

the Roundtable Mentoring MATTERS

*The collected
wisdom of leaders
for leaders.*



I'm excited to welcome you to Volume 1 of our new Mentoring Matters series. Here you'll find members and mentors of The Roundtable Community share words of experience and wisdom on some of your toughest leadership challenges.

At The Roundtable, we know that leadership isn't learned in a binder. We learn best by doing and we learn even more when we share our knowledge and experience with others. We see it every day in our group coaching and team coaching work. There is value in connection and so much wisdom to share.

Let's face it, the world of work isn't going to slow down any time soon. As we find ourselves living in this volatile uncertain complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world, we can find ourselves tackling tougher and tougher situations, often without a roadmap. In our work with hundreds of talented and inspiring leaders, we hear lots of great questions. Questions that relate to the day-to-day, real time challenges that all of us face in one form or another.

Each month, through our Mentoring Matters spotlight, we showcase a tough question and share perspectives on how to handle it from a broad range of our membership community. For Volume 1, we've compiled the advice and perspective of 15 leaders who tackle 5 tough questions. Think of this as your back pocket mentoring guide. Sure, leadership is rewarding but let's be real...it's not easy. I know you'll find lots of practical tips and strategies that you will be able to action immediately. And, I guarantee you'll enjoy the varied perspectives and tips that you'll find from the leaders involved. If you'd like to share wisdom in a future volume, we'd love to hear from you. We are The Roundtable. **And we are the place where leaders cultivate their leadership, together.**

Happy leading!



Glain Roberts-McCabe
Founder & President, The Roundtable



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Chapter 1

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"I'm really interested in advancing to the senior management ranks but my immediate supervisor isn't very good at promoting me to the CEO. I feel like I'm lacking a sponsor."



These members share their strategies with us for achieving recognition at work and getting on the map with the CEO.



BILL NEILL

Business Consultant

Sharp End Strategic Solutions

Bill reminds us that good leadership aims to promote the best interests of the company and leadership influence goes both directions. He shares ideas on championing the corporation's long-term wellbeing to make it easy for people to be on your side.



NICOLE LICHOWIT

Global Vice President

People + Culture,

Celestica

Nicole points out that, as far as your reputation goes, you are your own biggest asset. She shares the tools you need to make a big impact.



GREGORY HUCKLE

Director of Finance

Quaker Canada

Greg shares his experience and secrets for success in securing what you need to do to influence the CEO.

Leadership concerns itself with influencing others to perform at higher than average levels.

Being a strong influencer is an essential skill for the successful leader and it is as important when influencing those in higher positions as it is for influencing subordinates.

When you're wondering why someone won't champion you, start by asking yourself some pertinent questions.

Why is your boss not your champion? Is it because he is afraid of being eclipsed? Is it because she is naturally taciturn and promotes no-one? Or might it be because your work is not quite as good as you think it is...

Hopefully you have received some feedback but if not, take a very critical look at your past two or three projects to determine that your work was at a high standard.

You, your boss and the CEO should all have one thing in common - that the work you do contributes to the long-term wellbeing of the corporation. Be your superior's greatest ally. Enlist your boss by finding projects that seek to achieve this goal. These are the kinds of projects that merit being sent to the CEO with both your names on the cover. Ask your boss for feedback throughout the project and incorporate those ideas and reflections

You can achieve anything if you do not care who gets the credit.

"I'm really interested in advancing to the senior management ranks but my immediate supervisor isn't very good at promoting me to the CEO. I feel like I'm lacking a sponsor."



BILL NEILL
Business Consultant
Sharp End Strategic Solutions

into the final document. These projects will promote your boss' position in the company.

If you commit to this fully, two things will happen:

- 1. Your boss will feel that you are on their side and reciprocate the commitment.**
- 2. Your CEO will notice the increase in valuable output - and wonder why.**

I know this is an old truism but you can achieve anything if you do not care who gets the credit.

If you commit to doing your best for your company, you will feel good about your work and your level of contribution. If nothing happens after six months to a year of doing your best, take your talents to where they will be better appreciated. 🌐

LOOKING FOR MORE RELATED READING?



Influencing Up

Do Over: Make Today the First Day of Your New Career

Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader

What Got You Here, Won't Get You There

You may not be able to control your boss, but you can control yourself.

Be clear in your purpose. What do you want the CEO and the broader leadership team to say about you? Be specific.

Make a list of everyone in the company who knows you and their level of influence across, up and down the organizational hierarchy. What is the size and mix of your circle of influence? Ask yourself:

- How would people describe me?
- Is the description consistent or does it vary?
- Is what people are saying true to how I see myself and how I want to be seen?
- Does my circle touch many areas of the business and people at multiple levels in the company?

Use this thought process to refine your thinking around strategies for becoming more visible in your company. The CEO does not have to 'see' you directly to have an impression of who you are.

1. Define Your Personal Brand

- What are the attributes that define your value?
- Who are you?
- What are you good at?
- What value do you bring to your job? Your team?
- Do you look, communicate and act in a manner which is consistent with the impression you are looking to make?
- Where are your gaps? What steps can you take to fill your gaps?

Draft your vision. Include how you want to be seen, heard and spoken about. Start each day with this vision and regularly reflect on how you

are showing up at work. Make changes where you need to. Be consistent. Every interaction is an opportunity to strengthen your brand.

2. Engage your Supervisor

- Ask for time to talk about your career.
- Be clear that your intentions are focused on your personal development.
- Identify specifically how your supervisor can help you and ask for sponsorship. For example, ask to be on a project that exposes you to different types of work and different areas within the business. Ask for a positive internal reference.
- Ask your Supervisor for his/her point of view on what you can be doing and how s/he can help.
- Ask for a 'skip level' meeting with your Supervisor's direct leader to broaden your sources of feedback and guidance.

3. Start a Dialogue

- Read the company newsletter, intranet or CEO's blog and post a question.
- Ask a question at a Town Hall.
- Take note of a topic of interest you heard the CEO speak about and start a conversation about it when attending company events.
- Find topics which interest you and share them on Twitter and LinkedIn with thoughtful, relevant comments.
- Introduce yourself to people in different parts of the business to get to know them and learn about what they do, thereby expanding your knowledge of the company overall.

4. Seek Mentorship

- Ask a leader outside of your direct reporting line for feedback and guidance. Ask for their sponsorship.

"I'm really interested in advancing to the senior management ranks but my immediate supervisor isn't very good at promoting me to the CEO. I feel like I'm lacking a sponsor."



NICOLE LICHOWIT
Global Vice President,
People + Culture
Celestica

- Volunteer to participate in internal committees such as the United Way Campaign or the Health & Safety Committee.
- Find something you are passionate about and volunteer outside your organization. Ask for feedback and introduce your knowledge and learnings from this experience into your discussion, tweets and posts.

The CEO's radar is wide and deep. Sponsorship from multiple sources is important. So is your knowledge of the business and how you can contribute now and in future roles. Create opportunities to talk about yourself in the context of the business. Be ready. 🌟

"I'm really interested in advancing to the senior management ranks but my immediate supervisor isn't very good at promoting me to the CEO. I feel like I'm lacking a sponsor."



GREGORY HUCKLE

Director of Finance
Quaker Canada

I have found having two champions at the decision-making table is the key. You want one person pushing your career forward and then another person saying "Yes, they are ready!" This is what will clinch your leader's confidence in you.

The first step to finding a sponsor is to get clear on the skills (leadership, collaborations, technical skill-sets, etc.) you will need to demonstrate to key decision-makers in order to unlock the career advancement you are looking for.

Now comes the hard part: Recruiting your sponsors.

Person #1 should be your Supervisor or Executive Leader.

Ask yourself, can they be your Champion? If the answer is no, are you sure you know why? Leveraging your company's performance review and career discussion processes are great ways to get the feedback you need in a non-confrontational manner.

Be truthful on your goals and ask for feedback on what you need to focus on. Turn that feedback into your Performance Review goals and deliver it! Don't forget – the person who can influence your career the most is your boss!

Person #2 is a cross-functional partner and is that champion who will say at the decision-making table, "Yes I agree – they are ready!"

To get this champion, you will need to leverage your interactions with cross-functional partners to build your executive presence.

Are there projects, task forces, or issues that give you exposure to the CEO and/or their direct reports? You need to seek out the right opportunity to showcase your talents to the individuals who can influence the CEO.

Here are two things to remember as you try to make this happen:

1) Great results in your current role will be the foundation for building credibility with senior leaders.

2) Leverage your network of cross-functional partners to champion your cause with the CEO. 🌐

Don't forget – the person who can influence your career the most is your boss!

The Bottom-Line:



CHAMPION YOUR COMPANY'S LONG-TERM WELLBEING

- Ensure that your work is at your highest standard. Take a good, critical look at recent projects to evaluate.
- Remember that the long-term wellbeing of your company is a priority to both your boss and your CEO.
- Focus your efforts on contributing to the long-term wellbeing of your company.
- Be your boss' greatest ally. Seek to identify opportunities/projects that will have a positive impact on the company and don't worry about who gets the credit.



IT'S UP TO YOU

1. Define and build the brand you want for yourself. Be consistent and use every interaction as an opportunity to strengthen your brand.
2. Engage your supervisor. Have discussions about your career aspirations and, with the focus on personal development, ask for their help in providing you with experiences to broaden your exposure.
3. Initiate dialogue. Use Town Halls, newsletters, blogs, social media to engage and share thoughts/ideas, acquire more knowledge of the business.
4. Seek Mentorship. Get involved with other senior leaders inside or outside your organization. Look for opportunities to get their feedback and guidance.



IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GETTING A SPONSOR – IT'S ABOUT GETTING TWO

- Identify key skill requirements. Determine which skills will be important in advancing your career and look for opportunities to showcase these broadly.
- Deliver great results in your current role. Remember that great results in your current role will be the foundation for building credibility with senior leaders.
- Secure your boss as your primary champion. Your boss is the person who can influence your career the most.
- Look for others who will champion your cause with the CEO. Leverage your network of cross-functional partners.

Q

"I've just been promoted into a new division and the person who was in that role previously has been promoted up and into a new part of the business. It has become apparent that this previous manager left behind a lot of performance issues within the team and played favourites with certain employees. I feel like I need to do some significant restructuring but I'm concerned that the former manager (who is a good friend of my new boss) will view my actions negatively. Some of the people who I feel are underperforming were the former manager's favourites. How should I handle the changes?"

These members share their strategies for taking on performance issues in a new team when it feels like the old manager is still in the picture.



SHARON WOOD
President & CEO
Kids Help Phone

Sharon points out the opportunities this situation presents to show others what you are made of, and provides some strategies on how to make the most of them.



GABRIELLA O'ROURKE
Group Practice Manager
Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

Reminding us that leaders are expected to make decisions, Gabriella offers some practical tips on how to approach that with objectivity and the best interests of the organization.



TREVOR LEWINGTON
CEO
Economic Development Lethbridge

Trevor provides actionable advice to find out if it's just a few people poisoning the whole team, and if so, how to pinpoint those individuals so you can start managing your team's performance issues and maybe even help those underperformers get back on track.

"I've inherited a potentially sticky situation in my new role - I need to restructure without offending my new reports and my new boss - how should I handle the changes?"



SHARON WOOD
President & CEO
Kids Help Phone

Every leadership challenge provides an opportunity to show what you're made of.

Remember that you were chosen for this role for a reason and lead with confidence.

Your arrival is an important new beginning for the team you are leading, creating some excellent opportunities for a different approach to management.

Your organization has placed confidence in your leadership abilities to lead this area. As an entry point to addressing the challenges you have identified, let's look at your situation through the "opportunity" lens – what are your new opportunities and how you can make the most of them.

OPPORTUNITY 1: CREATE A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR NEW BOSS

It is essential that you create a positive, effective working relationship with your new boss.

The situation you have identified with the team lends itself well to bringing forward your vision for your new team. Propose an approach for assessing the team's current effectiveness, using performance measures and a fact-based review of key deliverables and project status. Develop an understanding of your boss'

vision. This will be key to your success. *What are their objectives for the team? Do you have a solid grasp of them as you head into the assessment process? What can you glean from this knowledge that will help you move forward in alignment?* By proposing to bring back your recommendations for discussion, seeking additional insights from your boss and then agreeing to review these against the objectives you have discussed together, you will create buy-in and support for your management plan, paving the way for the approval you will need for any changes you aim to implement. The process will also help you uncover to what degree the friendship with the former manager is a factor, and insights about whether the additional facts you will bring forward will be sufficient to mitigate this concern.

OPPORTUNITY 2: SET THE STAGE

As a new leader for this team, you have the ideal opportunity to make your vision and values known. Share your management approach with the team as a whole (eg. Are you transparent, equitable, focused on results? Bring clarity on areas such as individual responsibility and team responsibility; how the team will communicate and work together; how you expect information to be shared with each other and you, etc.).

Ask the team members to share their own vision for the team, and contribute to a statement of shared values. Use the transition as an opportunity to lead the team in assessing their performance against the deliverables in the operating plan. Have one-on-one conversations with each individual, incorporating a conversation about their career aspirations.

Both the group and individual discussions will provide insights that help guide and inform your recommendations. You may not have all the information related to the previous manager's way of working, and some individuals on your team could surprise you with their appreciation for a fresh start and a new clarity related to their work objectives.

Those who were "favourites" and those who may not have been perceived to be may have views that come out through this process that will help you move forward. Others may indicate an interest in following their previous manager out of the department, or a preference for a different area of work altogether, that you can help support them to achieve. Surface the themes from these discussions to share with your boss, confirm your next steps, and agree on what will be shared back with the team as a whole.

OPPORTUNITY 3: DEMONSTRATE YOUR LEADERSHIP

You indicated that there might be a need for significant restructuring. Now that you have gathered all the facts and additional insights, you are better equipped to propose recommendations to your boss.

By demonstrating your commitment to creating operational excellence, and ensuring the team is set up to accomplish its deliverables, your boss will have the opportunity to witness the strength of your leadership as well as to support you in managing agreed-on changes. You may discover that you will need to be more patient than you would like, and that not all changes can happen at once for a variety of reasons that are beyond your or your boss' control. Communicate with your team about

how you will be managing the work required. You will have identified the areas you are concerned about with your boss, so you have the foundation for status updates that either indicate improvement or confirm the need for more immediate action. Employees appreciate transparency, knowing where they stand and how their work will be evaluated. This means fewer surprises and that they will be better equipped to welcome changes when they do emerge.

OPPORTUNITY 4: CREATE GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY

The only way through your situation is to act, proactively, and deliberately. By navigating this tricky set of circumstances so early in your new role, while demonstrating your professionalism as a leader, you will gain the respect and support of both your boss and your team, and enhance your department's long-term performance potential.

A FINAL FEW POINTS

- Don't assume your boss already holds a strong view about any particular employee or how the previous manager led their team. The friendship with the previous manager may well be there, but it may not have any bearing on your boss' interpretation of what needs to happen with the team. Enter the situation with the boss as you would wish to, disregarding the perception of favoritism, to keep your focus on the facts and away from perceptions that may be misleading.
- Employees on the team will likely have been expecting some changes with the departure of their former manager. That departure will have left some team



members feeling "unsteady" or anxious about what's in store, while others may be looking forward to embracing a new management style. Kicking off your work with this new team in a consistent, transparent fashion will set the tone for what's to come and how it will be handled. This approach will assist in the communication of change and its acceptance by those most affected.

- Seeking another trusted ally or mentor within the company who knows the culture of your division and can make additional suggestions for your process could be helpful to you as well, as a sounding board as you work through each of your steps. 🌐

"I've inherited a potentially sticky situation in my new role - I need to restructure without offending my new reports and my new boss - how should I handle the changes?"



GABRIELLA O'ROURKE
Group Practice Manager
Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

Congratulations on your new role, and for recognizing the potential minefield that lies in front of you as you navigate this transition.

The #1 principle to keep in mind is that **leaders are expected to make decisions.**

Right now, everyone will be watching to see how you handle this transition, especially your new direct reports who have had to live with the frustration of underperforming colleagues.

Yes, you should be aware of and sensitive to the views of your predecessor and your current boss, but you should also conduct your own due diligence and make decisions accordingly. This is not about keeping everyone happy. This is your moment to show that you are focused only on the best interests of the company and building a team that will deliver results.

Before you charge in and start firing people, take some time to learn from and listen to all stakeholders. If possible, have an informal chat with the old boss about the team they have left behind and the potential they saw in those they favoured.

Schedule a meeting to talk to your new boss about the increase in performance they would like to see from the team under your leadership.

Ask other stakeholders around the organization (internal clients, other department heads) what strengths and weaknesses they see from your group and what performance improvements they believe possible under new leadership.

take some time to get to know your people and what drives them

Perhaps even more importantly when inheriting a team, take some time to get to know your people and what drives them. Even if you have worked alongside them before, there is a great deal you won't yet know about their goals, aspirations, motives and behaviours. Make your own mind up about their respective performance capabilities based on current and up-to-date information, not hearsay or the sour grapes of those who were not considered "teacher's pet."

Take a few weeks, **observe, absorb, and then make your decisions** as you see fit, based on objective evidence. Use every opportunity you have to build trust with your new team members and show them that you are interested in gaining a full and complete sense of everyone's potential before making any changes. If there is an underperformance issue, it must be dealt with decisively to regain the team's trust, morale and show them that you are committed to a high-performance environment. With their former manager out of the way and your adopting an open and listening approach, the problem performers will either step up to the plate or make it very clear that it is indeed time for them to move on to other opportunities. 🌟

Former GE Chairman and CEO Jack Welch is known for describing his role as one of a gardener. In his words, "My main job was developing talent. I was a gardener providing water and other nourishment to our top 750 people. Of course, I had to pull out some weeds, too."

We, too, as leaders must confront the harsh reality that performance problems, like weeds in a garden, can grow and choke out results from the rest of the team. That said, we must also be cognizant of the political landscape in this scenario. No need to risk being perceived as spraying herbicide on the whole workforce when a few surgical treatments may be all that's needed to allow the team to flourish and bloom.

Arrange time with the former division manager to ask for their assessment of individual performance. You may be surprised to find out that the previous leader had many of the same concerns as you but was unable to address or correct the performance issues.

Ask a lot of open-ended questions and listen.

Consider that the underperformers you believe were the former manager's favourites may not necessarily be so. Seek out what development plans may have been in place and work to gain an understanding of any concerns that the former manager had about the team. Ask a lot of open-ended questions and listen. Let the former manager do the talking and be careful not to put forward your perceptions until you are clear on where they stand. By engaging the friend of your new boss in the restructuring process you can potentially work to enroll them in your restructuring efforts.

The next step is to engage your new boss in the process. Since you are new to the team, ask for your boss' perspective on individual and team performance. Even if you do not agree with the boss' assessment, you will gain insights as to how your team is viewed and of potential landmines. You will get a sense of whether the boss is open to talking about performance issues within your unit and what bias, if any, actually exists toward the former manager of the division.

Outline your thoughts for potential changes and gain feedback on concerns or issues that your boss may have. It is highly likely that a savvy boss will already be aware of the performance issues within your division and might just be waiting for you to step up and take action to drive improved results.

Once you've finished your investigation, **tackle the tough issues with your team.**

The responsibility to manage performance within your division ultimately rests with you, and it's up to you to provide balanced feedback to your team that remembers to highlight successes and strengths, as well as the problem areas. Use objective measures or relevant benchmarks to point out areas of concern with results and performance. Ask underperformers to provide a time-bound game plan to turn things around. Are they even aware there is an issue? By letting your team know that you are serious about results and will be tackling the tough issues, you may find that some underperformers simply self-select and head for the exit. Others may have legitimate barriers that have been holding them back that you can help remove. 🌱

"I've inherited a potentially sticky situation in my new role - I need to restructure without offending my new reports and my new boss - how should I handle the changes?"



TREVOR LEWINGTON
CEO
**Economic Development
Lethbridge**

The Bottom Line:



CONSIDER THE OPPORTUNITIES

1. Create a positive working relationship with your new boss while identifying and resolving issues related to your team.
2. Set the stage for your team's new way of working, both with their manager and as a team, while potentially unlocking performance issues and enabling individuals to look at themselves in a new light.
3. Demonstrate your leadership by effectively managing change, enhancing your boss' awareness of your strengths and equipping the team for success.
4. Create greater accountability and performance outcomes within your division and your organization.



CONDUCT YOUR OWN DUE DILIGENCE & MAKE DECISIONS

- Get some perspective from key stakeholders.
- Get to know your people and what drives them.
- Build trust with your people.
- Observe and absorb over a period of time.
- Make decisions based on your own objective evidence, and with the best interests of the organization.



YOU CAN STILL PULL THE WEEDS WITHOUT LEVELING THE GARDEN

1. Get former division manager's assessment of individual performance. Ask open-ended questions and listen. Be careful not to put forward your own perceptions.
2. Ask for your boss' perspective on individual and team performance.
3. Share your thoughts on potential with your boss. Gain his feedback, concerns.
4. Provide balanced feedback to all team members. Highlight strengths, weaknesses and any areas of concern.
5. Ask underperformers to provide a time-bound game plan to turn things around.

Chapter 3

Q

"I've been told I need to demonstrate more 'professional presence' and gravitas in my role. How do I do this in a way that feels authentic?"



These members share their strategies on how to increase your presence in a way that still feels genuine.



KIM ULMER

Regional President

RBC

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and
North Western Ontario

Kim shares her perspective that achieving presence begins by looking within, and she outlines 3 key steps in achieving this.



ANDREA GARSON

VP Human Resources

Cardinal Health Canada

Andrea shares some of the professional presence tips she's gathered through her career from various mentors and role models.



CHARLES BROWN

President

The Source

Speaking to one's brand as the essence of professional presence, Charles describes how to approach working on your brand.

I don't believe you need to look too far for the answer. Your answer can be found in the question itself. Some think that presence can be found in changing who you are. Others feel it is something physically driven such as speaking loudest or overwhelming others with your physical self. I have learned that it is none of these. I have found that presence is the result of three things: *Being your fully authentic self; Walking with worthiness; Being where your hands are.*

The foundation of achieving presence comes from being your fully authentic self. Being authentic is a journey in self-discovery that begins with finding "you"—the best "you" you can possibly be. I travel with the belief that **it's better to be a first rate version of you than a second rate version of somebody else.**

Once you come to know you, your next step is to recognize your worthiness. To walk with worthiness is to walk with the notion that you, your ideas, perspective, feelings, diversity, words, and even your flaws all have great value to the world around you. It's about accepting and honouring all 360 degrees of you.

Worthiness comes from honouring all 360 degree of yourself—even your flaws.

Sometimes that voice of doubt sends out SOS warnings throughout our entire bodies to not look or sound silly. That voice then begins to immobilize us.

We need to get out of our heads and out of our own way. We often think that we need to be perfect in everything we do to earn the

respect of others and that simply isn't the case. The cornerstone of presence is in our ability to make strong connections with others and I have found people connect more often with our flaws and what makes us human than they do with what makes us great.

This sense of worthiness can't be found in a survey, performance review, or words of validation from others. These are simply indicators that we may be on the right track. A sense of worthiness comes from within. It comes from believing it in your heart, knowing it in your head, and trusting it in your gut. Once you believe in you, the next step is to live it openly.

This begins with being where your hands are—and that means being fully present in the moment, whether at work, home, or in your community. This is also known as achieving mindfulness.

Being present is born out of finding a sense of worthiness. Instead of our vision being clouded by our inner critic, we experience clarity, enabling us to be in the moment as an active and present contributor.

In the workplace, there are simple tactics you can leverage to help you demonstrate your authentic and worthy self, such as choosing the chair closest to the front of the boardroom versus hiding in the back or being the first to share your idea versus waiting to see if someone else will mention it first.

"I've been told I need to demonstrate more 'professional presence' and gravitas in my role. How do I do this in a way that feels authentic?"



KIM ULMER

Regional President

RBC

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and North
Western Ontario

Feedback is a gift so never hesitate to invite in the observations of mentors to ensure the perceptions of others are in line with your intentions. If not, don't change or adjust who you are, just realign your authentic self to your public self.

When you choose to be your authentic self and walk with worthiness, then your ability to achieve presence, both personally and professionally, will reveal itself to you. Remember, achieving presence begins with looking within before you look around. 🌟

"I've been told I need to demonstrate more 'professional presence' and gravitas in my role. How do I do this in a way that feels authentic?"



ANDREA GARSON
VP Human Resources
Cardinal Health Canada

Enhancing our professional presence is one of the abstract pieces of feedback we often receive in our career at some stage, typically as we are approaching management levels. But what does it really mean? As mysterious as this feedback can be, its meaning is grounded in performance, appearance, communication style, and relationships.

I always look at performance of an individual from two aspects—the 'what's (their outcomes) and the 'how's (how they went about achieving these outcomes). It's easy to give feedback when someone isn't achieving the outcomes of their performance—did they achieve their objectives, did they hit their numbers, complete that project on time, etc. It's not so easy to describe to someone how to change who they are and how they act.

Professional presence is more about "how" you conduct yourself, how you carry yourself, relative to your communication style, both verbal and non-verbal, your attitude, and your level of engagement.

Throughout my career I've had the benefit of working with some excellent mentors and role models, both male and female, and I've picked up a few tips regarding professional presence.

TIP #1: Be true to yourself.

No matter how much advice you receive on your appearance, or presence, or gravitas, if you choose to make changes in order to enhance your career prospects, make sure that you don't step outside of your comfort zone or else you will fail on more than one front. You will come across fake, or awkward, or possibly as if you're hiding something as you will always be conscious of what you've changed and not focused on your task at hand.

Consider, for example, if you never wear high heeled shoes and someone recommended shoes with heels. I, for one, cannot walk well in heels and my teenage daughter always tells me how awkward I look trying to walk down the hallway in heels. While heels can add a cleaner, slicker, more professional look than flats, especially when wearing a suit, look for thicker or wider heels as opposed to spikes, so that with perhaps just a little bit of practice you can be comfortable standing or walking, as opposed to just sitting.

Whatever changes you choose to make, ensure they represent who you are and what feels natural to you, not who someone is advising you should be. It's OK to step outside your comfort zone, but not to the point of discomfort.

TIP #2: Once you “know yourself,” ensure your presence defines who you are.

You need to dress professionally, spend time on grooming, choose jewelry appropriately, and ensure your makeup subtly enhances your face (as opposed to looking like you are dressing for Halloween).

There are several ways to appear professional and still show your personality. I had loafers made for me by a Canadian craftsman and they are pink, with yellow and purple patches. They are unique—no one else has the exact same pair—and I’ve had so many people comment on these shoes. The uniqueness of my shoes, the confidence to wear them, the ability to match them with a professional outfit, helps define to others who I am, what I like and what I want people to know about me.

TIP #3: Communicate with power, credibility and a sense of competence.

Public speaking is a scary prospect for many, however, if you are confident in the material you are presenting, you will be great. It’s when you’re asked to present material that someone else created or that is not something you know well, that you will likely come across less professional.

As silly as this sounds, rehearsing in front of a mirror really helps—it forces you to practice eye contact (in this case with yourself) and helps you see what you look like standing. If you want to take it to the next level, set up a video camera and record your practice—when you play it back, you will likely identify some natural quirks you have (such as

saying “um” or “ah” to stall while you are thinking, or constantly switching from leaning on one leg then another). Reducing these quirks will help you avoid distracting your audience from what you are saying and practice will do that for you. Make sure you are comfortable with the material you are presenting so you can exude the competence to gain credibility.

Tip #4: Be present. Listen to people when they speak to you.

Stay focused on the conversation—don’t check your texts or look away. Show enthusiasm and energy in conversation with others, in your everyday work, in meetings, or when talking to people at the water cooler.

Engage in your workplace—attend social activities and participate, ask questions to learn more, volunteer to participate in projects or committees, introduce yourself to people you work with but have never met. Follow through on commitments to others.

Be present. Professional presence is something that can evolve, with the right coaching and practice, but it can also be the one thing that costs you your next promotion if you don’t pay attention to it. 🌀

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I find professional presence is a common topic these days, and the subject often comes up during new hire reviews, promotion considerations or talent review discussions.

When you're told you need to work on your professional presence it usually means you don't fit with the organization's culture or people don't understand who you are or the value you bring.

"I've been told I need to demonstrate more 'professional presence' and gravitas in my role. How do I do this in a way that feels authentic?"



CHARLES BROWN
President
The Source

While professional presence can seem a rather amorphous concept, simply put, it is your brand. Professional presence is how others judge you on who they think you are, what you stand for and your value to them and the organization. Common qualities associated with professional presence include confidence, body language, communications and speaking style, emotional stability and empathy—and even style of dress or table manners.

Professional presence is a critical input when management decides to increase a person's responsibility or grant a promotion. Consequently, **you need to have your brand working for you and ensure that others understand who you are and how you create value.** So where do you start? Well, you start with yourself.

Once you accept that you need to work on your brand, the first step is to identify how you want others to perceive you and the value you deliver. This process requires a lot of thought and you may need some help.

There are lots of great books, articles, webinars and courses that will aid you in building your brand.

Once you are able to articulate your brand you should ask your manager or work colleagues for feedback. You need to understand the gaps between how they perceive you and how you wish to be perceived. A more formal tool could be a 360 degree evaluation. Your company may support this type of evaluation or you may have

to invest in it yourself but it is a great tool to understand how your peers, subordinates and management see you. Once completed you can use the feedback to identify what elements of your brand need work.

Think carefully about who you are going to ask for the 360 feedback. It's best to have people who know you and your work, as well as some senior managers. Don't fall into the trap of just asking your work buddies. You're looking for honest feedback here. Also, take a look around your office. There are many attributes to your brand and depending on your company's culture, some are more important than others. Look at the successful leaders in your company and you'll get some ideas as to what is important. This step is key because you may notice that what your company values isn't you. If that's the case you need to ask yourself if it is time to move on.

Once you've got your feedback and understand what brand attributes you need to work on, it's time to practice. That practice could take many forms. Consider filming yourself before you give a presentation and make sure you are representing your brand. Work with a mentor or a co-worker and ask them to watch for areas you are attempting to polish.

You'll find it is hard work changing the perception others have of you and developing that professional presence. It's really a never-ending process and as your career progresses you'll find you need to constantly re-tune your brand.

But above all, **be true to yourself.** As long as you **don't try to be someone you are not**, the work will pay off. 🌟

The Bottom Line:



LOOK WITHIN BEFORE YOU LOOK AROUND

1. Be your fully authentic self... Find the best version of "you".
2. Walk with worthiness... Carry yourself with the notion that you, your ideas, perspective, feelings, diversity, words, and even your flaws all have great value.
3. Be where your hands are... be fully present in the moment.



PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE TIPS

- Be true to yourself... Don't step too far out of your comfort zone.
- Ensure that your presence defines you... appear professional and show your personality.
- Communicate with power, credibility and confidence... rehearse to gain confidence in the material you are presenting.
- Be present... listen, focus and engage.



PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE = YOUR BRAND

1. Identify how you want others to perceive you and the value you deliver.
2. Seek out some honest feedback to understand the gaps between how you wish to be perceived and how you are perceived.
3. Consider what's valued in your organization.
4. Identify what you want to work on and practice.
5. Be true to who you are.

Chapter 4

Q

"I've just taken on a new team and it's filled with twenty-somethings. It's my first time managing a group this young. I've heard that younger employees can be a challenge to manage. How can I get off on a good foot?"



These members share their advice for managing a millennial team.



SHARMANE GOOD

SVP Customer Care & Rewards
Loyalty One

Sharmane shares pragmatic advice on managing a millennial team and reminds us to be open and have fun!



GREG BANDLER

Founder & Managing Director,
Brand-Point Inc.

Greg highlights some similarities and differences between the two twenty-something cohorts, and shares strategies for how to inspire team members to outstanding results.



TONY GARERI

CEO
Roma Moulding

Tony shares his positive attitude and insights in getting to know and leading a new team.

Regardless of age or generation, whenever a team gets a new leader, there will be a period of acclimatization for everyone. Here are some of my tried-and-true new team ideas:

Get to know the individuals who make up the team.

Don't assume that there are "truths" about any generational cohort that will be a reflection of your new team members.

"I've just taken on a new team and it's filled with twenty-somethings. It's my first time managing a group this young. I've heard that younger employees can be a challenge to manage. How can I get off on a good foot?"



SHARMANE GOOD
SVP Customer Care & Rewards
Loyalty One

A team is made up of individuals who all have a role in the team dynamic and understanding each person as an individual is very important.

Tell your new team your story.

In order to create followership, the team needs to understand: (a) Who you are; (b) Why you are here; and (c) What you are trying to build.

Listen and ask questions.

Younger associates tend to ask lots of questions. Many times those questions start with "why." Be honest, be factual, and don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions back. Honesty builds trust, and trust is the foundation of any great team.

Provide clear accountabilities and authorities.

One of the most powerful self-discovery coaching questions is to ask your team members, "What would you do?" It is a great way to explore how an associate thinks and makes decisions.

Even if you don't have a door, have an "open door" policy.

Gone are the days when hierarchy created boundaries between leaders and associates. Be open to casual as well as work related questions, without the need to book a meeting.

Career development is always a hot topic. Which generally starts with a question, "How do I get from here to there?" Encourage everyone on your team to have a documented learning plan which is kept up-to-date

and discussed at least every quarter. The most important goal is that they are ready for their next role—up or across—when the organization is ready.

The lines between work and play are very blurry.

Technology has enabled most to work anywhere at any time. Resist the urge to count the work hours based on a nine-to-five clock and, instead, consider what work is getting done. Coach to quality and speed and ensure that there is open dialogue about what is next.

Have fun! Work is no longer about putting food on the table or a place that you go. Regardless of generation, many of us want to work for a company that also gives back to the community and encourages their associates to do the same.

Culture is about setting the understanding about how great work is accomplished not just about what great work is completed.

Always remember that "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." (Peter Drucker) As a leader, everything you do and say will set the culture for your team. Culture is about setting the understanding about how great work is accomplished not just about what great work is completed. The "what" will always be important, but never lose sight of the "how." 🌟

"I've just taken on a new team and it's filled with twenty-somethings. It's my first time managing a group this young. I've heard that younger employees can be a challenge to manage. How can I get off on a good foot?"



GREG BANDLER
 Founder & Managing
 Director,
Brand-Point Inc.

Proficiency in Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Pinterest may help you navigate communication channels with your "twenty-somethings," but won't necessarily assist you from a management and leadership point of view.

Twenty-somethings are categorized into two distinct Millennial groups: those who are 25-plus and are classified as Gen Y; and the Gen Z Millennials, aka GenZers, who are under 25.

The incoming GenZers are the group most typically represented as a leadership challenge. Consider the staggering fact that by 2019, it is expected the workforce will be 30 million GenZers strong in North America. This trend coincides with nearly 30 million Boomers preparing to retire, meaning we are in for a huge demographical and generational change.

Much has been written about the Millennial generation being "lazy and entitled." In fact, as a recent study by Pew Research Center in Washington has identified, "Millennials stand out in their willingness to ascribe negative stereotypes to their own generation. More than half of Millennials, 59%, described their generation as "self-absorbed," while almost half or 49% said they were "wasteful," and 43% said they were "greedy."

Fortunately, my experience with Millennials has been nothing short of positive. The same can be true for you. It's your job as a manager and leader to inspire these high-potential twenty-somethings to outstanding results and breakthrough innovations. You can achieve this with thoughtful, purposeful leadership and mentorship.

Here are four key leadership approaches to get you off on a good foot:

1) Start with Vision

Both Gen Y and Z need to know their work is valued in the context of the bigger picture. They need to know where they fit and how their work contributes to the cause. Millennials need to have a direct line of sight on the prize as motivation to do the heavy lifting.

Take time to articulate the vision and how/why it was formulated. Twenty-somethings need to understand the insights behind the decision-making process in order to feel included as a team member. They have a thirst for knowledge, so be sure to openly share the details. In turn, they will likely interpret or internalize the vision, giving meaning to their own purpose.

2) Set Clear Expectations and Define Outcomes

Gen Y and Z want freedom and flexibility, but because they have been the recipients of "helicopter parenting" all their lives, too much autonomy can have an adverse affect. They can spin endlessly or worse, not spin at all, while waiting for check-in approvals.

So how do you find the right check-in balance as a manager/leader? From the onset, be sure to set clear expectations and define specific outcomes. Then get out of the way.

Let them do the work and check in periodically or, better yet, be available for their self-initiated progress reports (the ones you may have hinted would be a good idea).

3) When Things Get Heated, Take Time to Explain

A prevalent perception is that Gen Y and Z often act and think like they know it all. The fact of the matter is they realize there is still a lot to learn. And importantly, it's this learning process that they want from a job. So when you encounter obstacles or challenges on a project, don't kick into an authoritative style of leadership. It's your job to explain the thinking or principles behind your decisions. The ability to learn firsthand, in the heat of the moment, is a key motivator for your young recruits.

4) Give Constructive Criticism

Both Gen Y and Z have shelves full of trophies and ribbons. They want to win. Avoid pointing out only what is wrong. Reinforce what has gone right and use that positive support to encourage fixes or required improvements. Utilizing these four leadership approaches will help you become a more effective manager.

Having mastered your leadership approach, you can complement your style with a sensitivity to the difference between Gen Y and Gen Z. A good understanding of the similarities and differences between these two groups will make you more effective in one-on-one interactions.

THE SIMILARITIES

Both Gen Y and Gen Z were brought up in a much more technological age than Boomers. The internet, smart phones, and social media are second nature to Millennials. In North America, they were raised with empowering devices in their hands, and view the television as an antiquated technology. Both cohorts were on the receiving end of a helicopter parenting revolution. They enter the workforce accustomed to being the center of attention and likely recipients of excessive positive feedback during their upbringing.

THE DIFFERENCES

Compared to Gen Y, GenZers have had access to ideas and content from an even earlier age, in an always-connected, always-on mode. GenZers are experiencing hyper-connectivity in a social landscape where the outlook has not remained quite as rosy for as it was for Gen Y, who grew up in the 1990s, prior to the dot-com bust and at a time when the western world was experiencing a decade of peace and prosperity. Bruce Tulgan of Rainmaker Thinking Inc. said it well: "GenZers have been shaped by nearly a decade of war and economic uncertainty and the contrast in their attitudes and behaviors is vivid. They are dubious about their long-term prospects (five years) and fearful about the short-term (tomorrow)." Recognize that GenZers are arguably less confident than their

Gen Y counterparts. If they don't feel they are receiving enough of your time and coaching, they are more prone to change jobs. With GenZers now entering the workforce in droves, you are definitely putting yourself on the right track by seeking a new leadership style. Unfortunately, the definitive manual is still a work in progress. As a trailblazer, you will benefit by experimenting with the four approaches outlined. Make them your own and revise as you see fit. You'll soon be equipped to write your own chapters to contribute to the manual! 🌀

LOOKING FOR MORE RELATED READING?

Enchantment

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Drive



"I've just taken on a new team and it's filled with twenty-somethings. It's my first time managing a group this young. I've heard that younger employees can be a challenge to manage. How can I get off on a good foot?"



TONY GARERI

CEO

Roma Moulding

Congratulations! Earning the opportunity to lead individuals is always a privilege. At first glance, the difference in values and expectations that can come with younger employees may appear challenging.

However, I have found that the overall approach towards developing and nurturing passionate employees, regardless of generation, is fairly similar. The difference lies in taking a nuanced approach to suit your audience's needs.

In this case, the twenty-somethings, the largest age group within "Millennials," grew up in a set of circumstances unique to this generation. Here are the three most significant factors shaping the values of the twenty-somethings:

- they grew up with access to the internet and social media;
- they are the most diverse and educated generation to date; and
- they entered adulthood during a time of global economic uncertainty and concerns over the job market.

In other words, they arrived to the workforce more knowledgeable, more connected, and more confused/worried over career choices than any other generation. With this context, I suggest five areas to focus on:

1. OPEN THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Similar to a first date, meeting a new team can be interesting! When people meet each other for the first time, there is always a bit of anticipation, intrigue, and mystery. I would

encourage opening up with a team meeting. Not just another boring team meeting, but one that sets the tone for who you are as a leader. If you are fun and outgoing, express it!

Do your homework on your team members. Learn as much as you can before entering the meeting. This is the age of social media but be selective about your sources. LinkedIn is a really important source for understanding an individual's career choices to date, whereas Facebook, for the most part, offers less that is relevant to the individual's professional life. Doing your homework shows your team that you are witty, clever, and willing to learn about them. It shows them you care!

Make the meeting an opportunity for the team to get to know you. Share who you are and who you are not: be authentic! Get relatable— share your interests, hobbies, and favourite junk food. Take the team through a fun journey of who you are, and be sure to cover the following:

Who are you?

Why did you join the team?

What are some of your personal goals in life?

What are your goals or intentions for the team?

What can the team always count on you for?

Traditionally, an "open door policy" was the go-to approach for being open with your team. Today an "open door policy" means being flexible enough to give twenty-somethings a number of different ways to connect with you (e.g. instant messaging, social accounts, or Skype- groups). Ensure that your people can get their questions and concerns over to you by maintaining regular question and answer periods.

2. SET ASIDE TIME TO GET TO KNOW THE TEAM MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY

It's super important to set aside mutually agreed upon times for individual one-on-one meetings. This one-on-one time sets the tone of your leadership and illustrates your willingness to listen and learn. These one-on-ones are excellent opportunities for you to get to know who's on the team, what their strengths are, what they love about the team, and so much more. Within my own teams, I often ask the following:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you feel today in your role?

What do you feel are the wins from the past (week, month, year)?

How can I support you in your role?

What is the one thing I should know about you?

Who's your favourite super hero?

Determine a consistent frequency and clearly outline the intentions of the one-on-one meetings. Not only are these meetings a great opportunity to learn about your team members, it also creates a safe and confidential space for your team members to communicate with you.

3. LISTEN, OBSERVE, AND ASK QUESTIONS!

While you are getting to know your team, your team is getting to know you! It's important to listen attentively to your team and it is critical that you deliver on your promises. Listen to both their pain-points and their highlights, and focus on the why. Listen to the language they use—is it "I" or "us"? Watch and observe the team in action! Are they collaborative in nature or do they prefer to work independently? Look for behaviours to reinforce or adjust:

Are they flexible and nimble?

Are they quick and assertive?

How is their physical environment?

Ask questions! The biggest challenge for some leaders is that they simply don't ask. Although you may have heard something or seen something, it's often best to ask and clarify. Asking questions is a sure way to get answers and gives you the opportunity to listen attentively. As the saying goes, 'It never hurts to ask'!

4. BE OPEN, HONEST, TRANSPARENT, AND VISIBLE

Don't try to be someone else in an effort to impress your team— just be yourself! Make yourself available and present so your new team can get to know you. If you are isolated in a far-off corner office, then get out and sit with your team. Have lunch and socialize in the employee lounge. Your team is watching you, evaluating you, and wanting to see you in action! How can your team possibly get to know you if you are not present, or worse, cooped up in a corner office? Always be honest and transparent, even if that means saying you don't know. Your team doesn't expect you to know it all. In fact, I believe your team wants to help and support you as well, so don't be shy to ask for assistance. This will give them the opportunity to see you on a different level, as one of them! Whatever you do, always be sure to be honest, be open, and deliver on what you promise!

5. BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE

These famous words by Mahatma Gandhi will always steer you in the right direction. Although your team may be from a different generation, one principle will always remain true for people of all ages, and that is: lead by example. Show your team what is possible and always believe in them!

Being able to lead is a privilege, being able to serve is an honour! I hope these words inspire you today as they continue to inspire me! 🌟

**LOOKING
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**Generational Differences:
To Hype or Not to Hype?**



The Bottom Line:



MANAGING YOUR NEW MILLENNIAL TEAM

- Get to know each team member as an individual... don't make assumptions tied to generational cohorts.
- Tell your new team story... who you are, why you are here and what you are trying to build.
- Listen and respond to questions with honesty... honesty builds trust.
- Provide clear accountabilities and authorities... put questions back to them "What would you do?"
- Have an 'open door' policy... be open to questions without the need to book a meeting.
- Document learning plans... review and discuss regularly with a focus on readiness for their next role.
- Resist the urge to count work hours... consider what work is getting done and coach to quality and efficiency.



TIPS FOR INSPIRING THE BEST FROM TWENTY-SOMETHINGS

1. Share the vision. This younger generation want to understand the bigger picture and how their work contributes to the vision.
2. Set clear expectations and define outcomes. Twenty-somethings want freedom and flexibility, but are accustomed to clearly defined expectations and outcomes.
3. Take time to explain. Young recruits are motivated to learn from their jobs.
4. Provide constructive criticism. Twenty-somethings want to succeed. Be sure to reinforce what's gone right in in the context of making suggestions for improvement.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEW TEAM

1. Open the lines of communication.
2. Set aside time to get to know the team members individually.
3. Listen, observe, and ask questions.
4. Be open, honest, transparent, and visible.
5. Be the change you wish to see.

Chapter 5

Q

"Our business is under a massive amount of pressure and it's been going on for a few years. There's been continuous change in our industry and it's increasingly tough to hit our targets. How do I keep my team motivated when the cards seem stacked against us?"



These members share their advice for how a leader can keep their team motivated when everything is working against them.



CARL KAZMIERCZAK
Director of Sales National Accounts,
PepsiCo Foodservice Canada

Carl shares his empowering tactics for keeping teams energized and on track for success.



STACEY ALLERTON
Director, U.S. Labor Affairs
Ford Motor Company

Stacey shares her strategy for "shift"-ing the workplace routine to keep morale high.



SIMON JENNINGS
CRO
Pelmorex Media

Simon shares his strategies on how to maintain a focused team, starting with getting the right people in the job.

The best way to confront reality is with honesty. Empower, build a common sense of purpose, simplify, execute, measure, reward and recognize accomplishments. For me, these elements are critically important to keeping a team motivated in a constantly changing and increasingly competitive environment. I'm fortunate to work for a great company with a strong vision for the future

"Our business is under a massive amount of pressure and it's been going on for a few years. There's been continuous change in our industry and it's increasingly tough to hit our targets. How do I keep my team motivated when the cards seem stacked against us?"



CARL KAZMIERCZAK
Director of Sales National
Accounts,
PepsiCo Foodservice Canada

and phenomenal leaders who understand how to win in the marketplace. Those leaders have taught me that, regardless of the size of team or types of employees, there will always be challenges when we strive for high performance.

I believe that it's important to be transparent and bring the team along in the knowledge of exactly where we stand as an organization, a division, and a team, against our performance targets. Being clear about what is going well and what our opportunity areas are is the first step to accelerating performance and achieving spectacular results.

My team has always taken the time to understand where we fit into the bigger picture and what our role is within our broader organization. Once employees understand this, we can then look at what we can do better and refine our focus to the aligned priorities that support the organizations strategic framework and long-term objectives.

The outcomes could be as simple as deciding on a new promotion tactic, or something more complex, like how to change the game and turn around performance with customers. As a team, we simplify and align on the priorities that we will all support and be held accountable for delivering.

At the end of the day, execution of our strategy and supporting tactics is key to achieving our goals. I recently heard a quote that described why Stephen Curry became such a great basketball player and it resonated with me:

"Are the habits you have today on par with the dreams you have for tomorrow?"
Execution is about building habits and staying accountable to the playbook that both the organization and the team have set out.

When I was in the field, we held weekly team huddles and roundtables where we discussed our weekly wins and challenges. The team committed to spending the time in market, working hand-in-hand with our field reps to support them in driving towards our shared goals and helping us measure our results. With our key account team, we strive to be disciplined and continuously work with the customer to drive win-win results. This means bringing new ideas forward at set meetings and communicating with all stakeholders internally to make sure we don't miss a beat with execution.

We've rewarded our team by celebrating the big wins, but more importantly the everyday "small" wins. Examples include sending thank you notes to our reps, bringing in food trucks at a group town hall, posting some of the great wins and results around the building and showcasing best in class execution up the organizational ladder. These small wins and habits build momentum and ultimately keep everyone motivated to drive performance.

Make sure your team has the habits in place that they need to stay on track with their goals.

This process is very much cyclical and must be consistent over time to be truly effective. It's important to continuously stay focused on aligned priorities and work as a team to deliver results. 🌟

“Our business is under a massive amount of pressure and it’s been going on for a few years. There’s been continuous change in our industry and it’s increasingly tough to hit our targets. How do I keep my team motivated when the cards seem stacked against us?”



STACEY ALLERTON
Director, U.S. Labor Affairs
Ford Motor Company

Almost every industry in North America is experiencing a disruptive marketplace where creating a challenging workplace guided by new values can tax even the most savvy leader. So, what’s a caring, thoughtful person to do?

Outlined below are some tactics I’ve had some success with in my industry that just might resonate with yours. I call it the “shift” strategy.

Strip out the “waste” in your operation to allow your team to focus on what’s really critical. Of course, this requires time to align your team around your key deliverables. Everyone on your team should understand exactly what they need to do to contribute to the team’s priorities. Once that is clear, anything that does not support those initiatives should be revisited. Common areas of opportunity include:

Reports. Are you customizing the same data for particular audiences? Is the information really needed to drive your business forward or is it ‘nice to know’?

Meetings! A fresh assessment of who needs to meet, when, and for how long can often reveal time and energy zappers in your team’s day.

Make sure your team’s deliverables correspond with the key objectives. Anything that does not contribute to these priorities can and should get cut.

Technology improvements. Are there areas of data management that could be automated or tech-enabled? A short term investment in technology can pay-off significantly in the long term use of your team’s bigger potential.

Hone your team’s effectiveness by playing to the strengths of your team members. By breaking down the barriers that traditional roles and responsibilities bring, you can focus more of the team members’ time on the areas where they’re strongest and motivated to contribute. Spend time talking with your team about where they believe they can make the largest impact on the success of the group and work to organize your team to allow them the opportunity to spend a portion of their day in that capacity.

Innovate! When the cards seem stacked against you, change the game. At Ford, instead of thinking of ourselves just as manufacturers of cars and trucks, we’re now thinking of ourselves as a mobility company. This opens up an exciting and interesting new perspective on our business model. When you view your business opportunities through the lens of innovation, you’re driving change instead of reacting to it after-the-fact.

Flexibility allows employees control and freedom to maximize their energy. With the line between work and home dissolving, employees are increasingly demanding a culture where they determine when and where they get work done. By focusing on results and not on 'face time,' you allow your employees to manage their energy and lives in a way that can sustain high commitment and engagement during turbulent times—without compromising business performance.

Play to strengths whenever possible.

Thank employees for their efforts in ways that they value and appreciate. Get to know your team members' preferences for how they like to be recognized and tailor your approach to make your appreciation heartfelt. Get your entire team in on the act. Provide a venue for them to thank each other and celebrate the small successes together. Today, someone on your team has demonstrated the behaviors your organization values. Find them and let them know you've noticed. 🌟

Always take time to appreciate your team members' efforts. This will let them know that, even if they can't see the results yet, their hard work isn't being wasted.

LOOKING FOR MORE RELATED READING?



Drive

Fire Them Up

The Leadership Challenge

Motivation 3.0: What drives you?

This question contains two statements blended into one. You've been experiencing pressure for a long time, which has been making things difficult. You are also dealing with a period of constant change and it feels like it's been impossible to achieve whatever goals you set in front of you. You're looking to increase motivation against those two factors.

"Our business is under a massive amount of pressure and it's been going on for a few years. There's been continuous change in our industry and it's increasingly tough to hit our targets. How do I keep my team motivated when the cards seem stacked against us?"



SIMON JENNINGS
CRO
Pelmorex Media

The question presupposes a few things:

One, that the level of pressure is inherently new. In my life, I've actually never noticed a pressure increase. However, I've always worked in the new economy space, so it's possible that I've never noticed an increase in pressure because it's always been like this!

The second part is interesting. The constant state of change is making it difficult to figure out how to achieve budgets. But it's not necessarily the constant change that creates more pressure, it's the rate of the constant change or the magnitude of the change that becomes disruptive. Fundamental changes and completely new innovations make it almost impossible for people to feel like they know enough about what's going on. No sooner do they learn something then something changes and what they thought they learned becomes something completely new.

So, how do you motivate a team in these conditions?

Find the right people for the job.

I pin the initial responsibility on the hiring managers. Whether you're creating a new company or job, or whatever, if you're the head of the company or at any level where you have oversight for managing, your accountability is to find the right people for the job. Your primary responsibility is not trying to deal with people who are

freaking out and spiraling because they can't handle the pressure or because the stress is too much. Your responsibility is to pick the right people for the roles so they don't end up in a situation where that's going to happen to them.

Make sure you've got farmers in the field and hunters armed with bows and arrows and not the other way around. Otherwise, you're going to fail. No amount of motivation is going to get you out of a bad hiring decision.

Focus on education, not motivation.

'Motivation' is kind of a 1980's term. It is almost unnecessary as an isolated practice if you can focus more on general education. Every time I sense that my team is overwhelmed, it is usually because they feel threatened by something that they don't know. Their lack of motivation or their pressure or their stress is usually based on fear or something that they don't understand.

Very rarely is this fear of numbers, like they're \$100,000 short of their million dollar target. It's that, say, money in the budget has suddenly moved to social media and they don't understand why, or how, so they're out there trying to figure out why that money went away and that's causing them stress. Instead of just telling them to 'grab the oar and row a little harder', we spend a lot of time reducing the fear. My definition of fear is 'not knowing.' Here's a hypothetical example of how to combat this: In the case of social media, we might bring in people from Facebook to explain what social media is, or bring in some other third-party social media provider to explain their service. In these sessions, you can watch the folks figure out how, why, and what they're fighting against.

It seems the more you educate them about the unknown, the more confident they get. They develop an understanding on whether their plan is attainable or not. That reduces the pressure, reduces the fear and that refocuses them to get more tactical about how to get to their end. For the most part, this strategy has always worked. Reducing the unknowns makes the pressure kind of go away and then the team can get pragmatic and tactical about where they want to go. They can assess the problems on their plate and either they'll be solvable problems or they won't be, but they'll understand why the problem is solvable or it's not. Then it's not just something that goes bump in the night or a monster in the closet they can't rationalize.

Take the hiring process seriously. It's your first responsibility to your team as a leader.

Clear the smoke.

I will fairly regularly bring in leaders from businesses that aren't really even related to us to talk to our group in a totally unofficial, unstructured conversation where it's almost like they're pitching us. We had a person come in to talk about apps—we knew nothing about apps but now the team understands the platform and the technology behind it. They feel a little smarter, they understand more about the peripheral challenges in their space, and it helps them demystify what they perceive to be the big daunting number or challenge in front of them. They know more about what everyone else is doing around them, and then from there, it's a lot easier to navigate your path. Otherwise, I could

give you a million dollar target and you can lose half of it to another company and you not understand what the company is or why you're even losing to them because they're not in your space. If you hate Google but you don't understand why, you'll be afraid. Another thing we do (sort of irregularly) is we'll have someone bring in a cool thing (something they've seen, an article they've read, a technology they've used) that they want to talk about. This encourages people to go out and find out what's new in technology and it gets the sales pressure out of the meeting and lets them talk about technology and how people are using it.

Give your team the knowledge they need to see their path clearly.

We have the regular tools to manage the numbers, we identify our top three accounts and we block and tackle all that stuff very pragmatically so people understand the path and the possible outcomes—I think that's a key part, the possible outcomes. We don't talk about a 20 million number and say, "How short are you?" We talk about the buckets where it's going to come from, the stuff that we know we can control and the stuff that we can't.

Don't try to solve pressure with more pressure.

I hire to achieve a goal, I hire people to help me achieve the goal, and then we share the goal. We share the challenge. And everybody we hire, whether it's my assistant or my head of sales or whatever, we're all trying to achieve the same thing. So it's a lot easier to

hire people who you know that can thrive in an environment where everyone takes a bit of ownership for it. We all accept the possible outcomes and we all have each other's backs. We all know what we're trying to do, we all do it together—it's full disclosure, whether we're up or down, everyone knows where everyone is and it works well.

The idea of the number-crunching way to manage sales or "50 calls out with a 10% success rate," all that kind of stuff, these tactics don't actually work. These systems of measurement anticipate failure before they accept possible success. We remove that from the discussion because it puts pressure on people to feel like they have to go through the motions, go through processes. We've created this entire science behind this and all these tools—CRM tools, sales tools, sales management tools, just a whole lot of stuff people need to try and focus on while losing sight of actually doing their job. You never get to celebrate anything other than if you achieve this preconceived benchmark, which basically means you're always chasing and you're always running. I just think that's not helping.

I've always resisted applying an unnecessary level of stress on a job that's already stressful. I think that's usually the shortcoming of most sales organizations—and of organizations in general. They set a goal and then they apply pressure because they think the pressure's going to make their people get there. It's almost like a threat: You hold up someone's ability to pay their mortgage or to feel proud, and then label these tactics under this title of motivation—but they're not motivating at all. Hire smart people and find ways to get them the knowledge they need to excel. It purely comes down to aptitude and attitude. 🌀

The Bottom Line:



Be honest & transparent about where things stand.

Clarify the team's role as it relates to the broader organizational purpose.

Work as a team to align priorities to support the business needs.

Stay on focus, execute the plan.

Celebrate wins – big and small.



“SHIFT”-ING WORKPLACE ROUTINES

Strip out the waste... allow your team to focus on what's really critical.

Hone team effectiveness... play to strengths.

Innovate... drive change rather than react to it.

Flexibility... allow employees control and freedom to maximize their energy.

Thank employees... show them that their work is valued and appreciated.



Find the right people for the job... no amount of motivation will get you out of a bad hiring decision.

Focus on education not motivation... lack of motivation or stress is usually based on fear of something that is not understood.

Clear the smoke... build understanding for what's going on peripherally around them.

Don't try to solve pressure with more pressure... resist applying stress on jobs that are already stressful

We hope you've enjoyed Volume 1 of Mentoring Matters. Our next issue of lessons learned will be available summer 2017.

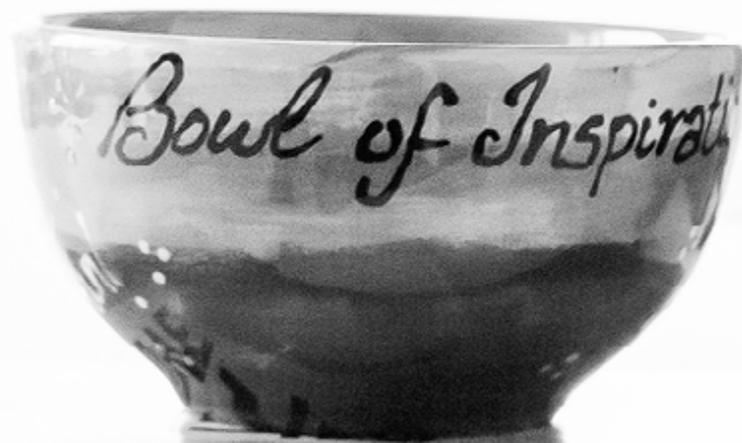
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