

absolutely business



Practical People Management Basic tools for extraordinary results

By Denise Walker FREC

Part one: Leadership

In this series of articles, Denise Walker shares her management experience, ideas and methods that actually work from a practitioner's perspective rather than HR theory.

Any good manager has an element of leadership ability, some more than others. Whereas management is often about the “here and now” and the detail, leadership is more about looking to the future and your strategy for getting there. So, in simplistic terms, if you are clear about your future goals, you can ensure that all your team's activities are geared towards achieving those goals and you are much more likely to maximise success.

In published studies, there are 7 key elements to businesses, which out perform other similar businesses in terms of growth and success. The top 3 are: **focus; cohesion and simplicity.**

To me, leadership is not only about having goals and focus, it is also about making it simple for people to understand these and removing any obstacles that could prevent goals being achieved. Attitude is key here and a good dose of leadership helps to achieve a higher level of motivation from your people than you would have without it. If you can not only visualise where your department/company is going but also communicate this to your teams, even the least experienced manager should find it much easier to encourage and excite individuals to work towards common goals linked to the overall vision.

I recall my first management role in 1988, when I told my new team that we deserved to be in the top 10 of the company, that I believe all they were great at their jobs and that together, we could achieve much greater results. And we did – we were number 6 within 3 months and continued to break records for that office for the next few years.

It is amazing how motivational this can be to individuals and teams. People hate to be kept in the dark and they love being kept informed. **Sharing the vision** is:

- Setting the scene
- Communicating the vision
- Helping people to see how they fit in with the long-term picture
- Motivating them to work towards the vision and shared, common goals

My first management example was a very basic way of sharing my vision for my new team and, in hindsight, I could have been a lot more thorough and probably achieved higher sales as a result. When working with managers today, I call this “**Vision Planning**”, where we create a plan, based on the following questions:

- Where is your business going and within which timescales?
- What will it “look” like?
- What will you do to get there?
- What parts of the plan will you communicate with your people?
- How will you communicate it?
- How will you ensure your people know how they fit in with and be excited by the vision?
- What impact will this have on you, your team and your business?
- What challenges will you need to overcome for you, your team and your business?
- What milestones have to be reached to achieve your vision?
- How will you measure the success of your vision?

It is this simple, yet effective and really does help them to get to where they want to be. The plan can be implemented in practical terms, because each task is identified, everyone in the team is involved and know where they fit in and every eventuality is considered and catered for. As a result, goals are much more likely to be achieved.

Some managers are great at making their ideas work and, on the other hand, I have seen examples of managers who have great ideas, which do not come to fruition, to the frustration of them and their teams. These managers get the reputation of being “all talk and no action” – something that is so easily avoidable.

So why do a large number of managers not plan for their goals? And why, even if they do plan, are goals still not achieved? I believe the reasons include:

- Not seeing the value of planning.
- A lack of understanding as to how to plan effectively.
- Unrealistic plans.
- Lack of buy-in.
- Lack of monitoring.

An obvious solution is for managers not only to learn how to plan effectively but also to **manage the plan and monitor progress** against it regularly. This relatively small amount of time invested saves a lot more time and hassle further down the line.

As we all know, good intentions can be successfully implemented with a little communication and practical application. In today’s market, making results happen is what counts in the end – for the sake of your business and your people.

About Denise Walker FREC

Denise Walker owns and runs Absolutely Business, a specialist management consultancy, designed exclusively for the recruitment industry, delivering **business consultancy, training and training services**.

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