cared for and that they’re a part of something meaningful and inspiring. This is accomplished easily when you build a culture of servant leadership. An e-commerce company called Next Jump is a great example of the power of building an organization full of people who are devoted to serving others and serving the greater good.

“The leaders at Next Jump consistently show how much they care,” he shares. “The company actually does the employees’ laundry for them. But they also find ways to help employees grow their ability to serve each other and the greater good. The most coveted award at Next Jump is a $30,000 package that goes to the employee who is voted by his or her peers to be the most helpful, selfless person in the company.

“A culture like the one at Next Jump produces extraordinary results,” Tenney says. “In 2012, the company accepted only 35 new hires out of almost 18,000 applicants. That’s a hire rate of 0.2 percent. And, although turnover in the tech space averages around 22 percent, at Next Jump, it’s less than 1 percent. This is despite the fact that highly talented employees there often receive phone calls from other companies offering two to three times the salary they currently receive.”

3. **Increase innovation by being more compassionate.** Most leaders are aware of the importance of innovation, but many make the mistake of assuming that creativity and innovation are synonymous. Creativity, which is the ability to generate novel ideas, is not necessary for innovation. Innovation is a function of sticking with and executing on ideas—whether new or old—that don’t conform to the status quo, which results in turning an idea into something tangible, useful, and differentiated. So if you want innovation, Tenney says, you need to create an environment where people feel safe to take risks and stick with ideas that deviate from the norm.
“We need to listen noncritically to ideas,” he says. “We need to encourage and be forgiving of mistakes. In essence, we need to consistently show people that we truly care about them. SAS CEO Jim Goodnight is a great case study for how compassion fuels innovation. He showed incredible compassion for his people at the onset of the Great Recession by assuring them that no one would lose their job and simply asking that all employees be vigilant with spending.

“As a result of his care, they felt safe. They continued to disrupt the market with innovations through the Recession, setting records for revenues, while most companies in the software industry were struggling to stay alive.”

4. **Focus on your most important customer.** Organizations that deliver world-class customer service have a few things in common. First, they spend very little money acquiring new customers because they’re able to keep the ones they have and because those customers are constantly referring others. Second, they don’t have to compete on price because their customers are willing to pay more for the excellent service they receive. And perhaps most important, their external customers aren’t their number one priority. The members of their organization are.

“The best way to ensure that your customers are consistently well cared for is to treat your team members with the same care you expect them to deliver to the customers,” Tenney explains. “By listening well and treating team members with kindness and respect, leaders develop team members who do the same for customers.

“When leaders focus on developing happy, loyal team members, happy, loyal customers are a natural side effect. A very simple way to put this principle into practice is to frequently communicate with team members about what you as the leader can do to help them be happy both at work and at home. Make an effort to show that all ideas are heard and considered, and try to execute on as many feasible ideas as possible.”

5. **Get a better ROI on marketing by serving the community.** Push marketing—broadcasting unsolicited messages to large numbers of people—is simply no longer an effective way to reach potential customers. In a world where people consume more information in a few hours than our ancestors did in an entire lifetime, our chances of being heard amid the noise are slim. To stand out from the chaos, Tenney recommends that you make serving the community a priority.

“When organizations develop leaders and team members who really care about others, community service efforts can be really powerful because people tend to talk about and remember them,” he asserts. “In addition to being rewarding (it’s simply the right thing to do!), serving the community is a very powerful way to build trust and rapport with potential customers.

“For instance, did you know that the apparel company Life is good® has yet to spend a dime on traditional advertising?” he asks. “Years ago, they hosted a festival to raise money for youth going through challenging times. Afterward, the company realized that the media and word-of-mouth exposure was more valuable than the ad campaigns they had been considering. Up to that point, their growth curve had been pretty flat. Since then, it’s been almost vertical.”

6. **Stop fixating on providing perks and pay more attention to the little things.** In *Serve to Be Great*, Tenney offers several examples of companies that
go to great lengths to show employees how much they care by offering incredible perks. But perks alone don’t result in a team culture that people want to be a part of.

“The perks aren’t necessary,” Tenney says. “Perks are easily copied and can been seen as a façade. What’s most important is to consistently show team members that you truly care about them—and believe it or not, that doesn’t take a lot of money or effort.

“Little things like making time for personal interaction, asking more questions, listening more, and showing sincere appreciation for a person’s efforts can go a long way. Honestly, we leaders need to carve out time for personal interaction; actually put it on our calendars. If we don’t, we might find that we’ve gone days, or even weeks, without connecting personally with team members.”

7. **Make serving others a habit.** Hardwiring servant leadership into your behavior is all about being mindful of seemingly small thoughts, decisions, and actions. For example, each time you’re about to interact with someone, ask yourself, How can I help this person? or, How can I contribute to this person’s happiness? You don’t need to have an immediate answer. Just adopting this attitude changes the dynamic of an interaction in positive ways, says Tenney. He also suggests starting each day by taking at least 5 or 10 minutes to contemplate the question, What can I do to better serve the people on my team today?

“The practice that made the biggest difference in my life is using the question, How will this help me to serve others? as a filter for decisions,” he shares. “Before I do something or consume something, I look at it from this perspective. This question helps me to waste less time pursuing things that don’t really matter, and has gradually made serving others the motivation for everything that I do.”

8. **Gain power by giving it away.** A common misperception among leaders is that they need to be the ones coming up with all of the great ideas or the people making great things happen. The best leaders, though, are the ones who are able to harness the talent and intelligence of the entire team. You can do this by pushing power down to the lowest levels possible.

“This is a great way to serve the people on your team,” Tenney says. “Empowered people become much more engaged in their work. You can empower your team members by involving them in decision making to the greatest extent possible, ensuring that they truly feel heard. You can also give team members final decision authority on tasks within their area of expertise. Just make sure that you’ve previously communicated the organization’s core values so that they can guide decision making. Let your people know that as long as a decision doesn’t conflict with a core value, you trust that they’ll do the right thing.”

9. **Inspire your team to greatness.** One of the greatest gifts we can offer team members is the gift of inspiration. In *Serve to Be Great*, Tenney cites Martin Luther King Jr., PhD, as an example of a leader who had an extraordinary ability to inspire others. He did so by connecting people to a purpose far greater than themselves and by carrying out his work with impeccable character.

“An important role of a leader is to clarify not only what the team does for the customer, but what the team does to make the world a better place,” Tenney
explains. “The leader must also ensure that each team member can see clearly how his or her work contributes to that larger vision and find ways to frequently remind team members of their purpose.

“You can also inspire greatness in others by working to develop your character so that you consistently do the right thing, even when the personal costs are very high,” he continues. “At some level, we all aspire to be a person who puts others first and always does the right thing. When we see someone else living in that way, it touches something deep inside us. We are reminded of who we can be. We are inspired.”

10. Measure the things that really matter. Most of us do a fairly good job of measuring our progress toward quantitative goals. In our personal lives, for instance, we measure progress toward checking items off our to-do lists, losing weight, or making money. Likewise, large organizations measure things like sales numbers, expenses, and quarterly profits.

“What we need to do a better job of measuring is who we are and how well we treat each other,” Tenney asserts. “When we measure these things, we make a much better effort to improve in them. Remember, it’s who we are and how well we treat each other that drive long-term success. I suggest that you seek feedback on how well you as a leader live the values of the organization and how well you treat the members of your team. You should also measure those things in your team members. By doing so, you’ll make it clear that they’re important and that people must develop these areas to be considered for a leadership position.”

11. Practice mindfulness to become the Ultimate Leader. Mindfulness training—a simple, science-based practice for training attention and developing emotional intelligence—was the foundation of the transformation that Tenney underwent in military prison. In Serve to Be Great, he describes how the practice of mindfulness helps leaders become the best they can be.

“Most people want to do a better job of serving and caring for the people around them,” Tenney comments. “Mindfulness training helps us close the gap between intention and action. The practice has been proven to be extremely effective at increasing resilience during stressful situations, which will allow you to live up to your ideals of serving and caring for others even when you’re under intense pressure to hit a goal. The practice also gradually makes kindness, compassion, and a spirit of service your natural response to the people around you.

“Beginning the practice is very simple,” he continues. “Just pick a simple activity like drinking water and make an effort to let go of thinking and be fully present for that activity. Commit to being mindful each time you drink water for a week. The next week, continue with drinking water and add another activity. After a couple of months, you’ll be practicing mindfulness during most of your day. You’ll notice that you’re happier, more resilient to stress, and more present for the people in your life.

“Being successful as a leader and living a meaningful, enjoyable life are not mutually exclusive,” concludes Tenney. “In fact, the two actually fuel each other. The very things that make life truly rich are the same things that create and sustain long-term success in both business and in life.
“The best news is that it’s all highly trainable,” he adds. “Any one of us can become an extraordinary, highly effective leader who enjoys going to work each day because we know that we’re making our world a better place.”

Matt Tenney is the author of Serve to Be Great: Leadership Lessons from a Prison, a Monastery, and a Boardroom. He is also an international keynote speaker, a trainer, and a consultant with the prestigious Perth Leadership Institute, whose clients include numerous Fortune 500 companies.

For more information, visit www.matttenney.com.

Succession training

Successful succession planning requires training employees at all levels

Traditionally, succession planning focused on an orderly transition at the top of the company. Today the focus is on dealing with the coming “brain drain” most companies will experience as Baby Boomers begin to retire.

We’re dealing with an aging workforce. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that over one-third of the civilian employees working for the federal government are eligible for retirement. The same situation exists, but to a somewhat lesser degree, in the workforce as a whole. Companies can’t duck the problems that presents.

In this new environment, succession planning has a broader focus. Companies must plan not only for staffing needs at the top of the company but must also identify and plan for future human capital needs at all levels—planning for the future growth and success of the company.

If the company is not prepared and has not invested in its key employees, when the need to fill a position arises, the company will likely find itself looking outside the organization in competition with other public and private employers.

Developing a succession plan

To be of real value, a succession plan must include input from senior management, an analysis of the company’s current and future needs for talent, a plan for identifying employees who will be trained and mentored to fill key roles in the future, and a plan for recruiting outside talent to make sure the company has the skills and experience it needs.

Once this is done, the plan must be implemented, and managers and supervisors at all levels of the company must be evaluated on their work in developing employees.

Early on—study the demographics of the company

Early in the process, it is important to analyze the current workforce. Is “brain drain” going to present a significant problem for the company, and if so, when and in what areas or jobs? Knowing when and where there will be key vacancies or a
need to replace accumulated skills and knowledge will help focus on future needs as well as current vacancies when new employees are recruited and hired.

**Link strategic goals with human capital needs**

Identify the talent, skills, and experience the company will need over the next 5 to 10 years in order to achieve goals and continue to be successful. This will include the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, education, core competencies, and even personality traits that will be needed to fill top management positions and other positions that will be key to the company’s long-term success.

**Let senior management play a role**

Armed with demographic information and information on the talent, skills, and experience the company will need over the next 5 to 10 years, HR managers need to involve senior managers in the planning process so that succession planning and the development of employees are adopted as strategic goals.

Senior managers will be more likely to participate in the process if it is linked to their own strategic goals and the long-term strategic goals of the company. Senior management roles include:

- Reviewing and adjusting the 5- to 10-year analysis of talent, skills, and experience to make sure it is aligned with the long-term goals of the company;
- Identifying key positions and the skills and experience necessary to fill them;
- Using data that are readily available and can be gathered at regular intervals;
- Identifying high achievers or high-potential employees already working for the company who will be targeted for mentoring and cross-training so that they can fill key positions in the future;
- Providing project work to targeted employees in order to expand their knowledge and experience and prepare them for future leadership roles;
- Supporting recruiting efforts aimed at hiring individuals with the skills and experience needed now and in the future; and
- Evaluating managers and supervisors at all levels of the company on how well they develop and mentor employees.

**Notifying employees**

Critical to the effectiveness of any succession plan is employee awareness of such a plan. Employees who are aware of the employer’s succession plan and program will be motivated to perform well. In addition, they will be more likely to stay, knowing that there is a tangible, well-laid-out plan for their future.

**Identifying key positions and skills**

A critical step in the process is to specifically identify the key positions that will be targeted in the succession plan. This usually includes management-level positions. It may also include highly specialized jobs that are essential to the company’s ability to meet current or future goals.
Once the positions are identified, clarify what knowledge, experience, training and education, skills, personality traits, and other requirements are for these positions. Then look at current employees and identify individuals with the potential to fill these key positions. Identify gaps in the skills and experience of current employees and then make a concerted effort to fill those gaps when hiring employees from outside the company.

**Identifying high-potential employees**

Also critical to the succession plan is the process of identifying employees who will be targeted for training and mentoring so that they will be ready to step into key positions when openings occur. It is helpful to consider these criteria:

- Work history, including progression into more responsible positions, and past experience that might be helpful in a future position;
- Job performance over time;
- Education and training;
- Demonstrated willingness to take initiative on new projects and to suggest new ideas;
- Employee’s own interests and career goals;
- Personality profile if the company uses this type of assessment;
- Ability to get work done and to meet deadlines;
- Ability to work as part of a team and to motivate others;
- Understanding of the company’s products and customers;
- Training needs of the employee in order to be ready for more responsible management positions.

Once an employee is identified through this process, the next step is to develop an individualized plan for the employee. The best development plans include a mentor relationship with a successful senior manager, cross-training, and project work that provides leadership opportunities for the employee. Even though some classroom training may be appropriate, managers generally learn more relevant skills through observation and practice.

**Team leaders**

**Train employees to be positive team leaders**

Employees can be leaders on their teams by demonstrating positive attitudes and actions—even during tough times. This tip describes the need to train employees about how to be a positive influence on their teams.

Negative behavior on the part of some team members may blossom during the tough times, says Kevin Sensenig, PhD, RODP, and global brand champion for Dale Carnegie & Associates ([www.dalecarnegie.com](http://www.dalecarnegie.com)), Hauppauge, New York.
“When people are uncertain or nervous, not knowing what may happen next [with the current national economic situation],” he says, “they may not feel comfortable asking directly about how the issues may affect the organization.

“Instead they ask a coworker, which leads to rumor generation. Rumors can add more frustration and fear and that can lead to some team workers being difficult to work with because they don’t know who to trust.”

Another problem that may emerge during the tough times is an increase in team members complaining about other team members. “All these little irritants that might have existed in the past become major issues to some team members,” notes Sensenig.

“They have trouble getting past the little things that people do to annoy them. It happens when things are uncertain. People go into protection mode—they’re trying to protect their job so they point out someone else’s problems or challenges, thinking that it will take the focus off them and onto the other person. This can lead to negativity in teams.”

Team members under stress can twist even casual communication. Interpretation of nonchalant comments about someone’s performance or about a customer may become blown out of proportion by a team member who hears another team member or the leader say it, according to Sensenig.

To explain a bit further, someone might say, “I hope that John [the team member] didn’t irritate Mr. Johnson [a customer] today when he told him the product wasn’t in stock.”

During the bad times, a team member might hear that and tell others, “I hope we don’t lose our biggest customer,” notes Sensenig. “The team member may become fearful.” The anxiety may spread to other team members, and eventually the entire team may become unsuccessful because the team is no longer functioning as a cohesive unit, he explains.

“One person with negativity and poor performance who remains in that mode may influence the rest of the team, pulling away and isolating that person,” says Sensenig.

Ignoring these problems will not help and will not make them go away, stresses Sensenig. Instead, HR can help the team leader face the challenge of dealing with a usually productive team member who exhibits negative behavior. “HR becomes the coach and thought leader, the resource to support the team manager in solving the problem,” he explains.

HR doesn’t have to be the only resource, however. Any team member trained to take positive actions that deal with rumors, anxiety, and complaints among team members can help the team succeed and thrive.

Sensenig works most often with HR professionals. His points, however, can be given to any employees whom you have identified as having leadership potential. He notes, for example, that it is important for HR professionals, in their role as coaches to team leaders, to remember that people want to be part of the company and part of the team.
When negative behaviors appear, it is often in reaction to fear, stress, and uncertainty. This must also be communicated to the team leaders.

Three principles HR professionals may share with team leaders for use in dealing with the negative behavior on the part of one or more team members come from Dale Carnegie, according to Sensenig:

1. **We should call attention to people’s mistakes indirectly.** When we point it out [negative behavior] in a positive way, they’ll be more likely to address it and get back on track on their own. Sometimes when we put something in someone’s face, he or she will react to that even more negatively and exhibit even more negative behaviors.

2. **We need to ask questions rather than give direct orders.** Why is this happening? Why are you feeling this way? What’s causing you to react or behave this way? The person may save face and be able to change the behavior, saving himself and moving forward.

3. **We need to praise all improvement [in behavior].** We need to give positive reinforcement. An example of that is, “Hey, I noticed a much better attitude in that last team meeting. Good job!” Another example is, “I noticed that with the last project, you followed up with every detail. Way to go!”

**Prevention is the best cure**

It is worthwhile to discuss how human resources executives and company leaders might work to prevent negative behavior altogether. Sensenig says that much of the anxiety and frustration that leads to negative behavior may be avoided by encouraging open dialogue between leaders and employees.

“Employees shouldn’t just hear information from the top and try to assume how they fit into it. Leaders must be more approachable and communicate new strategies and how employees fit into them,” he concludes.
Section 2: Supervisor leadership training tips

Avoiding 10 sins of supervising

Train supervisors not to commit any of these 10 sins

Sometimes it seems as though there are a thousand ways supervisors—with the best of intentions—can practically beg for a lawsuit. We’ve distilled it into 10 major sins you can train your supervisors to avoid.

Let’s jump right in.

**Sin #1. Making unlawful preemployment inquiries**

That’s an interesting accent you have. Where were you born?

Do you have any children? If so, will you have any daycare problems?

By the way, we’re all about diversity here.

Inappropriate questions during interviews and other preemployment contacts are a primary source of claims of discrimination. The courts generally assume that if you asked a question, you intended to use the answer as a factor in your hiring decision. Therefore, any questions about or references to protected categories like sex, age, race, national origin, or religion can later be used against you in court in a discrimination claim.

**Sin #2. Delivering ‘dishonest’ evaluations**

I’m giving you a “satisfactory” rating, and I think we both know what that means in this company.

I gave her a “good” rating even though her work is poor, because I think a “poor” rating would be demotivating.

Many managers and supervisors avoid the discomfort of delivering a review that indicates poor performance and instead, cop out with a “satisfactory” rating. As a result, many legitimate actions taken against an employee based on poor performance can be questioned because the performance reviews are positive.

**Sin #3. Too vague in discipline and performance write-ups**

Sally, your work could use improvement.

I’m making a note here that we talked about your performance.

Jay’s poor performance is unacceptable, and I’m just going to spell it out—he’s lazy.

Again because of the desire to avoid unpleasantness, managers and supervisors will often write something on performance evaluations like “needs improvement.” That’s too vague. Does it mean the employee did a great job, but there’s always room for a little improvement, or does it mean that the employee did a terrible job?
Or, how about “Talked about your performance”? Was that to tell her how exceptional her performance and behavior were?

And then we’ve got judgment words like “lazy.” Again, too vague. Offer documentation and give specific examples of the unacceptable behavior.

**Sin #4. Making rash disciplinary decisions**

That’s it. I’ve had it. You’re fired.

Ultimately, firing may be the appropriate thing to do, but acting instantly in anger isn’t the way to do it. First of all, an angry, public tirade gets those “I’m going to sue” juices flowing. Second, you should never fire without carefully reviewing the circumstances with HR. They are in a good position to evaluate the appropriateness of the punishment and its consistency with previous, similar cases.

**Sin #5. Making uninformed responses to medical leave requests**

You want what? You want 5 weeks of bonding leave during our busiest season? I don’t think so.

You’re going to take every Friday off? That’s not going to happen.

Few supervisory situations are as frustrating and challenging as dealing with employee requests for medical leave, but managers and supervisors must curtail that frustration and respond professionally.

You just don’t want your managers and supervisors trying to deal with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. The basic rule for managers and supervisors should be: Contact HR.

**Sin #6. Not realizing the ‘power’ of the supervisor**

Let’s go out for a drink after work. Then maybe we’ll grab dinner.

I’m hoping everyone will contribute generously to my charity.

Inviting an employee out for a drink after work may seem like a simple gesture, but the subordinate may view it as an order. Especially if the request is repeated, it can always be viewed as coercion or harassment. Supervisors and managers are agents of the company, and when they engage in behavior that may be considered harassment, it’s especially egregious because of the power they have over their employees.

Another aspect of supervisors’ agent status is that if the supervisor knows, the company knows. The company can’t say, “We weren’t aware of the situation.”

**Sin #7. Not knowing and not enforcing policies**

We’re busy now. Talk to me about that harassment business next week.

If you think the work’s not safe, you’re free to quit at any time.
Nobody in this department can talk about salaries or benefits with other employees or outsiders, especially online.

Supervisors and managers are the front line for interpreting and enforcing the company’s policies. But if they don’t know the policies and their associated responsibilities, even with the best of intentions, they’ll be setting you up for a lawsuit.

**Sin #8. Making wage and hour blunders**

We’re out of overtime. Can you clock out and then set up for tomorrow?

You new recruits will be working alongside our regular employees, but you will all be independent contractors.

Tracy, make sure you stay close to the phone during lunch.

Sandy, keep your phone near you evenings for calls from the West Coast.

Wage and hour should be simple, but it just isn’t. The most common problems are:

- **Overtime.** You must track it, pay it, and include nondiscretionary bonuses in the “regular rate” for overtime calculations.

- **Off the clock.** You must pay for all hours worked, even if the employee volunteers and even if you’ve forbidden the employee to do work.

- **Misclassification.** Many “independent contractors” are actually employees who need to be paid overtime. And many “exempt” employees have duties that do not meet the criteria for exemption.

**Sin #9. Letting problems fester**

Teresa’s crossing the line with her behavior, but she surely knows it—she’ll figure it out.

Oh, that’s just Jimmie. He means no harm—he’s just “old school.”

With bad behavior, it’s always tempting to ignore it in hopes that the behavior will improve on its own. But you know that’s not going to happen. Unfortunately, as time goes by, you appear to be condoning the behavior.

**Sin #10. Making ‘side agreements’**

Stay after you clock out for the next 2 weeks until we get this job out the door, and I’ll make it up to you by writing in extra overtime next month when the budget switches over.

Take this transfer, and I’ll guarantee you a promotion at the end of the year.

I can’t pay you for this extra work, but you and your spouse can go out for a nice dinner on the company account.

Managers under stress may be tempted to make “side agreements” that either go against policy or consist of promises that likely won’t be kept.
Three problems arise with side agreements:
1. They are illegal, and there will eventually be lawsuits.
2. Employees will be left feeling that agreements haven’t been honored.
3. Others who didn’t get the special treatment or privilege may sue.

OK, that’s our top 10 sins of supervisors and managers. Train your people to avoid them so that your organization can stay hassle- and lawsuit-free.

**Alcohol abuse**

**Train supervisors on these 4 steps to recognize alcohol abuse problems**

A new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that binge drinking (five or more drinks on one occasion for men, and four or more for women) was responsible for more than 70 percent of costs related to excessive alcohol use. Here are some training tips on how to identify and respond to problems.

CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden called the effect of excessive alcohol consumption devastating. He added, “In addition to injury, illness, disease, and death, it costs our society billions of dollars through reduced work productivity, increased criminal justice expenses, and higher healthcare costs.” The study says the economic burden on states is huge—an average of $3 billion per year.

The first step is to establish or refine your company’s drug and alcohol policy. Much of the burden lies with front-line supervisors who interact with employees every day.

Use these tips to help supervisors learn to identify and respond to problems:

1. **Be attentive.** The sooner a problem is identified, the sooner it can be addressed. Look for job performance issues like:
   - Rising accident rates,
   - Increased absenteeism or tardiness,
   - Decreased productivity, and
   - Deteriorating coworker relationships.

2. **Observe.** Watch closely if you begin to notice changes in an employee’s work patterns or performance. It’s not the supervisor’s job to determine the cause of the problem, but rather to observe behavior and determine the effects on job performance. Behavior changes may be related to alcohol or other drug abuse, but they can also be caused by other medical problems.

3. **Document.** Supervisors should maintain a written record that explains the behaviors they are observing. It should include the name of those involved, the
time, date, what occurred, names of witnesses, and actions taken. Also document job performance and attendance over time.

4. **Address problems.** Once the issues have been documented, meet with the employee to discuss the situation. Talk about what you’ve observed but don’t judge. Keep communication channels open. Confronting employees about possible alcohol use is difficult. Consider when and how to involve your human resources department, safety and health manager, or employee assistance program coordinator.

As a result of the conversation, look for improvements in job performance. If things do not change, be clear with the employee about next steps (intervention, recommendations for treatment, etc.) in keeping with your alcohol and drug policy.

## Challenging employees

### Train supervisors to manage challenging employees

Challenging employees can try your supervisors’ patience and drain a lot of their time and energy. That’s why your supervisors need to know how to manage these employees so that they can help turn them into productive, positive workers. This tip gives you an exercise to train your people on leadership.

Supervising other people is never easy, but some employees make it particularly difficult. Challenging employees can be a disruptive influence, damaging morale and making it difficult for their coworkers to function productively. It takes skillful management and patience to turn things around with difficult employees.

“Skillful” is the operative word here. Most people aren’t born with management skills—and just being promoted to supervisor or manager doesn’t automatically anoint them with the appropriate skills either. The majority of people need to be trained on how to manage employees—especially the challenging ones.

The editors at BLR® understand this and put together a PowerPoint® course, *How to Manage Challenging Employees*, that includes the following training exercise to assist you in building these skills in your supervisors and managers.

**Exercise objective:** To review strategies for managing challenging employees effectively.

**Instructions:** For each situation, briefly write your strategy for dealing with the challenging employee.

1. Joe constantly complains about everything—job assignments, equipment, coworkers, work schedules, any kind of change. You name it, Joe can find fault with it. **How would you deal with Joe’s challenging attitude and behavior?**

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________
2. Jen thinks rules are for other people, not for her. If she doesn’t outright break a rule, she bends it to the breaking point. How would you manage Jen’s challenging attitude and behavior?

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3. Carl is the department’s rumor king. When he isn’t making rumors up, he’s spreading the ones he hears. His latest creation is that there are going to be some big layoffs that will affect the department. You know for a fact that this is not true. How would you deal with Carl’s challenging behavior?

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4. Nancy tries to make herself look good by making her coworkers look bad. She frequently goes behind people’s backs and bad-mouths them to others, including the group supervisor. If you were Nancy’s supervisor, how would you handle this situation?

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Guidance

Here are some points to make during the class discussion of each scenario.

1. Sit down with the employee and examine each of his recent complaints. If a complaint has merit, ask the employee for suggestions about how to resolve the problem. For complaints about things that cannot be changed, explain why certain decisions have been made, why these things are the way they are. In the future, consult more with this employee. Get his input as often as possible. Try to include him in decision making whenever possible. Delegate decision-making authority when possible. Bringing this employee more into the department loop should help change his attitude and reduce the complaints.

2. Take this employee aside and speak with her privately. Tell her that you value employees who take initiative. But add that in the future, you would prefer that she consult you before she acts outside the established rules. Then point out specific instances in which she has broken or bent work rules. Give her the
opportunity to explain why she acted as she did. Then explain the reason for each of these rules. Warn her that failing to follow the rules in the future could result in discipline—something you would prefer to avoid. Tell her that you would much prefer her full cooperation in following the rules in the future.

3. Take Carl aside and ask him where he heard the story about layoffs. Assure him that the rumor is untrue. Explain how damaging it can be if employees are misinformed about important issues like this. Discuss any other damaging rumors with which this employee has been involved. Ask him to check with you before he passes along information concerning company business. Then, in the future, try to involve Carl in department communications in a positive way. For example, perhaps you could enlist his help in writing memos or writing up department news for the company newsletter. By being more involved in legitimate channels of communication, this employee might be less tempted to turn to the rumor mill.

4. Sit down with Nancy and tell her that you are concerned about her relationships with her coworkers. Explain that her behavior is alienating other workers and damaging important work relationships. Also tell her that although she is entitled to her opinion about people, you and her coworkers would prefer to make your own judgments. Assure her that you judge her performance on its own merits, not in comparison with others. Tell her that in the future, you want her to focus on her work and her performance goals and let others worry about theirs. Assure her that you are confident that she will be successful in attaining her goals and that you will help in any way possible.

Communicating in emergencies

Train supervisors to communicate effectively in emergencies

Whether natural or man-made, emergencies sometimes occur in the workplace. This tip presents a valuable training outline that you can use to train supervisors on how to communicate effectively in emergency situations.

The material in this tip is adapted from BLR’s 10-Minute HR Trainer session, “Communicating in Emergencies.”

Supervisors such as yourself play a critical role in emergency communication with employees. In fact, communicating emergency information is a crucial part of your job. How effectively you communicate could make a big difference to the safety of employees during an emergency.

Employees look for leadership in emergency situations. Supervisor communications will help:

◆ Prepare them for an emergency,
◆ Guide them during an emergency, and
◆ Assist them after the emergency.
A calm and decisive leader giving clear instructions during an emergency can help keep your people safe. When employees act swiftly and properly in response to emergencies thanks to your training and communication, they can help minimize injury and damage. Your communications and leadership after an emergency will help your employees and your organization recover more quickly.

As a supervisor, you need to **know the characteristics of effective emergency communication.** Namely, emergency communications must be:

- **Specific** and must deal with one issue at a time. Explain concisely exactly what workers need to do and how to do it.
- **Accurate,** because misinformation can lead to casualties and damage.
- **Clear and straightforward** so that everyone can understand. Choose your words carefully and verify that employees understand you.
- **Timely,** since your people must get the information they need in time to respond effectively to the emergency.
- **Reassuring,** since many employees will be anxious. Work to get employees to focus on following the emergency actions they’ve been trained to take.
- **Repeated** so that everyone gets the message.

**Choose the right communication channel.** There are various options for communicating with employees during an emergency, ranging from direct communication within the workplace, to public address (PA) systems, to phone, e-mail, social media, and radio and television to reach employees outside the workplace during an emergency. Often a combination of methods will be most effective in reaching all workers—or at least the greatest number possible.

Your choice of communication method will likely depend on the content of the message, how widely your message needs to be circulated, access to particular communication channels, and how often the message needs to be repeated. Choose a method that reaches all the employees who need the information.

Your communications must also be properly timed to get the necessary information to employees when they need it, for as long as they need it. Communication channels in emergencies must be reliable, which can be a problem with power outages and downed phone lines.

Channels for emergency communication should also be selected based on effectiveness. A face-to-face or phone conversation, for example, is generally more effective than an e-mail or text message because your communication will have more impact and you will be able answer questions more quickly and easily.

**In addition to conveying information to employees, you also play an important role in communications with management personnel.** During an emergency, you will need to:

- Communicate with other supervisors, your manager and other managers, and emergency coordination personnel.
- Remain in touch with management throughout the emergency to keep up to date with the situation as it evolves, receive instructions, coordinate
communications to employees, solve problems, and make plans for dealing with the aftermath of the emergency.

Also be aware that your effective communication after an emergency will hasten recovery. Here are some best practices to follow:

- **Meet with employees** as soon as possible and discuss the situation.
- **Answer employees’ questions** about how the emergency has affected their jobs.
- **Explain what you and your employees need to do** to return to normalcy following the emergency.
- **Identify and solve problems** affecting employees, operations, and work areas.
- **Set a timetable** for a return to normal.
- **Work with your employees** to get things back to normal.
- **Set an example** for dealing with trying situations with positive communication and lots of encouragement and feedback.

**Applicable regulations**

Occupational Safety and Health Act

**Training tips:**

- Review your organization’s emergency action plan and explain the chain of command.
- Discuss the types of communications that typically need to be made during emergencies.
- Ask participants to identify emergency communication problems and offer ideas on how to overcome them.

**Critical thinking**

**Train supervisors to think critically**

Critical thinking is a valuable skill for supervisors. In this tip, we’ll go over the value of training your supervisors to develop this critical skill.

The goals of a training session on critical thinking skills should include helping trainees:

1. **Understand what critical thinking is** and how it can help on the job.
2. **Use the critical thinking process effectively** to improve job performance.

Understanding what critical thinking is leads directly to discussion of how it can strengthen a supervisor’s work performance. The basic definition is that “critical thinking” is a disciplined way of thinking about issues, decisions, and problems. It is focused, intentional, and goal-oriented.
For these reasons, being able to think critically will help supervisors do their jobs better in several ways. For example, critical thinking will help them:

- Make better decisions.
- Analyze and solve work problems more effectively.
- Manage challenges and overcome obstacles.
- Develop more and better ideas about improving quality, productivity, and other issues related to the success of themselves and the organization.
- Identify the potential for error and make fewer mistakes.
- Learn new information more efficiently and get more out of learning and growth opportunities on the job.

In short, by teaching critical thinking to supervisors, you’ll help them improve their job performance, too.

Share with supervisors the many ways they can use critical thinking skills on the job. They can:

- **Analyze information and situations accurately** and make sense of all the data that impact your work on a daily basis.
- **Identify and interpret patterns** and determine how they affect your work.
- **Make connections** so that you can link new information to what you know.
- **“Connect the dots”** so that you can understand a process or a sequence.
- **Make inferences**, which are conclusions based on the evidence that allows you to see beyond the known facts and make predictions about possible outcomes.
- **Evaluate information** so that you can determine its validity and value.
- **Develop and organize** ideas to make it easier to work with and implement them.
- **Discuss issues** with others in an organized way and support your ideas and suggestions with sound evidence.
- **Develop and weigh alternatives** to make the best possible choices.
- **Make plans** that are likely to lead to successful outcomes.
- **Apply abstract or theoretical knowledge** to actual job situations to ensure the best results.

**The skills**

So, what skills are required for effective critical thinking? Being able to:

- Observe and qualify incoming information to determine its value.
- Compare different pieces of information and discover connections.
- Probe to discover root issues and causes and clarify information.
- Direct your thoughts to focus on specific pieces of information.
◆ Understand the meaning of information and relate it to your job.
◆ Generalize from specifics and apply findings broadly.

**The process**
Use the following description to teach your supervisors how the critical thinking process works. You can also go over each step of the process in more detail by describing a common workplace situation and then discussing each step trainees would follow to think critically about it.

1. The critical thinking process begins with defining questions clearly and precisely.
2. Next, you gather information that can answer your questions.
3. Then you assess all information with an open mind.
4. When you have obtained all the information you need and have evaluated it properly, you are ready to draw accurate conclusions about the information and how best to use it.
5. You might also be able to make predictions, or inferences, based on the information. You might be able to make decisions about the future with a reasonable degree of confidence, based on your predictions.
6. Finally, be prepared to revise your conclusions and predictions when new information comes in or when you realize that your thinking about a particular issue might be faulty.

**The obstacles**
There are several obstacles that can hinder critical thinking that you should share with trainees so they can be aware of them—and avoid or overcome them. Here are the most common:

◆ **Defining the problem imprecisely**, which could mean you’re likely to arrive at the wrong conclusion

◆ **Not having enough information** to make a reasoned judgment or having inaccurate information

◆ **Making faulty assumptions** based on the facts

◆ **Being influenced by biases**, which can result in blind spots

◆ **Failing to reflect long and hard enough** before making a judgment

◆ **Being too proud** to admit that you might have made a mistake, missed something, or taken too narrow a view of the facts

The material in this tip is adapted from BLR’s *10-Minute HR Trainer* session, “Critical Thinking.”
Leadership styles

Is your leadership training all about power and style?

Do your supervisors know the difference between leadership and power? Do they know what their leadership style is? In this tip, we look at key aspects of leadership training.

People sometimes confuse leadership with power. Leaders are often portrayed as hard-driving, hardnosed, and headstrong. And many good leaders have those qualities, to be sure. But it takes both force and influence to lead others effectively. The two approaches complement each other and create a powerful, yet adaptable force for action. Good leadership always balances power and influence.

For example:

- **Good leaders must be both commanding and understanding.** A leader must know how to take command and run a department or work group. At the same time, he or she must be understanding and take the needs of each group member into account.

- **Leaders must direct as well as consult.** They have to be able to direct operations and activities, but they also must consult those they lead and listen to their ideas and opinions.

- **Leaders must develop a balance between ordering and asking.** They have to know how to give orders when necessary and when it is more effective to ask for cooperation.

- **Leaders must be striving yet yielding.** They need to strive for success, but they must also know when to go around a barrier rather than try to break through it.

- **Good leaders are both strong and flexible,** just like the best athletes. Leaders must know when to stand firm and when to bend.

- **Sometimes leaders need to be controlling and sometimes they must rely on influence.** They have to be able to control situations and groups, but they also need to know how to influence, facilitate, and work from within the group—or even from behind the scenes.

Leadership styles

Train your managers and supervisors on different leadership styles. Any one of these styles can be effective, depending on the circumstances and the employees involved. Here are four basic leadership styles.

1. **The authoritative style** is often effective when dealing with new and inexperienced workers or in times of crisis when employees need to feel reassured by a strong leader at the helm. Authoritative leadership:
   
   — Communicates from top to bottom;
   
   — Provides solid direction;
   
   — Wastes no time getting things done;
—Consolidates decision making in the hands of the leader;
—Provides a secure position for dependent employees; and
—Offers a tightly organized and efficient work environment.

2. **The laissez-faire style** works well with experienced, well-trained, self-directed employees. Laissez-faire leadership:
—Draws ideas from employees;
—Usually communicates upward; and
—Often places responsibility for outcomes on employees.

3. **The social leadership style** is inclusive and supportive. It is:
—Action-oriented;
—Participative;
—Encouraging of innovation and creativity;
—Supportive and forgiving;
—Positive and upbeat; and
—Reward-oriented.

4. **The team leadership style** also encourages employee participation and initiative. Team leadership:
—Maximizes employee efforts;
—Encourages two-way communication;
—Creates an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and understanding;
—Involves employees in decision making and problem solving;
—Encourages creativity and initiative; and
—Fosters enthusiasm and a sense of belonging.

Teach your managers and supervisors that the most effective leaders create their own style by combining and blending different styles to suit different challenges and situations.

**Train leaders how to build credibility and trust**

One of the most important things effective leaders can do—regardless of their leadership style—is to build credibility and trust with everyone they work with. Here are some tips for building credibility and trust:

◆ **Always set a good example.** Leaders never say, “Do as I say, not as I do.” They do as they expect their employees to do.
Keep commitments. Nothing destroys credibility quicker than when someone in a leadership position fails to make good on commitments. It’s better not to make a promise or commitment than to fail to deliver.

Always tell the truth. Of course, sometimes you must keep confidences or be judicious about the information you share. But make sure what you do say is true. Once you’re caught in a lie, your credibility will always be in question.

Be fair. If you want employees to trust you, you have to have their best interests at heart. You have to treat them all fairly and provide equal opportunity.

Admit your mistakes to build credibility and trust, and encourage employees to do the same. We’re all human. We all make mistakes. The successful leader admits mistakes, learns from them, and moves on.

In addition, use the following six leadership techniques to become a good leader:

1. Empowerment
2. Motivation
3. Delegation
4. Accountability
5. Participation
6. Feedback

The information in this tip is adapted from BLR’s presentation “Leadership Skills: What New Supervisors and Managers Need to Know.”

Managing conflicts

Train supervisors to manage conflicts

Whenever people gather together, conflict is nearly inevitable. In the workplace, supervisors are on the front line of dealing with conflict among their employees before it can escalate. This tip gives you helpful information to train your supervisors on conflict management.

Management experts estimate that most supervisors and managers spend as much as a quarter or more of their valuable work time managing conflicts. Workplace conflict may be based on disagreements over work procedures, different needs and interests, clashes of personalities, or a range of other situations and circumstances that lead to confrontations between or among employees.

What training do you give your supervisors for handling conflict within their team? How do you coach your employees to mitigate destructive conflict in the workplace?

When workplace conflict is not well managed, it is likely to have a destructive influence. Poorly managed conflict among employees may lead to:

- Reduced productivity
- Lower morale
Increased absenteeism, as employees seek to avoid a hostile and uncomfortable work environment

Greater turnover, as workers leave to find jobs in organizations where conflict is well managed

The “wildfire” effect, with one conflict leading to others and spreading out of control within groups and between departments

An increased potential for violence

When your supervisors and managers know how to resolve workplace conflicts effectively, they can save time and turn potentially destructive situations into positive, productive opportunities for growth and development within their departments and work groups.

Additionally, when supervisors and managers know how to build consensus among employees, they can enhance motivation and cooperation as well as create an atmosphere in which agreement generally prevails over conflict.

The objectives of conflict management training, then, are to enable supervisors to be able to:

- Recognize the impact of workplace conflict.
- Identify common causes of conflict.
- Understand how positive communication helps prevent conflict.
- Resolve conflicts successfully.
- Build consensus among employees.

**Legal overview**

There are no general employment laws or regulations that require you to train supervisors in conflict resolution and consensus building. However, when supervisors know how to manage conflict and build consensus among employees, you are more likely to avoid disputes with employees that can lead to discrimination complaints, wrongful discharge lawsuits, and other legal problems.

**Training requirements**

Your conflict resolution and consensus building training program should contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Definition of conflict
- Benefits of well-managed workplace conflict
- Potential damage caused by poorly managed conflict
- Common causes of workplace conflict
- Basic options for addressing conflict
- Conflict assessment
- Communication skills that help prevent conflict
Conflict resolution process
Resolving recurring conflicts
Mediating personality conflicts
Definition of consensus building
Importance of consensus building
Basic building blocks for creating consensus
Common mistakes when trying to build consensus

Training frequency
Supervisors should be trained when they are hired or promoted into a supervisory position and periodically thereafter. Retraining is recommended whenever you detect increased levels of workplace conflict.

The above information comes from BLR’s presentation “Conflict Resolution and Consensus Building.”

5 keys to prevent conflict

“The key to managing conflict isn’t just about pushing them to resolution, but also to learn how to have nicer conflicts,” said Tim Scudder, CEO of Personal Strengths USA and coauthor of Have a Nice Conflict: A Story of Finding Success and Satisfaction in the Most Unlikely Places (www.haveaniceconflict.com).

“As one set of conflicts is resolved, others will take their place, so it’s important to learn how to make conflicts productive and positive experiences, instead of allowing them to distract us from our goals and disrupt our lives.”

Scudder’s five keys to prevent conflict include:

1. Anticipate. Anticipating conflict starts with knowing who you’re dealing with. Then ask yourself how various people might view the same situation. When two or more people see things differently, there is the potential for conflict. If you can figure that out, you have a good shot at steering clear of it.

2. Prevent. Preventing conflict is really all about the deliberate, appropriate use of behavior in your relationships. A well-chosen behavior on your part can prevent conflict with another person. But you need to prevent conflict in yourself sometimes, too, and that might have more to do with choosing your perceptions than with choosing your behaviors.

3. Identify. There are three basic approaches in conflict: rising to the challenge, cautiously withdrawing, or wanting to keep the peace. When you can identify these approaches in yourself or in others, you are empowered to handle the situation more productively.

4. Manage. Managing conflict has two components: managing yourself and managing the relationship. Managing conflict is about creating the conditions and empowering others to manage themselves out of the emotional state of
conflict. It is also about managing yourself out. Managing yourself in conflict can be as easy as taking some time to see things differently.

5. **Resolve.** To create movement toward resolution, we need to show the other people a path back to feeling good about themselves. When they feel good about themselves, they are less likely to feel threatened and are free to move toward a compromise and resolution.

“Unresolved or poorly managed conflict costs companies in ways they can’t even calculate,” Scudder added. “Lost institutional memory, low productivity, bad morale, [and] high turnover all cost real companies real dollars. On the other hand, well-managed conflict can not only prevent all those losses, but it can also promote higher productivity and a stronger bottom line. So, the end result will not only be fewer conflicts, but also nicer ones with positive results.”

**Mentoring for women**

**Consider a mentoring program for women**

January is **National Mentoring Month.** In this tip, we talk about mentoring programs for women.

Men generally do a “fantastic job” of helping their male colleagues move up the corporate ladder, but women typically do not, says Thomasina Tafur, a former FedEx senior manager who is now a consultant to HR executives on positioning females for leadership roles.

“I don’t think it’s deliberate or malicious,” says Tafur, president of Thomasina Tafur Consulting (**www.thomasinatafur.com**). Women are often so focused on the climb themselves that they don’t have time to look back down and give their female colleagues a hand, she says. “We have strived so hard just to get to the top.”

Mentoring programs for women can help fill that gap. But how common are such programs? “Not very, that’s the problem,” she says. “I do not believe that there are enough mentor programs specifically geared toward women.”

**Two key elements**

Mentoring programs for women primarily exist at larger companies where, for example, affirmative action requirements apply or public image is a top concern, according to Tafur. However, she says smaller companies can benefit as well because mentor programs for women can help tap a “unique talent pool.”

Such programs also promote retention in companies of all sizes because they demonstrate a company’s interest in investing in women’s futures and helping them excel within the organization, she explains. Having a mentor program says to a female employee, “We really care about you and your future.”

Tafur identifies two key elements of an effective mentoring program for women.

1. “First and foremost, you absolutely have to have buy-in from upper management,” she says. “If your program does not have that, it’s doomed from the beginning.”
2. Second, mentors need to see themselves as “sponsors,” take their roles seriously, and be held accountable for their work in this area, according to Tafur.

**Women mentoring women**

Tafur gives these tips for you to consider when offering a mentoring program for women:

◆ **Conduct a needs assessment.** Determine what upper management expects from the mentoring program and survey the workforce to assess their needs, she recommends. “People do like to believe they have a voice and that they are going to be heard.”

◆ **Identify specific goals upfront.** “The goals need to be very specific” and will vary by organization, she says. “For some, the goals are to have X number of female leaders in C-level positions or in middle-level positions … or to promote up or out (laterally) to a department that doesn’t have a lot of females.”

◆ **Be flexible with timelines.** “Be open-minded,” she says. “Don’t be so adamant about your direction and timelines that you hire unqualified female applicants just to boost your numbers and meet specified deadlines for your program. “You don’t want to hire women for the sake of developing women.”

◆ **Put it into place.** After you have created a solid plan for implementing your mentoring program and have upper management’s support, it is time to implement the program. Consider creating a task force of employees to help generate ideas and oversee the program.

◆ **Measure your success.** “It’s very important to measure what you didn’t do well as well as what you did correctly,” she says.

**Professional development**

**Give employees the skills they need for professional advancement**

Your current supervisors may be the best positioned to help employees develop into the supervisors of tomorrow. In this tip, we look at important training opportunities for employees.

Do your supervisors know the skills their employees need for professional advancement? Do they know how to delegate work and teach those skills to employees looking to advance in the organization? Here is some important information to convey to your supervisors.

Skills needed for personal and organizational growth change constantly. That means that offering appropriate training opportunities is a key professional development tool:

◆ **Group training** can not only provide employees with the essential skills they need to perform well in their current jobs but can also prepare them for promotion.
One-on-one training can narrow the focus to include specific skills an employee needs to advance along his or her particular career path. You can provide the training yourself when you have time or delegate this task to experienced employees. This can also be accomplished by sending the employee off-site to a seminar or a conference workshop.

Coaching is another excellent way to develop employees on a one-to-one basis. This informal, often spontaneous, daily contact with employees offers many opportunities to focus on professional development. It lets you guide and direct a worker’s progress. It gives you an on-the-spot opportunity to recognize accomplishments and build on them. And it provides a chance to motivate and support employees in their self-development efforts.

Cross-training is another productive way to build new skills and provide new work experiences. Cross-training also broadens an employee’s perspective, allowing the worker to see how what others do fits in with what he or she does. An understanding of the bigger picture is essential as employees rise to higher levels in the organization.

Delegation is yet another essential managerial skill. Employees who aspire to leadership positions must begin to acquire this skill now. Teaching delegation means providing opportunities to practice the skill—perhaps through management of a special project or team effort. It also means imparting an understanding that delegation is a six-step process, as follows:

1. When you delegate, you must first determine which tasks to delegate. Some work only you can do, but other work can be done just as well by an employee, freeing you up to do more of the work only you can do.
2. Then you need to define the task. Specifically, what needs to be done, step by step?
3. Next, you must select the right person to do the job. You may want to refer back to your employees’ skills inventories to identify which employees are best suited to which tasks.
4. Then you have to explain the task completely to the employee and answer questions.
5. Once the employee begins the task, you need to provide support and positive feedback to ensure success.
6. And finally, you must follow up to make sure that the task has been performed completely and accurately.

The information in this tip comes from BLR’s presentation “Enhancing Professional Development of Employees.”

Time management

It’s time for time management training

Have your supervisors and managers managed their time as well as possible this year? Since there’s always room for improvement, take some time for either first-time or refresher training on how to make the most of every minute.
The information in this tip is adapted from BLR’s 10-Minute HR Trainer® session, “Time Management for Supervisors.”

The first step to tackling more-effective time management is to understand why supervisors have trouble managing their days. Here are several factors that interfere with a well-planned schedule:

- Reacting to others’ demands instead of deciding how your time will be spent
- Putting out fires rather than thinking ahead about how to avoid crisis situations
- Inadequate planning, which means you’re always rushing just to keep up
- Excessive attention to detail, which leaves little time for the really important things
- Trying to do everything yourself instead of delegating
- Failure to communicate effectively, leading to errors, misunderstandings, and other problems
- Lack of clear-cut goals, which can lead you to mistake a lot of activity for results
- Overcommitment, which often means you do too much and accomplish too little
- Indecision—if people wait while you make up your mind, time is wasted
- Poor organization—you often spend more time getting ready to work than actually working

Ask trainees which of these items they can relate to and spend a few minutes defining and discussing the specific issues they are encountering in your workplace.

Once trainees understand their biggest time management problems, go over the ways they can plan their time sensibly and efficiently. Here are some effective tips for them to follow:

- **Set both short-term goals (next few weeks) and long-term goals (next few months).**
- **Identify priorities** at the beginning of each workday and workweek. Focus on getting these tasks done, and then do less important tasks only if you have time.
- **Use a calendar** and a daily to-do list to better manage your time.
- **Allow more time than you think you need** to complete each task on your list.
- **Be flexible** and ready to revise your plans for the day as you go along.
- **Organize your office**, desk, and computer so you can quickly find things.
- **Take advantage of your “prime time”** (the time you are most energetic and have the fewest interruptions) to get the most important work of the day completed.
- **Schedule meetings only when necessary** and keep them short and to the point. Go to meetings only when your attendance is mandatory.
- **Plan downtime each day**—take a lunch break and refresher breaks occasionally.
Communication time-wasters are a category unto themselves! Give trainees these tips for managing their communications effectively:

◆ Handle each piece of paper coming across your desk as few times as possible: Act on it, put it aside for further study, file it, or throw it away.

◆ If possible, let voice mail pick up when you’re busy, and then check messages at set intervals.

◆ When you do pick up the phone, lead the caller politely but firmly to the point. When you feel the matter is concluded, end the call politely but firmly.

◆ When making calls, pick a time the person you’re calling is most likely to be in. Jot down the key points and questions you want to discuss beforehand. If the person isn’t available, leave a message indicating the best time to reach you.

◆ Rely on e-mail rather than the phone for communications as much as possible. Incoming messages won’t disturb you, and you can respond when you have time. Check e-mail only at set intervals, and set time aside then or later to respond.

Another big obstacle to efficient time management is dealing with interruptions, which are inevitable and unpreventable. Remind your supervisors and managers that dealing with people and problems is part of their jobs, so they have to expect interruptions—but how they handle them makes a big difference to their schedules.

Give trainees these tips on how to handle interruptions politely but decisively:

◆ **Set limits** on interruptions, asking people politely what they want and how much time they’ll need—and then, lead the conversation directly to the matter at hand.

◆ **Answer questions or comply with requests immediately,** if possible. That way, you won’t spend time later getting back to the person.

◆ **Stand up** when you’re ready to end a conversation and conclude the conversation firmly—for example, “I’m glad that’s settled. Now we can get back to work.”

Being able to delegate tasks is a key tool in a supervisor’s time management toolbox. Devote a section of your training time to giving trainees guidance to help them delegate appropriately as often as possible.

First, instruct them to focus on doing the things only they can do and delegate the rest to employees. Each delegated task gives supervisors more time and gives employees the opportunity to take on new responsibilities and develop their confidence and abilities.

Delegation basically involves a simple six-step process:

1. **Determine** which tasks you can safely delegate.

2. **Define** the task clearly in your own mind first.

3. **Select** the right person for the job (in terms of skills, training, and experience).

4. **Explain** the task thoroughly and clearly, stating required standards, demonstrating proper methods, and answering any questions about the job.

5. **Monitor** progress and provide whatever support and advice are necessary.

6. **Follow up** to make sure the job has been successfully completed.
Here are some final training tips for your time management training session:

- Ask participants for examples of situations in which good time management helped them achieve important goals. Also discuss situations in which participants lost control of their time.
- Have participants describe the techniques they use to prioritize and schedule their time.
- Discuss circumstances in which delegation is appropriate and times when it is not.

**Train the trainer**

**Teach your new supervisors how to train effectively**

Do your new supervisors know the importance of training their employees? Do they know the best ways to make their training efforts effective? This tip gives you training information to convey to your new supervisors.

Training employees is a big part of any supervisor’s job. Whether it’s formal classroom training, safety meetings, on-the-job training, or coaching, teaching employees how to do their jobs properly is an important part of your supervisory responsibility.

Training improves worker performance and productivity. Formal and informal training should build skills and competence as well as help employees understand:

- Their responsibilities and functions
- Tasks and teamwork
- Equipment and technology
- Policies and procedures
- Standards of quality, behavior, and so on
- How to work safely
- The legal and regulatory requirements that apply to their jobs

To make your training sessions effective:

- **Assess employee training needs** and match needs to training objectives.
- **Set up a practical training schedule** that allows for full employee participation.
- **Choose appropriate training methods**, such as classroom training, including discussions, lectures, storytelling, and video; PowerPoint presentations; other computer-based training, including DVD and online; demonstrations; and hands-on practice.
- **Specify training objectives** so that employees know what they’re supposed to learn.
- **Write a well-organized training outline** that presents subject matter in a logical order and emphasizes the most important points.
Incorporate interactive methods into training, such as asking questions or solving problems.

Provide helpful handouts that highlight training points.

Plan for questions and answers during and at the end of the training session.

Evaluate learning with a quiz or practical performance test.

The information in this tip comes from BLR’s presentation “New Supervisors’ Guide to Effective Supervision.”

Video training

How to create effective training videos

In this tip, we share expert advice from Ari Bixhorn of Panopto.

Whether it is for job-specific training, benefits enrollment, or communicating company culture, efficient onboarding is an essential part of every organization’s learning and development activities. For many businesses, onboarding also presents a unique challenge: How do you deliver time-sensitive training, tailored to a specific role, and to a small audience that may be remotely located across the country or around the world?

A growing number of organizations are turning to video as the solution. Video provides a more engaging way to ramp up employees and, because video can be viewed from any laptop or mobile device, it provides new hires with easy access to the information they need for a successful start.

According to Gartner, an information and technology research and advisory company, onboarding is among the five most valuable uses for video within business. But where do you begin? If you’re looking to enhance new hire training with video, here are a few tips to get started.

Keep it simple

Your training videos don’t have to have production budgets that rival Michael Bay’s action movies in order to be engaging. With new, cost-effective video platforms, you can easily record an onboarding presentation with as little as a Windows® or Mac computer, PowerPoint® or Keynote® slides, and a webcam. All you do is hit the record button, and your video is automatically synchronized to your slide presentation. No expensive audiovisual equipment is needed.

Keep your videos short

Shorter videos help ensure that your audience remains engaged. The longer the video, the less likely your audience will watch the entire way through. We recommend limiting your content so that each video covers only one topic and lasts a maximum of 10 minutes.

If you’re speaking on a longer topic, break your video into smaller, shorter subtopics. For example, if you would like to inform your new hires about
healthcare benefits, you may wish to consider separating your presentation into shorter videos on insurance options, flexible spending accounts, and enrollment instructions.

Depending on your presentation and preference, you may find it easier to record a longer presentation all at once, and then separate the recording into smaller “chunks” using a video editor. Modern video platforms include easy-to-use video editors so that you no longer need to rely on audiovisual experts and complex software to create polished onboarding videos.

**Make your videos searchable**

The first day at any job can be overwhelming, especially when there are lots of things to remember. Ensure that your new employees can quickly refer to your training content when needed by making your video content searchable. Look for a video content management system that allows you to search inside videos for words mentioned by the presenter or shown on the presentation slides—so that new employees can quickly get to the information that is most important to them.

**Consider ways to make your videos interactive**

Some people retain information better when they’re more actively engaged in the learning process. Build quizzing and polling into your videos so your new hires can get more involved in the topic at hand. You could build a simple quiz using Top Hat or SurveyMonkey®, and then you can append that quiz link into your video. Viewers can answer the quiz during the video and then view the results and engage in dialogue based on the findings.

**Use analytics to improve your video content**

Video analytics can be an invaluable tool for determining what works (and what doesn’t) in your training videos. Modern video analytics can show you points in your videos where your new hires’ attention spans are dropping off—to help you develop more engaging and effective videos.

While it often takes new hires months to truly ramp in their role, organizations that use video recordings make the learning curve more manageable, providing better support to their new staff and reaping tangible gains in productivity, satisfaction, and retention.

*Ari Bixhorn is senior vice president at Panopto and responsible for driving awareness and understanding of Panopto’s enterprise video platform.*

*Before Panopto, Bixhorn worked at Microsoft® Corporation for 12 years, writing speeches for CEO Steve Ballmer, leading business development in the Windows division, and driving product management efforts within the Developer Tools division.*
Video training on how to respond to an active shooter in the workplace

In this tip, we share a short video to help you train employees on how to respond to an active shooter in the workplace.

The city of Houston Mayor’s Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security announced the release of a video that provides key steps individuals should take if they encounter an active shooter.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of Aurora's (Colorado) tragic shooting, along with their friends, family and community,” said Mayor Annise Parker. “I can’t imagine the horror and grief. If it is at all possible for any good to come out of it, perhaps it can be letting people know the options to consider if it happens again.”

“We hope our residents are never confronted with such an event, but we want to prepare them with some important information if they ever find themselves in this situation,” said Dennis J. Storemski, director of the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security.

Although active shooter events are unpredictable, motives are different, and warning signs may vary, there are three things citizens can do to increase chances of safety and survival—Run. Hide. Fight.


1. **Run if a safe path is available.** Always try and escape or evacuate even if others insist on staying. Encourage others to leave with you, but don’t let the indecision of others slow down your own effort to escape.

2. **Once you are out of the line of fire, try to prevent others from walking into the danger zone** and call 911.

3. **If you can’t get out safely, find a place to hide.**

4. **When hiding, turn out lights,** remember to lock doors and silence your ringer and vibration mode on your cell phone.

5. **As a last resort, working together or alone, act with aggression:** Use improvised weapons and fight.
Section 3: Manager leadership training tips

Appraisals

‘They never told me’

Ridiculous as it sounds, “they never told me” is a standard defense in employment lawsuits. It plays to the jury’s sense of fairness, and it plays pretty well. So, train your managers to communicate expectations effectively.

‘Surely they know what I want’

Managers and supervisors don’t like confronting their employees about performance problems so they tend to assume that employees are aware that they are not doing an acceptable job.

Unfortunately, employees don’t think that way. They assume that everything is fine unless they are told otherwise. Then if there’s a termination and they are surprised, they fight back—in court.

In front of a jury “they never told me they were displeased with my work” becomes a poignant plea for justice. The jury is likely to agree—It wasn’t fair.

In contrast, think of the same jury, but there’s a clear trail of formal performance appraisals and informal counseling that shows that the company bent over backwards to try to get this employee up to an acceptable level of performance. The jury’s likely to side with the employer that gave a wayward employee every chance to improve.

Bottom line? Train your managers and supervisors to set good goals as follows.

The four Ms

It’s easy to set good goals if you follow the Four Ms of Goalsetting:

1. Meaningful
2. Measurable
3. Makeable
4. Mutual

Good goals are meaningful:

- Broadly based on and supporting the organization’s mission and strategy
- Directly linked to division and departmental goals
- Important to the organization
- Important for the individual, relating to central parts of the job
**Good goals are measurable.** Vague goals with no measures attached do little to motivate employees. They are nearly meaningless at appraisal time since they are open to completely different interpretations by the employee and the boss.

Some examples of vague goals:

- Do a better job at X.
- Shake things up and develop a better mousetrap.
- Bring that average up a little.

Try these goals instead:

- Increase production of X by 10 percent given an overtime budget increase of 6 percent.
- Evaluate the process of the widget production and delivery and restructure to achieve a 3-day reduction on order-ship time.
- Bring the average truckloads delivered per month to 230.

**Good goals are makeable:** A goal set so high that there is no hope of achieving it is no goal at all. And a goal that’s no challenge is a gift, not a goal. Spend time to find a reasonable balance.

If an incentive is involved, it’s often useful to set several levels, for example, 5 percent improvement nets one level of incentive payment and a 10 percent improvement nets a higher incentive.

**Good goals are mutual.** Finally, goals should be mutually agreed on. It’s important to have “buy-in” from the employee and it eliminates the complaint that “I didn’t know the goals or understand them.” Furthermore, the employee’s insights into the job and how challenging it might be to attain a goal are important input in developing the goals.

**Frequent measurement is key**

The appraisal meeting should never surprise the employee, most experts agree. Surely the metrics for important goals are calculated more often than once a year. So go over the numbers or the figures with the employee on a monthly or at least quarterly basis.

For major projects, set milestones or stepping stones—a series of intermediate goals that let everyone track how the project is coming along.

For example:

**Month 1**  Interview staff involved, industry contacts, and vendor contacts.

**Month 2**  Create detailed operation plan and budget.

**Month 3**  Secure all necessary approvals and identify vendors.

**Month 4**  Send Request for Proposal out to vendors.

**Month 5**  Plan staffing changes, workflows.
Month 6  Review vendor proposals, make site visits.
Month 7  Select vendor, order materials and equipment.
Month 8  Prepare documentation, training, announcements, etc.; go for vendor training.
Month 9  Take delivery, install, enter test data.
Month 10  Train, enter full data.
Month 11  Begin parallel running.
Month 12  Switchover to new system.

One thing to remind managers about during training—if the project fails, it will reflect poorly on the manager as well as the employee.

Performance appraisal ratings—training required!
Because poor performance is often advanced as the reason for a termination, the performance appraisal system is often the crux of the defense against a wrongful termination suit. Here’s how to train your managers and supervisors to make sure your appraisals hold up.

Direct legal problems in appraisals
One common claim is from an employee who claims that he or she was given a low rating because of membership in a protected class (race, sex, age, religious belief, national origin, veteran status, disability).

To fight these claims, employers may consider three steps:
2. Avoid comments that could suggest a discriminatory attitude (women shouldn’t take jobs like this, men don’t usually take jobs like this).
3. Be consistent. Reasonable consistency means treating similarly situated employees the same. Once there’s inconsistency, eventually, there’s going to be the appearance of discrimination.

Hiding expectations
Another common claim is that the employee never knew what was expected. Sharing expectations and results is part of fairness. Juries want to know, Did the employee get a chance to improve? Did the employee know what the consequences of poor performance were?

Indirect legal problems
Many legal problems of appraisals are indirect, for example, documentation issues and inflated ratings.
**Documentation issues**

It’s a frequent problem in court that an employer has terminated an employee for poor performance and then the performance appraisal has a block checked “poor” without supporting evidence or documentation. That makes defending the suit tough.

Even worse—the appraisal can’t be found at all. (This is surprisingly and annoyingly frequent.)

**Inflated ratings**

Another legal problem that plagues performance appraisals is the problem of inflated ratings. These are a lawsuit waiting to happen. Positive or neutral ratings will confound your attempts to explain adverse actions you based on poor performance.

Imagine yourself—perhaps on the witness stand—explaining that a termination was due to incompetence or poor performance or poor attitude. Then the defense attorney produces a string of recent performance appraisals—that you signed—indicating “satisfactory.” (Or, worse, “excellent.”)

Case closed.

Either you were lying when you filled out the appraisal or you’re lying now. Either way, your credibility is shot.

What can you do to make sure your leaders—every manager and supervisor on the org chart—take their leadership roles seriously? There’s only one way—train, train, train.

**Avoiding enemies of success**

**Train your leaders to avoid these ‘7 enemies of success’**

In this tip, we get expert advice on helping you ensure that your newly promoted leaders won’t be defeated by the “seven enemies of success.”

Forty percent of newly promoted leaders fail within the first 18 months, says Diane Egbers, president of Leadership Excelleration, Inc., (LEI Consulting) ([www.lei-consulting.com](http://www.lei-consulting.com)). “It’s often what leaders don’t know that can harm them,” Egbers warns.

In *The Ascending Leader: Conquer the Seven Enemies of Success—A Strategic Guide for the Newly Promoted*, Egbers and coauthor Karen Schenck outline seven common failures of newly promoted leaders, as well as strategies and tools to help leaders overcome obstacles to their success. Train your leaders to beware of The Seven.

**The seven enemies of success are:**

1. **Submitting to the enemy within.** With the stress and anxiety of tackling new challenges and responsibilities, newly promoted leaders may become
their own worst enemies. “There are multiple things that leaders tend to do under stress” that can impede their success, Egbers says.

For example, in trying to gain credibility, new leaders might come across as being a know-it-all, they might focus on the wrong goals in an attempt to stay within their comfort zone, or, while attempting to position themselves as being authoritative, they might appear to be aggressive. Egbers says newly promoted leaders need to “conquer” this stress—rather than submit to it.

2. **Yielding to chaos.** This “occurs when a leader does not allow the time to learn comprehensively about the business and its complexities, and instead becomes consumed by the crisis of the day—day after day. Rather than assessing the needs of the business and allowing time for learning before leading, the leader becomes mired in the minutia,” Egbers and Schenck explain in the book.

Egbers says newly promoted leaders need to “manage” the chaos, be willing to make themselves “vulnerable” by asking questions, and be strategic. “Leaders need to step back and choose strategic priorities to grow the business and make it stronger.”

3. **Misreading culture cues.** Citing the Harvard Business Review, the authors say, “75 percent of the reason executives fail in the first 18 months in a new role is due to poor culture assimilation.” That’s why it is so important for leaders to “master” culture cues by “really learning and adapting to the culture before they attempt to lead,” Egbers says. Even when leaders have a long tenure in a particular department or business unit, they need to understand the culture of their new department to be successful.

4. **Misfiring with your manager.** Newly promoted leaders need to “calibrate” with their new manager, Egbers says. That is, they need to establish an effective working relationship—or risk working with “unclear expectations” and “marginal support.”

5. **Overlooking stakeholders and peers.** Newly promoted leaders are also wise to take the time to connect with internal and external stakeholders. “They provide such critical information that leaders have to know about an organization, about the business, culture, and even the new leader’s manager,” Egbers says.

6. **Alienating your team.** “Leaders in a new role risk coming off as a micro-manager or dictator, and can alienate the people on their team before they even get started on their goals,” Egbers and Schenck explain. Instead, Egbers says, leaders need to connect with, inspire, and “engage” their teams.

7. **Sub-optimize your vision and business plan.** Leaders should strive to “inspire” by creating a vision and a “focused” business plan, Egbers says. Often, leaders don’t feel empowered to set a vision of their own to lead their teams.

Not every organization has the resources to offer assimilation support, but Egbers says it is helpful to do so at every level of management. “Allow a leader to take the time to learn about an organization before they are expected to fully perform. When leaders jump in and try to lead [without first learning about the organization or department], they are at significant risk for failure.”

Although it is OK to expect them to tackle the day-to-day responsibilities of the job, give them time to learn about the organization or their department
before expecting them to make strategic decisions and create a vision to lead the business forward, she recommends. This process “is setting a person up to succeed versus hoping they don’t fail.”

HR can facilitate the assimilation process by meeting with the new leader and his or her manager and helping the leader “conquer” the seven enemies—for example, by making sure the new leader’s questions about the organization are answered and by talking to the new leader when he or she seems to be faltering, Egbers says. “There is a tremendous opportunity to be a strategic HR partner from the inception of a leader’s role and to create credibility early on. Leaders never forget who helps them when they need it most.”

In cases where a new leader is already struggling in his or her new role, Egbers recommends that HR review the seven enemies of success and try to determine why the leader is not thriving. “It’s seldom too late. Leaders can often get a fresh start with transparency and honesty. It is really important to help the leader with new awareness and support to get a fresh start.”

Avoiding lawsuits

Make sure managers know the #1 thing that makes you a lawsuit magnet

What’s the number one thing that makes a lawsuit attractive to a plaintiff’s lawyer? When no reason is given for a termination. Plaintiff’s attorney Whitney Warner spills about the management mistakes she looks for in planning legal actions against companies like yours.

Warner, who is SPHR certified, is the founding partner of Moody and Warner PC in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her tips came at a SHRM Annual Conference and Exhibition.

Train your managers to avoid the following mistakes that Warner warns can trigger expensive and time-consuming lawsuits.

No reason given for termination

Managers often say to employees who are being terminated, “You’re at will. We don’t have to give you a reason for firing you.” That’s a mistake, says Warner. It’s going to guarantee that the employee will bring a claim against you.

Why?

Every person believes that he or she is at least meeting expectations, and most think that they are stars. So the firing is going to come as a shock. The employee is going to think, “If it were performance, they would have told me about it; besides, it can’t be because of my performance, because I’m a star.”

The only conclusion the fired employee can reach is that it must be because of an illegal reason (I’m a woman, I’m pregnant, I’m old, I’m a member of a protected class). And so they call Warner.
Some HR managers believe they should say as little as possible. No, Warner says, tell all. If you list five things, I know I will have to refute five things.

So, says Warner, tell them what the reason is.

**Even worse—the reason changes over time**

If the reason you give for the termination changes over time, I’m going to get you on that, Warner says. She often hears, “Well, now that you put it that way, it wasn’t really the budget …”

One way Warner often catches people is through unemployment hearing testimony. “I’m going to get that testimony,” she says. In one case, the unemployment testimony was that the 20-year employee was fired for taking a $1.98 discount that she wasn’t entitled to. The firing was 10 days after she had made a harassment complaint to management.

“After we sued, the company said there was a ‘pattern’ of such violations, but I had the unemployment testimony to show that they were making it up.”

**Training point:** Make sure your unemployment hearing representative is trained and that you know what was said at the hearing.

**Even worse—your reason is contradicted by objective evidence**

One of my clients was fired for “poor attendance,” Warner says. “I pulled the computer logs and showed that my client only missed one day during the year in question.”

Another client was fired for “customer complaints” but there was no documentation to back it up. “Those are good cases for me,” she says.

**Failed to follow your own policies**

Another problem that Warner often capitalizes on is employers failing to follow their own policies. In one of her cases, Warner’s client, a caregiver in a residential care facility, had a bad thing happen from an outside third party. She was cornered by visiting family members and sexually assaulted with inappropriate touching.

The response of the supervisor was to pray about it. That was all.

When the client came back to work, the third party stalked her around the building, but the company still didn’t do anything. When I asked, “Did you know about this?” the manager said, “Yes.” “Why didn’t you do anything?” “I don’t know,” was the reply.

The facility tried to claim that they didn’t know this would happen, but there was evidence of a previous complaint about the same behavior. “That case settled,” said Warner.

“Because of the way the company handled the case, I was sure they’d have no policies, but, in fact, they had great policies with very detailed step-by-step procedures. Maybe nobody knew about them? No, unbelievably, the managers had all been trained on the policies between the two incidents.”
When you don’t follow policies and there are no consequences to the managers who don’t follow the policies, this appears as “utter indifference”—and that means punitive damages.

**Train your managers with Warner’s warnings to avoid lawsuits**

*Whitney Warner, a successful plaintiffs’ attorney who is SPHR-certified, is the founding partner of Moody and Warner PC in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her tips came at a SHRM Annual Conference and Exhibition.*

Train your managers with the following valuable information and practical warnings from Warner.

**High-ranking manager is the bad actor**

“I like it when a high-ranking manager was the harasser or took the retaliatory step,” says Warner. The higher the rank of the bad actor, the better for my client.

**Even worse—this is not the first problem with this manager**

A step worse is when I can show that this was not the first time this manager committed the bad act, says Warner.

**Even worse—no corrective action**

And even worse than that, says Warner, is when there were previous incidents and the company took no action. Always take action, says Warner. Do something.

**Even worse—the manager got promoted and got a bonus**

Sometimes it’s a step worse than that, when the bad actor has been rewarded. Say the top manager was behaving inappropriately toward a 20-year employee who was subsequently fired. Here’s what I’m going to tell the jury, Warner says: “You rewarded him for this inappropriate behavior and she’s out of work after 20 years. There’s nothing bad in her file; he has a thick file full of complaints and problems. The jury does not like that.”

**Demonizing or humiliating the employee**

Another mistake that Warner will take advantage of is demonizing or humiliating the employee. For example, often in an early conciliation session, the company attorney goes nuts on the employee, says Warner: “That could never happen here. You are crazy. This guy you are accusing is a great guy.”

The employee’s response is going to be, “I don’t care what happens. I am not settling. I am going to get the jury to hear this case.”

Here’s what to try instead, says Warner: “I’m really sorry. What are all the reasons you are concerned? I can see this is upsetting.”
Trying to be clever with testimony

“If you try to be clever, I’m going to get you,” Warner says. For example:

**Warner:** Does this incident violate your zero tolerance policy?

**You (cleverly):** It depends.

**Warner:** How many incidents does it take?

**You:** A few.

**Warner:** Do you agree it would be inappropriate to do/say X in the workplace?

**You:** There are times when it could be appropriate. It depends on how it’s interpreted.

**Warner:** Aren’t you the one who should know this?

Acting clueless on the witness stand

Then, there’s the other side of the coin. A surprising number of managers and HR witnesses often seem clueless when testifying, Warner says. For example, they don’t know:

- The company’s policies,
- If or when training took place, how complaints are “supposed” to be handled, let alone how they were handled in the particular case, and
- The basics of the case: They haven’t reviewed the facts.

‘Losing’ important documents

Finally, says Warner, be careful about documents. “If you can’t find an important document in the case, like a performance evaluation or the other applicants’ resumes, I may suggest that you intentionally lost it.”

‘Finding’ mysterious ‘new’ documents

On the other hand, suddenly discovered disciplinary forms without an employee signature and complaints that are postdated are going to be suspicious.

Avoiding retaliation

Train managers to resist retaliation

Retaliation—surely the dumbest mistake managers make, and one of the most expensive. Fortunately, it’s also the easiest mistake to avoid. This tip gives you important training information to help managers avoid retaliating.

Gauge your managers’ current knowledge about retaliation with these quick cases:

1. Peter worried that a dangerous chemical was being used without proper protection, and he reported it to the federal Occupational Safety and Health
Administration (OSHA). His boss, Sheila, was not happy. “Peter’s wrong,” she said. “There’s nothing unsafe about our process. And I’m miffed he didn’t come to me first. I guess he’s not the team player I thought he was. He’s not going to get that promotion after all.”

2. Meanwhile, up in Accounting, Sally took FMLA leave at “crunch time” to care for her sick mother. A month later, Sally didn’t get the raise that others in her department did.

Do these scenarios depict retaliation?

The first case certainly seems to. In the second case, it’s not clear. There is no direct evidence of retaliation, but there is an appearance of retaliation. Bottom line, the organization is likely to see a retaliation lawsuit from one or both of these situations.

Unfortunately, retaliation is a natural reaction. No manager or supervisor wants to deal with unwarranted government investigations or have to cope with the absence of a top employee at a particularly busy time. But managers and supervisors must learn to resist the urge to retaliate. Retaliation claims are simply too time-consuming and expensive for employers to defend.

Train your managers and supervisors on the following key information about retaliation:

What is retaliation?

Retaliation occurs when employers take action against an employee—such as firing, demotion, or denying a raise or a promotion—for doing something the employee had a right to do (or a right not to do).

Retaliation danger zone

You may not retaliate against an employee for taking protected actions such as those listed below. These employees are in the “retaliation danger zone.”

Civic duties

◆ Voting
◆ Performing jury duty
◆ In some states, answering a subpoena to testify

Safe workplace—Reporting unsafe situations in the workplace.

Illegal actions

◆ Refusing to perform an illegal act. For example, refusing to falsify testimony or participate in a price-fixing scheme.
◆ Reporting illegal activity (whistleblowing).

Uphold the public interest—In some states, acting in the public interest is protected. Workers who are doing the “right thing” may be protected even though there may be no specific law protecting their action.
Keeping managers out of the danger zone

Are you in the danger zone? If your managers aren’t sure, have them ask themselves these questions:

◆ Would any evidence—other than timing—support the charge of retaliation? For example, have you said, “I’ll get her for this,” or “I’ve never been so mad at an employee?” How about your e-mails (“Who does she think she is?”)?

◆ Can you show, with solid documentation, that your action against the employee is for a good, nonretaliatory reason? If your documentation is weak, contradictory, or nonexistent, you will have a tough time convincing agencies or juries of your good faith.

◆ Is the action you wish to take the obvious action to take under the circumstances? For example, is termination the logical last step in a long string of progressive disciplinary actions, or is this a situation in which you would normally suspend the employee, not terminate?

◆ If there is a performance issue, what do the employee’s performance appraisals say? Unfortunately, these documents, which are powerful in court, often characterize performance as “satisfactory” or “good.” Those terms may be “low marks” in your organization, but they are likely to be taken at face value by a jury.

For sure, your employee’s attorney will find a company document that defines “Satisfactory” as “meets or exceeds all requirements of the job in a satisfactory manner.” You’re going to look like an idiot trying to prove that when you say “satisfactory” you mean “unsatisfactory.”

Preventing retaliation

So, what should managers do to prevent retaliation claims? Train them to:

◆ Know employee rights and honor them. Learn the policies and procedures associated with those rights (see the previous list in this tip).

◆ Treat employee requests with respect, and take complaints seriously.

◆ Stay in control when employees ask for something that is within their rights, even though it is aggravating.

◆ Be alert for situations that may give the appearance of retaliation.

◆ Avoid joking or other behavior that could be construed as indicating a plan to retaliate, such as “I’ll get even,” or “I’m not taking this sitting down.”

Finally, recognize that it’s hard to hide behind the technicalities of the law when it comes to retaliation. Some courts and many juries will infer an obligation of the employer to deal with employees in good faith, regardless of whether any particular law requires it. And retaliation is never going to look like good faith.
Legal activities outside of work—In some states, engaging in legal activities outside of work is protected. Many of these laws were passed to prohibit discrimination against smokers, but they may also protect other social activities.

Garnishment—Having had one’s pay garnished (reduced by court order).

Medical leave—Taking leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Disability accommodation—Requesting reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Workers’ compensation—Filing a workers’ compensation claim.

Harassment—Complaining about harassment.

Union activity—Participating in certain union activities under the National Labor Relations Act. Even in nonunionized organizations, employees have the right to engage in “concerted” activity.

Political activity—in some states, engaging in certain political activity is protected.

Compensation—Making complaints about wage and hour issues.

Benefits—Exercising certain rights pertaining to pensions and other benefits under the Employee Retirement and Income Security Act. For example, employees may not be terminated just so the employer can avoid providing a benefit, such as vesting.

Veterans’ rights—Taking leave for certain military service and the right to return to work under certain circumstances.

Secondary claims
Often a retaliation claim is secondary to another claim. The employee sues for sexual harassment, and then claims that he or she was retaliated against for having filed the claim. Surprisingly, the retaliation claim is often upheld even when the main claim is not.

Why? Juries easily grasp the idea of retaliation and they are sympathetic to the employee. Also, employers often have solid evidence to refute the original claim, but have weaker evidence to refute the retaliation claim.

Appearance of retaliation
Many retaliation charges are based almost entirely on unfortunate timing. For example, an employee requests leave, files a sexual harassment charge, or makes an OSHA complaint. Two weeks later, he or she is fired and charges retaliation.

Now you’ve got a tricky task to prove your case. If your documentation and reasons for the firing are not airtight, you’ll have a difficult time convincing a jury that the firing wasn’t retaliation.
Award-winning leadership training

What award-winning leadership training looks like

For 18 years, Brandon Hall Group, Inc., has recognized companies for their learning programs. In this tip, we’ll look at one recent winner that you can use as a benchmark for your own leadership training efforts.

Yum! Brands, Inc., is serving up more at its restaurants than a menu of familiar fare. In fact, the world’s largest restaurant company and parent company of KFC, Pizza Hut®, and Taco Bell® offers an award-winning employee leadership training program.

Yum! Brands’ “TAKING PEOPLE WITH YOU” program received a “Gold Award for Excellence” in the category of custom content from Brandon Hall Group, Inc.’s Excellence in Learning, Talent Management, and Sales and Marketing Awards.

The training program is based on the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal best-selling book, TAKING PEOPLE WITH YOU: The Only Way to Make BIG Things Happen, which was written by Yum! Brands Chairman and CEO David Novak.

Released in January 2012, the book provides an insider’s look at the unique leadership program that Novak has developed and taught globally to thousands of managers and franchisees in his 15 years with the company. The book “offers a step-by-step guide to setting big goals, getting others on board, and achieving breakthrough results,” and the related training program is offered globally in 11 languages.

“Our number one goal is to build people capability, and we are proud that our global TAKING PEOPLE WITH YOU training program has been recognized as a gold standard,” said Rob Lauber, vice president, Yum! University, Yum! Brands. “We’re leveraging TAKING PEOPLE WITH YOU to cultivate leaders throughout our organization.”

For 18 years, Brandon Hall Group has recognized companies for their learning programs. The organization awards gold, silver, and bronze awards in 48 categories. “This year’s winners should be very proud of their achievements especially based on the rigorous judging process all submissions underwent,” said Mike Cooke, CEO of Brandon Hall Group. “We are honored to recognize the award winners who exemplify a high standard of performance in their organization and demonstrate clear, measurable business results through these innovative programs.”

“This year’s award entries were all excellent examples of best practices in the categories of learning, talent management, and sales and marketing,” said Rachel Ashkin, chief operating officer of Brandon Hall Group. “Once again, our awards participants raised the standard for what world-class programs and initiatives look like and are remarkable examples of what organizations should be focused on to improve business performance.”

One award recipient is WellPoint, Inc., a provider of health benefits solutions and medical and specialty plans through its subsidiary companies. WellPoint won a Gold Award in the Best Sales Onboarding Program category for its Compass New
Hire Program and a Bronze Award in the Best Program for Sales Training and Performance category.

The 8-week Compass New Hire Program, which is offered quarterly to commercial sales associates, incorporates various training techniques, including face-to-face instruction, virtual classrooms, and self-paced instruction. The program fosters an interactive learning environment via frequent communications and online discussion boards.

The company has seen measurable results with the program. “WellPoint was able to reduce its new hire program from 30 weeks to 8 weeks, decrease the frequency of checkpoints from 23 conference calls to six discussion board check-ins, and significantly cut the cost per class without compromising the quality of the program,” said Jennifer Hammond, director of learning for WellPoint. “We not only saw higher participation in the program, we saw improved key performance indicators.”

“Our redesigned program now provides the foundation to help acclimate new associates to the company and develop core competencies in management teams—a recipe for sustained success,” said Ken Goulet, WellPoint executive vice president for Employer, Medicaid, Individual, and Specialty Business.

Balancing employer/employee needs

How to balance employer and employee needs

Representing both employer and employee is a challenging managerial role that is vital to morale and organizational success. In this tip, we present training information on the employer-to-employee half of the balancing act for managers.

The information in this tip is from BLR’s 10-Minute HR Trainer session titled “Balancing Employer and Employee Needs.”

Present employer needs and expectations to employees

On one side of the employer/employee balance is the task of conveying employer needs and expectations to employees. Train managers to:

◆ Know and understand what the organization wants from supervisors and employees in terms of mission, goals, and plans.
◆ Learn as much as possible about organizational needs and expectations by:
  — Attending meetings, workshops, and other programs.
  — Reading handbooks and other organizational materials.
  — Keeping up on E-mails, memos, and other updates.
  — Discussing organizational issues with managers and peers.
Communicate employer policies to employees

In addition, train managers to communicate organizational policies and directions to employees. Here’s how they can do so:

◆ Be sure that all employees receive organizational information on policies, goals, instructions, benefits, etc.
  — Require all employees to attend company and department briefings.
  — Check that employees have received and read any printed or electronic materials.
◆ Review major issues and changes personally with employees.
  — Meet with your own managers to clarify understanding of issues.
  — Conduct formal employee meetings on significant issues with direct impact on employees (e.g., relocations, new equipment, or new safety rules).
  — Conduct informal meetings to encourage questions and discussion of controversial or troubling issues (e.g., layoffs, mergers).
◆ Relate organizational goals and policies to employees’ jobs and prospects.
  — Help employees see the “big picture” with regard to marketing, competition, economic issues, etc.
  — Make sure they know how their work contributes to the organization’s success and/or survival.
◆ Be positive but realistic about organizational changes and directives.
  — Explain the potential gains for the organization and employees.
  — Don’t sugarcoat problems.

Avoid potential conflicts between employers and employees

In addition, managers need to know how to try to resolve conflicts between employee and employer needs. Train managers to:

◆ Know organizational resource policies and limits.
  — Remind employees of current situations and future prospects.
  — Keep salary and raise expectations in line with available funds.
  — Use your budget in ways employees care about (e.g., equipment upgrades, raises).
◆ Identify and use nonfinancial motivators (e.g., training, time off).
◆ Create a cooperative climate where employees support one another.

Anticipate employee needs and concerns

Communication is key to striking the right balance between employer and employee needs. Train managers and/or supervisors to convey employee needs and concerns to employers. Here’s how managers can stay in touch with employee needs:
Work to anticipate and respond to employee needs by obtaining your group’s fair share of available funds, equipment, training, and other resources.

Stay tuned to employee needs and concerns by:

— Discussing work issues often in informal groups and one-on-one.
— Encouraging workers to share thoughts about their jobs.
— Taking employee problems and worries seriously.

Let employers know employee accomplishments and concerns

Managers need to keep employers in touch with what is going on with employees. Here’s how managers can convey employee accomplishments and concerns to management:

Credit and reward employees for special achievements and consistent strong performance.

— Report to management on group and individual accomplishments.
— Share positive management feedback with employees.

Report employee concerns to management.

— Point to the potential impact (e.g., safety problems, productivity, heavy turnover).
— Focus on concerns management can address (e.g., benefits packages, layoff numbers, equipment upgrades).
— Suggest solutions (e.g., equipment upgrades, more training).

Work to obtain resources and information employees request and need.

— Represent employees to top management, other departments, etc.

Basic training for managers

Make leadership training a priority

Leadership is an essential skill for all supervisors and managers, especially if they are new to the job. While leadership may be considered a “soft” skill, it is integral to a well-functioning department, division, and, essentially, the entire workforce. This tip provides a primer on leadership training.

Truly successful supervisors and managers don’t “boss” their employees; they lead them. It’s through effective leadership that employees are motivated to perform at their best. It’s through effective leadership that goals are achieved and departments meet productivity, quality, service, and safety standards. In short, developing effective leaders among your managerial and supervisory staff is essential to the success of your organization.

So what does it mean to be an effective leader?

Read on for the valuable information you need to give your supervisors and managers so that they can develop first-class leadership skills. This material
Legal overview

There are no state or federal laws that require you to train supervisors and managers in leadership skills. However, organizations whose management is composed of effective leaders are not only more successful they are also more likely to be in compliance with laws and regulations and less likely to attract expensive and damaging lawsuits.

Your leadership skills training program should contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Concept of leadership
- Relationship between leadership and power
- Qualities of effective leaders
- Leadership styles
- How to build credibility and trust
- Basic leadership techniques, including:
  - Empowerment
  - Motivation
  - Delegation
  - Accountability
  - Participation
  - Feedback
- How to lead teams effectively
- Leading employees skillfully in times of change

Teach your supervisors and managers that to empower employees, successful leaders must:

- Promote “ownership” and encourage initiative.
- Be accessible for consultation.
- Provide excellent training.
- Share responsibility and credit.
- Encourage team action.
- Recognize achievement.

To motivate employees, supervisors and managers can:

- Create a vision that helps employees see how they fit into the “big picture.”
- Provide clear direction so that employees know the parameters of successful performance.
- Have high expectations for all employees.
◆ Set reasonable, achievable goals.
◆ Maintain consistent standards.
◆ Discover and use personal motivators.

**Six degrees of delegation**
Give managers and supervisors these six steps in the **delegation** process:

1. Determine the task.
2. Define the task.
3. Select the right person for the job.
4. Explain the task.
5. Provide support and feedback.
6. Follow up to make sure the job has been done properly.

Make sure managers and supervisors know that when holding employees **accountable** for performance, effective leaders:

◆ Set appropriate standards.
◆ Make sure employees understand expectations.
◆ Monitor performance.
◆ Provide support and assistance as needed.
◆ Evaluate performance.
◆ Explain what to improve and how.

In addition, let them know that good leaders encourage employee **participation** by:

◆ Interacting with employees daily
◆ Asking for input
◆ Involving employees in decision making and problem solving
◆ Encouraging all employees to speak up at group meetings
◆ Reinforcing participation

**Communicate how leaders communicate**
Explain that leaders emphasize two-way communication with employees and provide both positive and corrective feedback as needed. For example, when giving feedback, they:

◆ Make feedback specific and timely.
◆ Ask employee for input.
◆ Identify what was done well or poorly.
◆ Limit feedback to one issue at a time.
- Explain why it is important.
- Follow up and provide additional feedback.

For further discussion
Here are some more recommended interactive activities to assist you as you conduct your leadership training program:

- **Discuss the relationship between power and influence** and how that affects a person’s effectiveness as a leader. Ask trainees to give examples of how they have used influence to get employees to do what is needed to be done rather than just ordering them to do it.

- **Discuss the qualities of effective leaders.** Ask trainees to suggest other qualities that would make someone a good leader.

- **Discuss the benefits of empowering employees** and how to achieve this goal. Ask trainees to give examples of ways they empower their employees.

- **Discuss the importance of accountability** and the steps trainees can take to hold employees accountable while providing adequate support to ensure success.

- **Ask trainees to describe how they encourage participation.**

- **Ask trainees to describe how they use feedback** to motivate employees and encourage superior performance.

- **Give trainees a quiz.** (The BLR session that provided the information for this tip includes a prewritten quiz with answers.)

Coaching

Executive coaching programs are effective
Finding and/or making new leaders can be hard. Many organizations have turned to coaching programs to nurture promising employees into effective executives. But how effective is coaching? In this tip, we report on a recent survey that asked a few hundred organizations that very question.

Executive coaching programs are seen as being "very effective" by 26% of companies offering such programs and “somewhat effective” by 62% of companies, according to a recent national survey.

In addition, 12% reported that their executive coaching programs are “ineffective,” according to the survey of 230 organizations by AMA Enterprise, a division of the American Management Association (www.amanet.org) that offers advisory services and tailored learning programs.

“The mixed grades for coaching aren’t unexpected when compared to the effectiveness of other executive and leadership development opportunities,” said Sandi Edwards, senior vice president for AMA Enterprise.
“A big challenge for development professionals is to make sure all forms of learning are assessed critically, so the coaching numbers shouldn’t be a cause for alarm. But they’re a reminder that measurement and accountability may not be taken for granted.

“While coaching is more often seen as a benefit for high-potential managers, there’s sometimes a perceived stigma that the coaching may be an intervention to solve a problem,” Edwards explained.

“In any case, it’s key that the organization is clear about what’s expected with such initiatives as coaching, leadership development, or stretch assignments. In this way, their value may be seen not only by participants but also the organization at large. Visible outcomes are essential to the success of both the initiatives and the organization’s growth,” Edwards adds.

**Measurable business impact**

Survey participants are split on how often their executive coaching program delivers a measurable business impact compared with other development tools, such as on-the-job training, workshops, formal courses, stretch assignments, and functional training. Specifically, 35% of respondents said that coaching has a measurable impact more often than other development tools, compared to 37% who see a measurable impact with coaching about as often and 28% who see a measurable impact less often.

**Greatest challenges**

Conflicting priorities/time constraints are the greatest challenges that employers face with the effective delivery of coaching—with 32% of survey participants citing these challenges.

Other challenges include lack of sponsor/management support and involvement (cited by 17% of participants), lack of resources to provide needed coaching (16%), difficulty assessing coaching’s effectiveness (14%), lack of accountability (13%), and difficulty choosing effective coaches (8%).

To help ensure success of coaching programs, all involved parties must be clear about the desired results and committed to delivering those results, Edwards said. “Coaching demands the same determined commitment by all parties as does any other successful venture.”

**Employee engagement**

**Address employee engagement during management training**

In this tip, we hear from one author on why you need to do so.

“All managers should be taught the subtle signs of a disengaged workforce,” says Todd Patkin, author of *Finding Happiness: One Man’s Quest to Beat Depression and Anxiety and—Finally—Let the Sunshine In.*
“They should all learn which words and actions tend to upset employees and which get people fired up. They should know how to handle employees’ mistakes productively, as well as how to adjust the behavior of disruptive employees.

“The fact that a person is in a position of authority doesn’t mean that he or she instinctively knows how to engage a team. And at the end of the day, it doesn’t matter how much knowledge, experience, and skill a manager has if he or she can’t motivate and connect with employees.

“In my opinion, just about any phrase that affirms, encourages, reassures, thanks, or shows that you trust an employee is valuable,” says Patkin.

Here are three of his favorite phrases that help drive engagement that you can pass along to managers during training:

1. **What do you need from me?** The answer can provide insight into how to improve the company and develop and support individual employees.

2. **Thank you.** “People love to hear positive feedback about themselves and, in most cases, they’ll be willing to work a lot harder to keep the compliments and thanks coming,” he says.

3. **That’s OK.** We all make mistakes. Let’s talk about how to fix this. “Mistakes are an essential part of growth,” he says. Employees should feel comfortable taking risks—without fear of reprisal if things go wrong.

And why don’t more managers use these phrases? Patkin explains that:

- There is a lack of training on employee engagement;
- Some managers are reluctant to “get personal” with their teams and step down from the “leadership pedestal”; and
- Most often, managers are simply busy. They have so many responsibilities of their own that they just don’t think to stop, take a few seconds, and nurture the relationships they have with employees.

### 8 tips to help promote employee engagement

In this tip, we hear one author’s ideas on how to promote employee engagement.

When a top performer leaves to go elsewhere and your organization is left with a huge void, says management expert Jeff Cortes, it can negatively affect the performance of the whole organization.

Turnover is also very costly, adds Cortes, author of the book *No-Nonsense Retention ... Painless Strategies to Retain Your Best People*. Depending on the study you look at, the impact of turnover ranges from 3 months of salary for a low-level employee to as high as 400 percent of the annual salary of an upper-level person.

“If you are going to maximize your organization’s performance, you have to make a conscious, top-down management commitment to develop a no-nonsense approach to retention,” Cortes says.

Here are his top must-do actions that your managers must be trained to follow for retaining the human assets you’ve worked so hard to acquire:
1. **Fire the slugs.** “There’s good and bad turnover,” Cortes says. Firing a nonperformer—a slug—is good turnover. Identify the nonperformers and confront them with the problem, Cortes says. If they don’t solve it, terminate them with respect and dignity and replace them with someone who does what is truly desired and required for the role and position they are in. And here’s the big bonus from firing slugs—your good performers will love you. For sure, they’ve been stewing about having to carry most of the slug’s load.

2. **Manage visibly.** Get out of your office. Begin each day by walking around. Stroll around the floor several times a day. Meet the customers, talk with employees, greet the vendors, help the delivery trucks load and unload. Let people know you are there. If they like you, they are less likely to leave you. Visibility drives retention.

3. **Care about your people.** Similarly, if you don’t really care about your people, the business is doomed. Caring is the reason people stay. Get to know your people. Learn what each person likes and enjoys. Listen to them and learn about their interests, families, and hobbies. Protect your people from harm and from others in your organization. Employees are loyal to those who care about them and for them.

4. **Keep your door open 80 percent of the time.** Let your people know you are accessible to them, Cortes says. Avoid telling people to make an appointment or come back later. Make sure the time you do spend with your people is quality time, he adds.

5. **Actively focus on employee assistance.** Sit down with the other managers and supervisors in your organization and identify the problems that are faced by people in your workforce. Develop innovative ideas and deploy specific new plans to provide employees with more flexibility in their work, support for their common needs, and help for dealing with personal issues that impact their life.

6. **Treat everyone with respect always.** Every manager and supervisor must set the standard that respectful behavior and sincere open appreciation are expected with no exceptions, Cortes says. Investigate and take immediate action of all nonrespectful behavior incidents. And take an active step: Bring food to be shared on a regular basis. “Break bread with your people regularly instead of forcing people to eat baloney,” Cortes says. The point here is that you lead by example.

7. **Ask your people what they want.** Also, remember to ask people what they want out of their work. Identify how they want to grow so you can help them develop greater control, autonomy, and responsibility for the work they do for you. Help them achieve these goals specifically and incrementally. “Meaningful engagement in their own future drives commitment and loyalty,” Cortes says.

8. **Tell your people what you want of them.** Make sure you explain in clear and specific terms what you expect of them. Give them the tools, support, and time they need to get the work done. If they do not meet your expectations—assuming the expectations have been clearly communicated and they had the resources to satisfy them—bring them in to find out what it will take to get them on track.
Employee recognition

Train managers on 5 key tenets of employee recognition

Empowering and encouraging employees is an important part of a manager’s job. In this tip, we get expert advice on training employers and managers to recognize employees more effectively.

Derek Irvine, coauthor of the book *Winning with a Culture of Recognition* (Globoforce Limited, 2010) and vice president of Global Strategy for Globoforce, suggests that it’s time for employers to take another look at employee recognition. “It’s no longer just a nice-to-have a program; recognition can be, if deployed strategically, a massive profit generator and a massive strategy deliverer for organizations when it is done right.”

Even during this difficult economy, more people are voluntarily leaving jobs right now than people are being laid off, says Irvine. “Employees are feeling disenfranchised and disengaged. People sustain an extra level of work and pressure for a time, and then they’re voluntarily leaving jobs and out hunting and finding others. As you well know, it’s the top performers that, even during difficult times, still find alternative jobs.”

Irvine asserts that strategic employee recognition is an answer to retaining staff. He says that one of the problems with relying on individual managers to recognize employees for a job well done is that some managers are more creative than others in individually recognizing and rewarding employees. Another problem is that recognition may fall by the wayside when managers become preoccupied by important business needs.

The biggest problem, however, is that when recognition is left up to each manager with no structured plan in place, it may not happen at all. Irvine notes that one research study reported that 60% of employees said that they had received no recognition or reward during the past 12 months.

Key recognition tenets

“Strategic recognition comes into play by providing a format, a structure to follow [that] is based on five key tenets that we find important to success,” says Irvine.

**Tenet 1: Make sure that strategic recognition starts at the top.** The CEO must really care about recognition. According to Irvine, achieving long-term support from the CEO and senior leadership requires your ability to provide real data, metrics, and measurements of the successes of your recognition program back up to the executive offices.

**Tenet 2: Build the recognition program strongly on the back of metrics.** “Put into place metrics for the entire company so you have a cascade of metrics throughout the organization that says that recognition is going to be very important,” Irvine says. “More and more companies are realizing the financial impact of improving employee engagement.”
He cites a recent Harvard Business Review article about Best Buy®: “A store that achieved a 0.1 percent improvement in employee engagement achieved $100,000 more in revenue than any other store.” Irvine also cites a Towers Watson study that a 15% improvement in employee engagement equates to a 2% improvement to a company’s bottom line.

**Tenet 3: Build the theme of the program behind quite simple, but extremely important, topics for the organization.** “For example,” says Irvine, “your core strategy and goals that the company has set for growth and innovation, clearly communicated to employees so they know these are the things that matter; these are the values we follow.

“Strategic recognition becomes the lever, the mechanism that reinforces the theme that matters,” he explains. “That’s why we are going to continuously celebrate all employees when they live and behave in this fashion.”

**Tenet 4: Touch as many people as possible as often as possible.** Recognition programs often have reached the top 20%—only those employees who are most motivated. Irvine says that’s a mistake. “We recommend recognizing and celebrating at least 80% of the employee population. A key emphasis of strategic recognition is to cast a wider circle of recognition to get the 80% behind the theme—the values and strategy of the organization.”

**Tenet 5: Put together a coordinated strategy around the recognition program.** There should be a consistent, coordinated approach across company locations and even within departments, a single voice that all employees can rally around, notes Irvine.

**A client example**

Irvine cites a Globoforce client company that provides technology security solutions, among other products, Symantec. The company grew very quickly over the years and acquired many other companies with different company cultures. Globoforce helped Symantec live a united, Symantec strategy, one set of values, by creating a strategic employee recognition program built on its strategy and values, he explained.

The result? Irvine reports that within 12 months, Symantec “realized a double-digit increase to their net employee promoter score,” their measurement of employee engagement. “There was the willingness of employees to promote Symantec as an organization.”

Irvine concludes his discussion of strategic recognition by stressing that the reality of modern management is that what gets monitored and measured gets results—and that’s the motivation behind the tenets espoused above.

For more information, visit Winning with a Culture of Recognition.
Essential dimensions of leadership

Teach managers the 6 essential dimensions of great leaders

Use the expert advice in this tip to help train your managers and supervisors to be more effective leaders.

Increased demands, overstretched budgets, stressed-out workers, flat business performance, and poor leadership role models—combined with a leadership model that tends to reward short-term results—have created a “growing gap between the leaders we have and the leaders we need,” says author Bob Rosen.

Rosen (bobrosen.com), who is CEO of Healthy Companies International (healthycompanies.com) and author of several books, including his latest, Grounded: How Leaders Stay Rooted in an Uncertain World (November 2013), uses an analogy to describe the current pressures leaders are facing. He says leaders are like “trees in the middle of a storm, and their branches are being blown by the winds of change. The winds of change are uprooting them.

“The world is changing, and we need different kinds of leaders,” he says. “Our leadership model is broken.” That’s because the focus tends to be on what leaders need to do to get ahead “and not nearly enough on who they are as human beings.

“There’s a disconnect between what people say and what people do,” he continues. “Actions don’t follow words, and most leaders haven’t fundamentally changed [despite the new demands], and that’s a real problem.”

In his book, Rosen identifies six essential dimensions that he says must be nourished and supported to develop great leaders. The dimensions are:

1. **Physical**

“This is how you live,” says Rosen. “We need leaders who are agile and have stamina.” Great leaders have a “deeper awareness of mind and body;” they know how to manage their energy, and they live a “peak performance lifestyle.” He adds, leaders are “running 24/7 and dealing with the speed of the market. They have to be physically fit and be able to bounce back in the face of adversity.”

2. **Emotional**

“This is how you feel,” he explains. Leaders need confidence and self-awareness, and they need to exhibit positive emotions, such as forgiveness, compassion, love, and generosity. “Uncertainty is the new norm. We need someone who is comfortable with uncertainty. We need someone who is emotionally healthy.”

3. **Intellectual**

Leaders need critical thinking skills. “The world is much more complex with information overload,” Rosen says. “We need leaders who can be confident with that complexity” and leaders who are constantly learning.
4. Social
Leaders must have strong interpersonal skills, be transparent, and be able to “build mutually rewarding relationships,” he says.

5. Vocational
This dimension focuses on how leaders perform, deal with competition, and maintain balance between finding meaning in their job and fulfilling their need for success. “Competition is so intense,” he says. “Leaders need a drive to succeed but not be hijacked by stress.”

6. Spiritual
“This is how you see the world,” Rosen says. “Do you have a bigger purpose above yourself?” Leaders who think globally see how they fit into the world, for example, by making their organizations more socially responsible.

While the focus of leadership development is often on competencies, actions, and skills, more attention needs to be paid to the character and attributes of a leader, Rosen says. “Who you are drives what you do.”

Although many leaders live their lives according to the six essential dimensions of great leaders, Rosen says many leaders do not. “Many work in unhealthy organizations, where they are rewarded for other kinds of behavior.”

However, there is a growing recognition of the connection between “healthy leadership and high performance,” Rosen says. Employers that recognize and embrace that connection will reap the benefits. “Healthy leaders create healthier companies, and healthier companies outperform their competition.”

Why? Healthy leaders have a higher purpose, engage people in the process, share direction, foster great relationships, unleash human energy, grow and innovate, and drive performance, he says. “The healthier the leaders, the healthier your culture is and the higher performing your company is.”

So, what can you do to address what Rosen describes as the current “leadership development crisis”? Rosen suggests focusing on who your leaders are; changing the way you assess, select, develop, promote, and reward them; and helping leaders see themselves in a different light.

“The secret is to help people see themselves and other people differently. A lot of people walk around with blurred perceptions of themselves.” To lead better, leaders need to have open minds and pay attention to their positive emotions, he says. “The return on investment is huge on how leaders operate.”
Gaining buy-in for leadership training

How to gain buy-in for leadership development training

Trying to get a leadership development training program off the ground? In this tip, we get expert advice on how to make the case that such training is worth the time and expense.

Managers who wonder why employee morale is low, why turnover is high, and why employees aren’t performing at their peak may be overlooking the real problem—how managers in the company lead—says Scott Love, a nationally syndicated leadership columnist and a speaker on leadership issues.

“They refuse to change, to learn, to grow, and to develop themselves or their team leaders and, instead, criticize and complain about the performance of their staff. But both the problem and the solution start at the top, not the bottom,” says Love (www.greatrecruitertraining.com).

An inherent, inherited problem

Love says an authoritarian management style is inherent in many corporate cultures because that’s just the way it’s been in some organizations since military-style leadership from World War II was carried over into business settings: “Managers lead the way their boss led them, who led the way his boss led him, who led the way his boss led him.”

However, an authoritarian management style is appropriate only in times of crisis, national disasters, or emergencies, Love says. “In times of crisis, fast, unquestioned orders are the most effective way to lead. An emergency is not a time to create focus groups or quality circles.” In most business settings, a collegial, cooperative approach is the most effective management style, he says.

How to make the switch

When trying to convince top management to switch to such a style, training professionals need to “sell” the idea. “This is really a sales job,” he says, noting that sales representatives try to get prospects to answer “yes” to a series of questions before actually offering them a specific product. You should use the same approach, according to Love.

For example, when approaching the CEO, he says training professionals should:

◆ Get the CEO’s buy-in for change by saying something like, “I have an issue that I think is going to help you reach peak performance. Would you want help with that?”

◆ Ask if he or she wants to hear the idea—even if some of the information is negative.

◆ Get a verbal commitment to change by asking the CEO whether he or she will consider changing.
When suggesting a new management style, Love recommends that training professionals point to measurable data, such as the company’s inability to attract and retain high performers or information from exit interviews that high turnover is caused by an authoritarian management style.

However, just presenting the raw data is not enough. Training professionals should also explain how that information affects the business and what will happen if the problem persists.

“People aren’t going to change unless there’s motivation to change,” Love says. “The first cardinal rule of human behavior is that people generally do what’s in their own best interest.”

Managers that recognize that employees want to be fulfilled at work and that create an environment in which people feel that they make a difference will generate far greater productivity than someone who routinely orders employees around, according to Love. “If managers lead in a way that people are fulfilled, they’ll get more out of people than they thought they ever could.”

Generation gap

Train young leaders to bridge the generation gap

In this tip, Tommy Beyer, CHA, general manager at the Hilton Garden Inn Savannah Airport, Savannah, Georgia (www.savannahairport.hgi.com), gives us best practices for training young leaders to bridge the generation gap with older employees. In this tip, he writes specifically of his industry—but the practices can be applied to any industry.

With more and more large universities and high schools adding degrees in hospitality to their course offerings, it’s clear that the industry is gaining attention from millennials. (A millennial, commonly referred to as Generation Y, is anyone born between the 1980s and early 2000s.) The increase in the number of students graduating with a bachelor’s degree in Hospitality Management means the average age of the workforce is beginning to drop.

Younger, educated workers are entering the industry at a rapid pace and are quickly working their way up the corporate ladder. However, many of the novice leaders have yet to determine their leadership style and are fairly inexperienced.

One of the largest issues facing these new leaders is learning how to lead a team of older and more experienced members. Speaking as a millennial who had to navigate his way through unfamiliar waters, I would like to lay a framework—for a young leader in any industry—for successfully building and leading a team of people who are, in some cases, twice your age.

1. **Give respect.** The worst mistake a young leader can make when leading team members who are their seniors—one that virtually guarantees your team will be more difficult to lead—is not giving them enough respect. By giving respect, I mean respecting their age, years of experience, and ideas. If you expect them to respect your position and you personally, you must make giving respect a top priority.
I was promoted to my first leadership position while I was still in college. Every person working for me was older than I was, and I had the least amount of experience. Once I became their leader, I quickly realized that the thing I could do to get them to perform at their best was to listen to them and give them as much respect as possible. I knew my position came with a certain amount of respect, but if I wanted to continue to progress through the industry, I needed to be known for being a leader who was respected because he respected his team first.

2. Leverage their experience. The number one advantage someone who is older than you has will most likely be the experience they have garnered over the years in the industry. Usually, with more experience comes a level of certainty in the work they are performing. I found that many of the team members that I began leading knew much more about the industry and property management systems than I did—however, I was still promoted over them.

I had to leverage the experience they had and use it to help me through some tough situations. I was able to build a team that had years of experience and was willing to share what they had learned to help me become a better leader. My team began to trust me more and, in turn, I was able to get them to want to perform at a higher level. I saw it as a resource that many leaders were too prideful to tap into.

Once they realized that I respected them and appreciated the experience they had, they became willing to explain how they had dealt with various issues in the past. As a college student, I may have had “book knowledge” that they didn’t, but I was certainly lacking in the on-the-job experience they possessed. Again, in order for me to get ahead and continue an upward trajectory in my career, I utilized the resources that were around me, which, in this case, happened to be leading a team of experienced individuals.

3. Be inclusive. Once you earn their respect and capitalize on their level of experience, you can begin to shift your attention to making your team members feel included. Since you are a new leader, you are still developing your leadership style and gaining on-the-job experience everyday. I came to the realization that I should not be afraid to include my team in some of the decisions I was making and ideas I was considering.

Once I began including them in the decision-making process, I was able to get more buy-in from the team. I even found that they had some really great ideas. I saw that the generalized perception of younger leaders is that they are very prideful and arrogant to the point where they would frequently fail to include their team in large decisions that affect the way they perform their jobs. Many young leaders have the tendency to feel threatened by the experience and age of the older members of their team, when, in fact, they should have confidence in their position and include the team in the process.

When I was able to get more buy-in, my team rose to new levels, and our performance exceeded everyone’s expectations. At one point, we were able to take the hotel to a #1 ranking in the brand for guest satisfaction, all with a key leader still in college!

4. Share your knowledge. The trend in the industry has been that many of the older workers never completed a 4-year bachelor’s degree, as it was not required in the past. Many of the newer leaders in the industry are equipped with this degree
and a good amount of book knowledge. The tendency of the younger workers is to feel like they have an advantage over the workers without a degree.

I realized that there was a tension here between the older and younger team members, and I was able to utilize my schooling to benefit my career path without making anyone who was less educated feel incompetent. Once I was able to earn the respect of my team and include them in some key decisions, I was comfortable enough with them to begin sharing some of the book knowledge I possessed. While they were teaching me the things they had learned while working in the industry, I, in turn, was able to teach them some of the knowledge they didn't have the time or opportunity to acquire.

The majority of the knowledge that I was able to impart related to some technological advancements made over the past few years. My older team members enjoyed learning how to fully utilize programs like Microsoft® Excel and Outlook to their advantage. If younger leaders take the time to build a solid rapport with their team, they should be able to impart the knowledge to the older generation without making them feel less valued.

The most successful young leaders will give respect to their teams, leverage their experience, include them in the decision-making process, and then share their knowledge. Following the framework laid out in this article is an excellent start to navigating through the difficult waters of leading a team of older, more experienced members.

**Hiring**

**Top 8 rookie hiring mistakes made by managers**

Most managers get thrown into hiring and interviewing without much training, and it shows—in poor performance and poor retention. In this tip, a hiring expert shares the top eight mistakes managers make—so that you can train managers to avoid them!

Bad hires sap time, training resources, and emotional energy, says Susan M. Heathfield, blogging on About.com. Here are her top eight “rookie” mistakes (often made by experienced pros as well).

1. **Failure to prescreen candidates**

Prescreening applicants is a must, Heathfield says. A half-hour phone call saves hours of your time and other interviewers’ time, not to mention the expense of arranging travel, etc.

Your screening call might, for example, reveal that a candidate’s salary expectations are way out of your range, or that the candidate’s background isn’t really a match for your needs. Always prescreen, Heathfield says.

2. **Failure to prepare candidates**

Brief your candidates on your company, the details of the position, the background and titles of other interviewers, and anything else that will let other interviewers...
concentrate their time on the important issues—determining the candidate’s skills and fit for your company.

3. **Failure to prepare other interviewers**

Don’t let interviewing be a casual process. Plan ahead. Who is responsible for which types of questions? Who will cover what aspect of the candidate’s credentials? How will you collect responses? Plan for success in employee selection, says Heathfield.

We’ll add a rookie mistake of our own here. Many hiring managers are so eager to start recruiting that they don’t nail down exactly what they are looking for. You can go through the motions of selection—posting, interviewing, and so on—but when you don’t know what you are looking for, almost anyone fits the bill.

4. **Relying solely on the interview to evaluate a candidate**

The interview is a lot of talk, says Heathfield. Plus, the candidate, wanting a job offer, is trying to tell you what you want to hear. Heathfield recommends using several methods for evaluating candidates.

For example, at one publishing company, the normal pattern was interviews and then, for the best interviewees, a writing and editing assessment.

What the company soon learned was that the interview was relatively unimportant—no matter how great the interview, if the candidate couldn’t perform on the writing/editing assessment, there was no interest. So the company switched the two procedures—first the assessment, then the interview.

5. **Do nothing but talk in the interview**

Do something more than talk during the interview, Heathfield recommends. Walk the candidate around the facility. Ask how he or she would handle some part of the job. Have them do something. As long as the tasks are related to the job, you will gain valuable information.

6. **Evaluate personality, not skills and experience**

It’s nice to hire someone you like, says Heathfield, but it’s more important to hire the strongest, smartest, and best candidates. People tend to hire people similar to themselves, but that will kill your organization over time, she says. You need diverse people with diverse personalities.

7. **Failure to differentiate the critical job skills**

Everyone has a wish list for their ideal candidate, but you must select the three or four most critical characteristics to focus on. Once you have agreed on these, don’t “settle” on a candidate who does not bring them to your workplace.

And, we’ll add, you need to devise a test or simulation or series of questions that will allow you to determine whether candidates have the skill and qualities you have identified as crucial. Avoid leading questions (“Are you good at managing
complex projects on budget and on schedule?” Who’s going to answer “no” to that question?), and be sure to probe (“How many people, how big a budget, what responsibilities,” etc.).

8. Using too small a candidate pool

Many managers err by interviewing from a small candidate pool. If you don’t have several qualified candidates from which to choose, your pool is too small. Don't settle; it's better to reopen your search, says Heathfield.

Leadership styles

Train managers to take stock of their own leadership style

In this tip, we look at the various types of managers, and we explore a ready-to-use library of online leadership courses available now.

Both leaders with advanced skills and bosses who could use a bit of polishing will benefit by taking account of management areas that they can improve on, according to Fierce, Inc. Train employees to take stock of their own management style with the information in this tip.

While there are many different types of bosses, the most common personalities are the Dictator, Cheerleader, Visionary, and the rare Perfect Boss.

The leadership training experts at Fierce, Inc., have worked with them all—across the globe and across multiple industries. The common factor behind all successful bosses is a sincere dedication to improving their leadership skills daily. The result of this development is a discernible improvement in the skills of their employees, resulting from a culture of open and honest communication that builds relationships and better organization.

The Dictator: Often characterized as someone who gives orders, the Dictator's behavior may be a factor of more than just personality. Combine lack of time and a demanding role, mix with stress, and you’ve got a recipe for a Dictator, someone who seems to simply walk, or sometimes run, around giving orders with little or no appetite for feedback.

Fierce, Inc., Tip: Proactively solicit feedback from employees and coworkers. Motivate and empower direct reports to employ creative problem solving. It is entirely likely that they have useful perspectives, new insights on issues, and opportunities for innovation.

The Cheerleader (aka the Softie or the Friend): This boss type is easy to work with day to day, but in the long haul, employees become dissatisfied because they aren't challenged or given enough constructive feedback to make them better at their jobs.

Fierce, Inc., Tip: Avoid cultivating a culture of nice. Talk openly and honestly with employees about both their achievements and areas that need improvement. Be timely by addressing things as they occur and don't sugar coat it—employees are not children.
**The Visionary (aka the Innovator):** Focused more on what’s next and what the business will look like in 10 or even 20 years, the Visionary is an inspirational personality for which to work but may not have much input on the day-to-day work.

*Fierce, Inc., Tip:* Remember to stay grounded with employees. Balance challenging them to think about the future while addressing current performance, accomplishments, and areas for improvement. Ground actions and next steps in the present. Have regular conversations with teams that focus on today as well as tomorrow.

**The Perfect Boss:** That elusive combination of mentor, leader, and fun-to-be-around person, the perfect boss respects employees and challenges them to be their very best.

*Fierce, Inc., Tip:* Chances are, if the perfect boss worked hard to earn that title, he or she knows it takes work to keep it. Continue to perfect listening and communication skills, and endeavor to build a culture where employees are motivated and want to be heard.

“When bosses create an inclusive culture where employees are invited to communicate their perspectives and have open conversations, whether it’s with coworkers or the boss, the business wins,” says Halley Bock, CEO and president of Fierce, Inc. “An overly nice, but repressed culture can be as ineffective as a tense militant one, which is why it’s the leader’s responsibility, regardless of personality, to be open, honest, and solicit feedback from employees.”

**Managers as trainers**

**Involve your managers in your training program**

Experienced managers at Dominium Management Services not only have input into the training curriculum but they also usually deliver the content themselves. In this tip, we’ll take a closer look at this company’s innovative training program.

Dominium (www.dominiumapartments.com), an apartment community management and development firm, introduced Dominium University several years ago, says Tanya Adair, vice president of Human Resources and Administration.

In some cases, outside vendors provide training, such as courses on tax credit compliance, Microsoft Outlook, or Excel®. However, most classes are led by seasoned Dominium managers, many of whom have taken train-the-trainer courses on presentation skills.

Not only does that approach help ensure knowledge transfer from experienced managers to new managers, but it also provides new managers with opportunities to meet the home office staff and to network. This is particularly important for managers who work in outside offices, Adair says.

The cornerstone program of Dominium University is New Community Manager Orientation, which is a comprehensive weeklong training program at the home office in Minneapolis. The company intentionally offers the program about 3 months after hire, so new (or newly promoted) managers come to training with some on-the-job
experience, she says. Each day of training is devoted to a different topic, such as tax credit compliance, marketing, maintenance, accounting, and HR/payroll-related issues.

Participants attend dinner with company executives and take part in a training-related scavenger hunt. In the scavenger hunt, participants are given a list of questions and told to find an instructor in the building who would be able to answer each question. For example, for a question about termination, the participant would go to HR for an answer before moving on to the next question, according to Adair. “It’s just kind of meant to tie together all the training.”

At the end of the week, participants don black graduation caps, and the company president/chief operating officer awards them diplomas.

A key program offered through Dominium University is **Community Manager Continuing Education**, which is similar to the orientation course, but geared toward upper-level, advanced supervisors as a refresher course, she says.

Dominium University also features other classes that fall into one of seven “colleges”:

1. Property Management,
2. Accounting,
3. Compliance,
4. Marketing and Leasing,
5. Career Development,
6. Legal Basics, and
7. Maintenance.

With approximately 170 locations in multiple states, it is impractical to bring every employee to the home office for training. So, trainers often travel to outside offices to provide training on such topics as marketing and leasing, workplace diversity and ethics, sexual harassment prevention, and safety, Adair says. Online training is also offered for several courses.

Dominium brings managers together in a leadership conference every other year in Minneapolis and in regional mini-conferences in alternate years. The focus is on helping managers be more strategic, become better leaders, foster a team environment, and become acquainted with their colleagues and the home office team, according to Adair.

Training has helped boost retention at Dominium and made employees more likely to reach out to get their questions answered, according to Adair. “They are much more open to calling people at the home office.”

**Tips for success**

Adair says it is important to look for ways to improve training and to update the curriculum as needed. “Industry needs are constantly changing, and so we need to make sure we are ahead of that curve.”
She also recommends evaluating training-related rewards to make sure they are actually incentives for employees. For example, offering a company sweatshirt to employees who attend a certain number of classes might seem like a great idea—unless employees do not want a sweatshirt.

Mentoring

A new mentoring model for training the next generation

Mentoring has been a tried-and-true method of training for centuries. But the old model of mentoring in which an older, more experienced worker passes on knowledge to a younger, less experienced worker, is being replaced by a new model, says mentoring expert Lois Zachary.


1. Reciprocity. In the new mentoring, there is equal engagement of both parties. Both have responsibilities, both have roles to play, and both have something to gain.

2. Learning. This is the essence of the relationship. And it’s not just acquiring knowledge, Zachary says, but also active learning: knowledge about the ins and outs of the organization, field, and profession; an understanding of what works and what doesn’t; and a deepened self-knowledge and self-understanding.

3. Relationship. The relationship piece takes work, Zachary says. Developing trust is essential, or you’re just going through the motions.

4. Partnership. In the old model, mentoring relationships were driven by the mentor. The new model calls for more involvement by both partners.

5. Collaboration. Both participants bring their own experiences to the discussion. The give-and-take contributes to shared meaning and something greater emerges because of this process.

6. Mutually defined goals. Without well-defined goals, mutually agreed to, the relationship runs the risk of losing focus and working at cross purposes.

7. Development. The focus is on the future and moving the mentee toward where he or she wants to be. Zachary says that mentoring differs from coaching, which is more oriented toward boosting performance and specific skills in the present.

Is mentoring right for you as mentor?

Zachary says potential mentors should ask themselves the following questions. “Yes” answers indicate readiness to be a mentor.

- Do you have specific knowledge that you want to pass on to others?
- Do you find that helping others learn is personally rewarding?
Do you enjoy collaborative learning?
Do you find that working with others who are different from you is energizing?
Are you always looking for new opportunities to further your own growth and development?
Are you seeking an opportunity to enhance your visibility, reputation, and contribution to your organization?
Do you need to meet a performance requirement at work or in your profession that mentoring would satisfy?
Are you committed to leadership succession?
Are you interested in mentoring a particular person?
Do you want to see that person succeed?
Do you want to “pay it forward”?

Is mentoring right for you as mentee?
And then, on the other side of the coin, Zachary suggests that potential mentees ask themselves the following questions:
Do I have a sincere interest in learning?
Am I willing to commit time to developing and maintaining a mentoring relationship?
Am I willing to work on my own growth and development?
Am I willing to be open and honest with myself and another person?
Am I willing to listen to critical feedback?
Can I participate without adversely affecting my other responsibilities?

Mentoring agreements make meaningful training
Successful mentoring relationships start with a clear agreement about goals, procedures, and limitations, says mentoring expert Lois Zachary.

Too often mentors and mentees start off without doing enough preparation and end up with an unsatisfactory experience, she says. Zachary, author of The Mentor’s Guide and the recently published The Mentee’s Guide to Mentoring, provides guidelines for setting the groundwork for great mentoring.

Preparing for a mentoring relationship
Zachary suggests seven steps in an initial conversation between potential mentor and mentee.

1. **Take time to get to know each other.** To start out, share career journeys.
2. **Talk about mentoring.** Talk about individuals who have had a profound impact on your development and learning. Discuss previous mentoring experiences.
3. **Share your goals for the process.** What does each participant hope to achieve from the relationship?

4. **Determine what each partner needs and expects.** Be honest about what you need, says Zachary. A brain to pick? Someone who can help you get your arms around a problem? Someone to give you a kick in the pants?

5. **Candidly share personal assumptions.** As an example of mismatched assumptions, Zachary offers the following example: The mentee assumes that his or her mentor will be a sounding board, help with day-to-day challenges, provide quick answers to questions, and introduce him or her to his or her network. Meanwhile, the mentor assumes that his or her role is to be a guide, asking questions that help the mentee find answers. Unless the two talk their assumptions through, they will be at cross-purposes.

6. **Share limitations.** Each of us has limitations, whether personal, time-related, work-related, or physical, says Zachary. It’s best to share them early on.

7. **Discuss personal styles.** For example, you may have data from Myers Briggs or other instruments that indicate your need for structure or your resistance to “touchy-feely.”

**Create a specific agreement**

After an initial discussion, you are ready to prepare a formal agreement, Zachary says. Here are her required ingredients for such agreements:

- Well-defined goals (What does each participant want to accomplish?)
- Success criteria and measurement (How will we know if we have succeeded?)
- Accountability assurances (How do we ensure that we do what we say we are going to do?)
- Ground rules (What are the norms and guidelines we will follow? Who will be responsible for what?)
- Confidentiality safeguards (What do we need to do to protect the confidentiality of this relationship?)
- Boundaries and hot buttons (What are the not-to-exceed limits? What hot buttons exist?)
- Protocols for addressing stumbling blocks (What process should we have in place to deal with any stumbling blocks we encounter?)
- Consensual mentoring agreement (What do we need to include to ensure that this agreement works for us?)
- Mentoring work plan (What are the steps for achieving our goals?)

**Know the difference between coaching and mentoring**

In this tip, Susan G. Weinberger, PhD, president of the Mentor Consulting Group in Norwalk, CT, coaches us on the differences between coaching and mentoring. Or does she mentor us on the difference? At any rate, read on for valuable information ...
The American writer, George Matthew Adams, once observed that “many moments of personal success and fulfillment in an individual’s life come about through encouragement from someone else.” No doubt you can remember those who impacted your life when you were young, during the school years, involvement in community activities, at your first job and, perhaps, the job you hold now.

Whether the support came informally or through a deliberate, formal program, helping you personally or professionally, there is no doubt that others can be easily identified who influenced and shaped your future. Those were or are your mentors.

Typically, informal mentoring programs do not have a structure, time limit, or support from a sponsoring business or other organization. How often the mentor and protégé meet is up to them. There are no entrance requirements.

Formal mentoring programs are long-term. They have minimum requirements, including selection of participants, training, support, and frequency of meetings between mentor and mentee.

Coaching and mentoring: Different goals, different methods

Establishing an internal mentoring program is not a new idea. In fact, a front page article in the Harvard Business Review in 1978 declared, “everyone who makes it has a mentor.” Until recently, however, business has been less involved in establishing formal mentoring programs for employees, focusing more on internal coaching.

It is easy to get confused about the differences between coaching and mentoring. The purpose and expected outcome of each is distinctly different although some overlap exists at times. For example, coaching, which provides specific feedback, can be used within mentoring. But as Lorraine Stomski, senior vice president of Aon Consulting, explained, mentoring is more holistic than coaching in that it develops the whole individual through guidance, coaching, and development opportunities.

An employee serving as the “coach” assists another colleague, known as the protégé, in order to improve their job performance. Often the purpose is to work with the protégé toward the goal of climbing the ladder of success and getting ahead.

Some companies even offer reverse coaching. That is, a senior employee who has perhaps been in the company for several decades is coached by a newer, junior employee in areas such as computers and advanced technology. Research shows that these kinds of formal coaching efforts improve career success and employee morale and retention.

Mentoring, on the other hand, is far more personal and friendship-based, offering nonjudgmental support as a positive role model and focusing on a mentee’s longer-term personal development. The mentor makes suggestions. The relationship is neither formally evaluated nor connected to job advancement but rather to personal improvement.
According to Lois J. Zachary, president of Leadership Development Services in Phoenix, “The mentee or protégé has gone from being a passive learner—where the mentoring is done to you as you sit at the foot of the master—to an active learner who directs the process. It’s much more collaborative now; there is more precision and structure.

“Many companies do not choose between implementing a coaching or mentoring program. They often implement both programs to meet different employee needs. When Jack Welch, former chairman of General Electric, stated that a strong mentor/mentee relationship is the basis of forging tomorrow’s leaders, I suspect that he recognized this as an outcome of both internal coaching and mentoring programs.”

The following chart demonstrates some of the differences between coaching and mentoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COACHING</th>
<th>MENTORING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOALS</strong></td>
<td>Improve job performance or skills.</td>
<td>Support and guide personal career growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INITIATIVE</strong></td>
<td>Coach directs learning.</td>
<td>Mentee is in charge of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VOLUNTEERISM</strong></td>
<td>Protégé agrees to accept coaching; may not be voluntary.</td>
<td>Both mentor and mentee are volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOCUS</strong></td>
<td>Immediate problems and learning opportunities.</td>
<td>Longer-term personal development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE</strong></td>
<td>Focus on telling with appropriate feedback.</td>
<td>Focus on listening, behavioral role model, making suggestions and connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DURATION</strong></td>
<td>Short-term needs; “as needed.”</td>
<td>Longer term.</td>
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(Source: *Coaching and Mentoring—Harvard Business Essentials—2004*)

**Benefits of implementing an internal mentoring program**

The business community in this nation is seeking employee retention, productivity, satisfaction on the job and improved morale, leadership, pride, and social responsibility. Creating corporate citizenship programs leads to competitive differentiation and stakeholder loyalty. Mentoring plays a critical role in personal combined with professional development. Mentors help their mentees over the speed bumps, providing needed support and encouragement. They offer advice and guidance and promote enhanced self-confidence. They foster pride in the organization and boost organization communication.

Mentors and mentees work together to discover and develop the mentee’s talents. The mentor offers perspective, insight, support, and wisdom based on experience.
The good news is that mentoring is two directional. Usually, the mentor gains as many, if not more, rewards from working with a mentee, including enhancing their own leadership skills, satisfaction, and personal fulfillment.

**A word of caution:** Not all employees make good mentors. Business should identify individuals to serve as mentors who are outstanding employees and who set positive examples for others. These are employees who like people and who are committed and willing to set aside the time to work with a mentee. They are consistent and confidential, have a superb work ethic, are patient and responsible, are positive role models, have a genuine interest in developing others and sensitivity to others’ needs and development, and possess excellent listening skills.

Mistakes made by leaders

**Avoid these 5 scary offenders**

You know the best leaders motivate through inspiration and not through fear. But are you training your leaders in exactly how to do that? In this tip, we hear from an expert on how to avoid leading by fear.

Without even realizing it, most leaders do and say things that send employees into their “Critter State” where every decision they make is driven by fear, says Christine Comaford, author of the new book, *Smart Tribes: How Teams Become Brilliant Together* (Portfolio/Penguin, June 2013). And the consequences are more dismal than you might realize.

Most leaders know that management by “command and control” is dead and that fear doesn’t motivate employees. Quite the opposite, in fact. That’s why, for the most part, we refrain from doing scary things. Yet, according to Comaford, even good leaders unintentionally strike fear in the hearts of their workforce.

“From time to time we all say or do things that spark unconscious fears in our employees,” says Comaford. “The primitive ‘fight, flight, or freeze’ part of the brain takes control. When that happens, when people are stuck in what I call the “Critter State,” all they can focus on is their own survival.”

In other words, everything that makes them good employees—their ability to innovate, to collaborate, to logically think through problems—goes out the window. All decision making is distilled down to one question: “What course of action will keep me safest?”

So how might we be inadvertently holding back our teams and crippling our own cultures? What, exactly, are we doing to send our people into their Critter States? More to the point, what are you doing? Comaford describes a few (very subtle) offenders:

1. **You “help them out” by giving them solutions.** Or, in Comaford’s words, you advocate when you should be inquiring. When we consistently tell people what to do instead of encouraging them to figure things out on their own, we develop a company full of order-takers instead of innovators. By training them to always ask, we create a workforce of employees who are perpetually “frozen” in their Critter State.
On the other hand, when we engage them in solving problems themselves, we create a sense of safety, belonging, and mattering—which Comaford says are the three things humans crave most (after basic needs like food and shelter are met). And, of course, we help them develop a sense of ownership that will serve them—and the company—well.

2. **Your meetings are heavy on sharing and point-proving**, and light on promises and requests. Why might a meeting scare your employees? Because confusion and uncertainty create fear, says Comaford. Meetings that are rambling and unfocused send people into the fight-flight-freeze of the Critter State. On the other hand, short, sweet, high-energy meetings that have a clear agenda keep everyone in their Smart State.

Ideally, you should focus on only enough information-sharing in order to solicit requests from parties that need something and promises from parties that will fill that need.

“Tune up your communication and the result will be meetings that are efficient and effective, and that keep your team happy and clipping along to glorious accountability and execution,” promises Comaford.

3. **You give feedback to employees without first establishing rapport.** Imagine for a moment that your employees are antelopes. Because you have authority over them, they quite naturally view you as a lion. It’s not that you’re purposely ruling with teeth and claws. It’s simply their critter brains at work, peering out and “coding” who is a friend and who is a foe. That means unless you can get employees to see you as “just another antelope,” you won’t be able to influence them—they’ll be too busy ensuring their own survival to accept your feedback.

4. **You focus on problems rather than outcomes.** “When we’re tense, we’re problem-focused,” explains Comaford. “We see everything as a problem, which causes anxiety, which leads to a reaction, which leads to another problem. It’s a self-perpetuating cycle. The solution is to switch your focus from problems to outcomes.

“Being outcome focused feels very different,” she explains. “It’s empowering and energizing and fills you with confidence.”

5. **You frame “change” the wrong way.** Almost all leaders want—probably need—their companies to change. It’s the only way we can achieve growth. Yet, as we all know, people inherently resist change.

What does this mean? Essentially, it means leaders need to present the “change” as merely an improvement to what we are already doing: The bad stuff is being removed and good stuff is being added.

“Seriously—this is the best way to package a change message,” asserts Comaford. “And don’t use the C-word. Say ‘growth’ instead.”

Did you recognize your own leaders—even yourself—in the list above? If so, you’re not alone. And the good news is that once you can make the (relatively simple) changes, you are likely to see dramatic improvements in your results.

“All leaders want to outperform, outsell, and out-innovate the competition,” reflects Comaford. “And most of us have teams that are quite capable of doing so. We just need to stop scaring the competence out of them.”
Prioritizing leadership training

Make leadership development one of your training priorities

Some folks believe that people are born leaders and that leadership can’t be taught. But the reality is that even people born with leadership qualities need to develop those talents and especially learn how to lead in their chosen profession. In this tip, we’ll look at the revealing results of a leadership survey.

A leadership skills gap and limited talent pipeline are prompting mid-sized and large companies to make a renewed commitment to leadership development, according to a recent survey.

“The Rising Risk of a Double-Dip Leadership Crisis: A Pulse Survey on Exploring the Increased Focus on Leadership Development” found that Fortune 1000 companies do not have enough leaders coming up through their ranks to fill existing and future leadership roles—partly due to recessionary cuts made to leadership programs. In fact, 62% of respondents surveyed by The CARA Group, Inc. (www.caracorp.com) indicated that their organizations face a leadership skills gap.

The top three most critical skills gaps are:
1. Leading others, cited by 54% of participants;
2. Managing change (43%); and
3. Strategic planning/vision development (40%).

However, the survey also revealed that companies are doing something to address the leadership skills gap. Also, 84% of survey participants said their organizations have placed a greater focus on leadership development in the past 2 or 3 years.

“The survey results are very promising in that organizations report they are taking necessary steps to quickly correct the current leadership skills gap,” said Jane Ehrenstrom, senior vice president of CARA, a human performance consulting firm. “We are seeing firsthand that businesses understand the potential consequences of not developing high potential leadership talent. They are meeting the challenge with innovative programs to help cultivate the leaders needed to competitively drive their organizations into the future.”

CARA also found that online learning and development is the top method companies are using to leverage technology in their leadership development programs, cited by 66% of participants. In addition, survey respondents reported that there is room for improvement with their existing leadership development programs. In fact, a mere 9% said their programs are “very effective.” More than half—56%—indicated that their programs are only “somewhat effective” or are “ineffective.”
“The survey revealed the need to significantly improve the quality of leadership development programs,” said Michelle Reid-Powell, CARA’s vice president of talent management and organizational effectiveness.

She says that “best practices from our client work indicate several ways to improve these programs, including:

- Elevating leadership as a differentiator in a company’s strategic plan;
- Aligning leadership development programs with business objectives and strategic business vision; and
- Creating formal mentoring programs.

“I expect that we’ll see these best practices implemented more widely as companies continue to expand their leadership development programs.”

**Proactive management**

**Train managers to lean forward**

Jathan Janove firmly believes that the most common and most harmful fault of managers and supervisors is avoidance. In other words, they lean back instead of leaning forward. In this tip, we’ll describe what that means for training your managers.


In his introduction, Janove evokes the image of a beginning skier. Frightened of going too fast, he or she likely obeys the instinct to lean back on the skis. The truth is, however, that keeping the weight forward steadies the skier and offers better control over speed and direction.

That’s his theme: **When feeling strong urges to avoid, delay, tell white lies, withhold information, etc., every manager should do the opposite of what those urges dictate.** Gen X guru Bruce Tulgan calls this type of avoidance “the undermanagement epidemic,” which Tulgan believes can be improved only by training managers. Janove’s book could be a useful guide to such training.

Convinced that only angry employees take employers to court, Janove focuses on preventing lawsuits. But the techniques he recommends would also help any manager increase productivity and retention.

Here are two stories he tells.

1. An engineering manager consistently found the performance of a particular subordinate inadequate and her interactions with others offensive. In counseling her, he would say, “Your engineering work is not as good as the others,” “I’m not sure your engineering skills are up to par,” and “I think you have a bad attitude.” She denied that her work or interactions were at fault. As one of the few female engineers in the company, she charged gender discrimination.
The manager needed to stop making generalizations (which almost any employee can find hard to interpret). Instead, the situation called for specific explanations of the gap between her work and his expectations, potential corrective measures, and recommended training. Regarding her interactions, he needed to point out phrases and tones she used, offensive e-mail messages, and other details.

2. A large food distributor had ignored major attendance problems at one site until the resulting mistakes and delays became untenable. So the site manager called a meeting to say that things needed to change: All past sins would be forgiven, but future attendance problems would be treated with a “three strikes and you’re out” approach. Even though the first employee to be fired for poor attendance was an African American whose attendance before the change had been better than average, the company avoided liability. This illustrates the first lesson, and others follow.

Janove’s book also includes the following proactive management tips that you can teach your managers and supervisors.

‘That Was Then, This Is Now’ is a good way to effect change in an organization. Grant amnesty for all past mistakes but set new standards and stick with them.

Make a date. When employees approach a manager with a complaint or question at inconvenient times, such as when the manager must finish an urgent task, instruct managers not to brush the questions off (as in, “Don’t worry about it”). Instead, they should say, “I can’t answer you now, but come to my office at 3:30 today and we’ll discuss it then.”

Don’t stay mum. In almost every situation, including impending layoffs, it is wiser and more effective for managers to share all the information they have with their subordinates. Otherwise, what Janove calls the Law of Employee Speculation kicks in. The only exceptions involve confidential employee health or other personal data.

React immediately. A manager who sees a subordinate do something praiseworthy or less than satisfactory should say so right then, following up soon with the same feedback in writing. Janove advises direct, immediate, and specific feedback.

Avoid misguided benevolence. Janove tells several stories that led to lawsuits. All are characterized by managers’ unwillingness to openly acknowledge a subordinate’s problems and deal with them in a straightforward way. A manager’s evaluations should always be an honest assessment of job performance. It’s just as bad to give satisfactory reviews to someone who is not performing adequately as it is to terminate the person and lie about the reason.

Be honest about terminations. If you say it’s a layoff when it’s not, or simply assert that the individual was an at-will employee, you’re telling lies that may catch up with you. Use specific performance- or behavior-based reasons.
Refresher training on managerial skills

Give managers needed refresher training

You make sure your employees get the refresher training they need to keep up to date on processes and stay motivated to succeed. Do you also make sure your managers get the important refresher training they need?

Your managers are the keys to your employees’ productivity and engagement. How well are they doing? A consultant whose opinion we respect—Bill Lee of Lee Resources, at BillLeeOnline.com—recommends a book he thinks is the best manager-improvement product he’s come across.

It is *The Control Theory Manager*, by William Glasser, M.D. (HarperBusiness, 1994), and it’s short enough to be covered in an hour-long training session. The author contrasts what he calls “boss-management,” which he advises against, and “lead-management,” which he advocates.

Here’s how they contrast:

- **Boss-managers** set tasks and performance standards for employees, usually without consulting them. **Lead-managers have ongoing discussions** with employees that encourage their input to improve the system or reduce costs.

- **Boss-managers** tell employees how to do the work and seldom ask for input. **Lead-managers show or model the job** and work to increase workers’ sense of control over their own work.

- **Boss-managers** or their designees inspect work and don’t involve employees in evaluating it. **Lead-managers encourage employees to inspect** and evaluate their own work.

- **Boss-managers**’ primary technique is coercion to make employees do their jobs. **Lead-managers promote continuous improvement**, helping employees by providing good tools and a friendly, nonadversarial work environment.

Furthermore, lead-managers avoid engaging in these three destructive behaviors:

1. Too much criticism of employees;
2. Asking more of them than they can accomplish; *and*
3. Trying to coerce employees to do what they don’t want to do.

Here are three lead-manager rules:

1. **You can teach employees a better way** and encourage them to try it. If it works, they’re likely to continue it. But you can’t coerce them to do what they don’t want.
2. **All human behavior is caused by what goes on inside the heads of each individual**, which bosses can influence but not control.
3. **Unless you understand what employees’ individual needs** are, you can’t give them need-satisfying information.
Resource maximization

Train leaders to maximize their resources

Once you’ve convinced top management that leadership training is worthwhile for your managers, supervisors, and high performers, you need the right content for training. The first skill great leaders learn, for example, is how to manage all the resources at their disposal, including personal, human, technical, informational, and, perhaps most important, time.

In this tip, we give you valuable techniques for maximizing resources that you can teach your leaders.

Personal

◆ Honestly assess what you’re best at (technical? motivation?).
◆ Do what you do best whenever possible.
◆ Seek ways to turn weaknesses into strengths (courses? more attention?).
◆ Delegate your weaker areas to employees who have proven ability in those areas.

Human

◆ Hire and assign employees based on their proven abilities.
◆ Encourage employees to build on their strengths with practice, courses, etc.
◆ Work with employees to overcome their weaknesses with demonstrations, buddies, coaching, courses, etc.
◆ Maintain relationships throughout the organization to stay up-to-date on available talents.
◆ Work with other supervisors and managers to share and build on personal and team member abilities.

Technical and Informational

◆ Try to obtain the most efficient equipment for the job.
◆ Avoid assuming that the newest or most expensive is the best.
◆ Provide employees with the training and practice to make the most of their resources.
◆ Identify opportunities to benefit from equipment or information used or developed elsewhere in the organization.

Time

◆ Identify and eliminate time wasters such as surfing the Web, meetings with no clear agenda, long lunches, reports nobody reads.
◆ Ask employees to suggest time wasters they feel could be eliminated or reduced.
Make completing tasks on time one of the criteria by which employee performance is judged.

Develop priority lists for your own tasks and have employees do the same.

Stick with your lists as you go through the workday.

Delegate tasks when an employee has the talent or interest to do it faster and better than you.

‘Wholistic’ management

Train managers to manage the whole person

In this tip, we get expert “wholistic” advice from Marty Martin, PsyD, that you can use to train your managers to manage employees as whole persons.

The term “human resources management” is essential in business. But have you noticed that the majority of the literature about the topic focuses on the “resources” and the “management” aspects but barely addresses the “human” element? As a result, most managers see their employees as resources to be managed and not as whole persons who can contribute so much more.

Managing the whole person means acknowledging that everyone is multidimensional and has numerous roles to balance in life—all of which affect job performance. However, this goes much deeper than simply work/life balance. It’s about recognizing all aspects of an employee to ensure a work/life “fit” that benefits the company and each individual.

In fact, when you focus on the whole person rather than on just an employee’s work performance, you build more meaningful connections with employees, which results in greater loyalty and productivity. Following are some suggestions for better managing the whole employee.

See the input, not just the output, of each employee

When managing the whole person, you need to look beyond the person’s job description. Look beyond the output (the deadlines, the expectations, and the day-to-day job duties) and start looking at the input factors, as these determine the quality of the output.

Input factors are the drivers and drainers in the employees’ lives that affect their job performance. Some typical input factors include:

- The employee’s best time of day to get work done
- What’s going on in the employee’s family
- The employee’s physical, mental, and emotional health
- Other stressors the employee has, such as being a caregiver to aging parents, being pregnant, being the only income-earner in the home
- What community or hobby events the employee is committed to
Basically, it’s about paying attention to all of the different drivers and drainers of what motivates employees to either perform at the level of acceptable performance, to go above and beyond an acceptable level of performance, or to underperform to expectations. Because all of the various inputs affect the overall output, being aware of the input makes good business sense.

**Acknowledge that everyone is multidimensional**

Many managers believe that finding out about their employees’ lives outside of the work role is intrusive. They do not want to ask personal questions for fear of appearing nosey. The good news is that you do not have to ask questions to find out about people. You simply have to acknowledge the clues that are all around you.

For example, if you see photos of children in someone’s office, you do not have to ask, “Are those your kids?” You can simply comment, “Those are beautiful children.” With that one acknowledgment, most people will open up, tell you who the children are, and offer lots more personal information.

Likewise, if you see sports gear stashed away in a corner of someone’s cubicle, you don’t have to ask, “Do you play tennis [or whatever sport is evident]?” Instead, you can comment, “I’ve always been interested in tennis.” Again, the person will naturally start talking about the sport, the team or league she is on, her accomplishments, and so much more.

While it is true that most people do not want to sit through a session of 20 questions with their manager, they do enjoy being acknowledged—not just for their work but also for their other interests.

**Look at the big picture, not just the day-to-day details**

The average full-time employee works 2,080 hours per year … at the office. That does not include time the employee puts in at night and on the weekends. With all of today’s technological innovations, more and more people are connected to work 24/7, even while on vacation. As the separation between work and life becomes narrowed—what many people are referring to as a “blur” of roles—a person’s ability to focus intently on any one role becomes more difficult, resulting in errors and burnout.

In many organizations the managers set the expectation for this blur because they are not looking at the big picture of what the organization accomplishes; rather, they are focusing on the day-to-day stressors, the errors, the requests for time off, or the employee’s lunch hour that was really an hour and a half. By keeping your eye on the day-to-day details, you’re missing the big picture of what your people really contribute. In essence, you’re adding undue stress on everyone—including yourself.

Of course, details are important, but it is also vital to take a step back and look at the big picture so you can see your employees as people and not as parts of a machine to be fixed.
**Take management to a ‘whole’ new level**

When you put the “human” element back into human resources management, you’re acknowledging the needs of the employees so they can perform better. When employees feel recognized as more than just a number on a monthly report, they tend to give you more discretionary effort or what’s called “citizenship behavior,” where they’re supportive of other employees and of the organization as a whole.

As an added benefit, when employees are more supportive of their managers, the manager’s workload becomes less stressful, too. Ultimately, the sooner you recognize all the drivers and drainers that impact people and then manage them, the sooner you will be able to create a high-performing team.

Martin, known for his state-of-the-art content presented in an engaging, dynamic fashion, has been speaking and training nationally and internationally for many years. His second book, Taming Disruptive Behavior, was published by The American College of Physician Executives (ACPE) in late 2013. He is currently working on his third book, Do You Have Career Insurance? Martin, PsyD, is the Director of the Health Sector Management MBA Concentration and Associate Professor in the College of Commerce at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. For more information to obtain a free chapter of Do You Have Career Insurance? please visit [www.drmartymartin.com](http://www.drmartymartin.com).