

Coaching Up or Coaching Out: Maximize Service Capacity and the Bottom Line by Coaching Up Your Middle Performers



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Middle performers are the unsung heroes of every organization. While high and low performers get most of the attention, middle performers typically make-up 60-70% of the workforce, and are critical to your organization's success.

But too often, they're taken for granted and underutilized. Too many managers just don't know what to do with these team members, understanding their potential, or how to motivate them to peak performance. To better understand how to manage Middle Performers we must first understand what constitutes low performance. How does your company effectively manage low performers? Most managers are unwilling to deal head on with low performers and the conflict they "think will occur." What constitutes low performance?

- Failing to meet performance expectations
- Negative attitude
- Trouble maker
- Blames others
- Lacks initiative
- Incompetent

We have all heard that managers spend 80% of their time trying to manage the 20% of poor performers. While some low performers lack skills, most display a difficult attitude and do not take responsibility to change their work behavior. Managers should be spending time coaching and reinforcing the other 80% of staff who are successfully meeting the standards and goals of the company.

As leaders we must make the tough decisions. The low performer has already made the decision to leave the organization by not meeting expectations and not behaving in a professional manner. These lower performers have resigned they just haven't told you

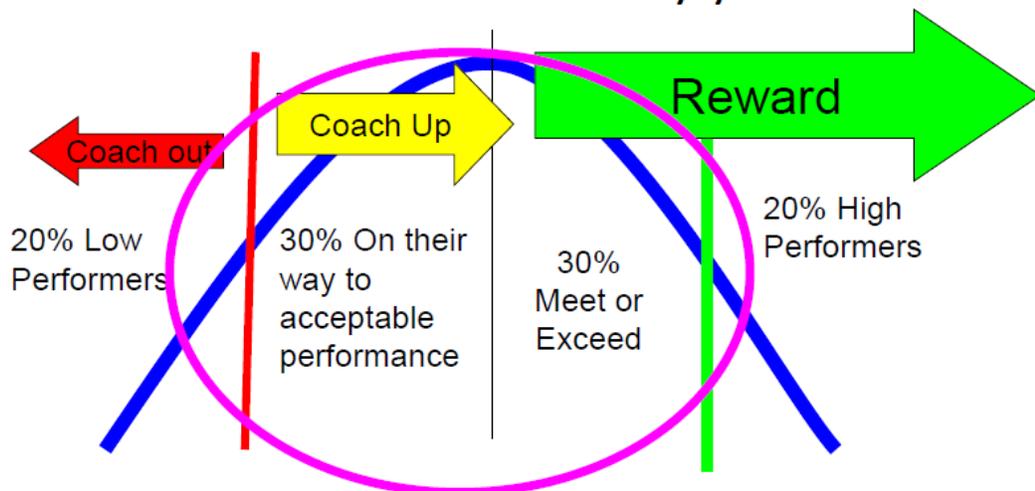
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yet. So why do we spend so much time with them? Jack Welch said once that he expected his managers to “coach out” 20% of low performers each year.

Improve or Remove

Focus the majority of your management time on the top 80% of your organization.

Coach out 20% every year



As this occurs, what remains? The mean becomes mid to high performers. The steps for ensuring that you have the right staff with the right skills at the right time are fairly straightforward:

#1. Conduct an assessment of the competencies and knowledge requirements for critical executive, management and line positions - for the present and for your business' long-term strategic future.

#2. Assess current employee performance, capabilities, and potential along these dimensions.

#3. Develop a plan to either buy or build the competencies you need for organizational success.



When the overwhelming majority of employees say that working with low performers makes them want to quit their jobs, leaders should accept this as a 'wake-up call' and tackle this issue immediately. If low performers start dictating the company's culture, productivity, quality and service will all decline, and high performers will avoid your company as an employer of choice.

Coach up your middle performers. Middle performers want to do well; they need goals and assistance with time management, understanding how daily performance, aptitude and attitude are keys to success. Reward your top performers and coach out your low performers who are not willing to improve.

For companies that can turn this around there is a strong competitive advantage. Under healthcare reform they can increase service capacity and the bottom line. To succeed, managers and supervisors need to understand the culture they desire. As Stephen Covey puts it, begin with the end in mind. The issue of low performers must be addressed as this is a constant reflection on the quality of the products, goods and services being provided.

In working with organizations, I like to take a look at their "Excess Service Capacity". By thinking with the end in mind, we can come to terms of how much excess capacity we have by team members not performing at optimal levels.

The figure on the following page illustrates that this organization has excess capacity of 67.63 out of 111.5 FTEs and that this excess capacity is costing them \$9,567,400 in lost revenue. In our current environment we can no longer afford to not focus on capacity and we must assist our middle performers to meet goal as well as try to bring the lower 20% up to goal.

Now we can see how low performers as well as No Shows, unscheduled time, client and staff cancels, lack of engagement and long wait times to access care are impacting our ability to serve our communities. Our task is to motivate teams to optimal performance. To coach them through the individual and systemic barriers that are impacting their ability to be successful.



Program	Name of Center: SAMPLE AGENCY Complete Light Blue cells only														Rate per service
	as of 6-30 2012 Available Service Capacity Summary														
	Fiscal Year: JUL 1st - JUN 30th 12 Months Ending Jun-12														
	FTE	Monthly	Actual Billable	Unrealized	YTD Billable	YTD Actual	Total Y-T-D	FTE	Annualized	Annualized	Annualized	Cost of	Annualized Cost of		
	On Staff	Standard Direct Time Available	Hrs Delivered	Srvc Capacity	Direct Time Available	Billable Hrs	Unrealized Cap	Equiv	Hours Available	Unrealized CAP	FTE Equiv	Unrealized Cap	Unrealized Cap		
Program 1	13	1,464.67	103.20	(1,361.47)	17,576.00	11,673.00	(5,903.00)	(4.37)	17,576.00	(5,903.00)	(4.37)	\$ (590,300)	\$ (590,300)	\$ 100.00	
Program 2	7.5	910.00	312.95	(597.05)	10,920.00	5,674.00	(5,246.00)	(3.60)	10,920.00	(5,246.00)	(3.60)	\$ (524,600)	\$ (524,600)	\$ 100.00	
Program 3	24	2,704.00	353.09	(2,350.91)	32,448.00	16,794.00	(15,654.00)	(11.58)	32,448.00	(15,654.00)	(11.58)	\$ (1,565,400)	\$ (1,565,400)	\$ 100.00	
Program 4	11	1,239.33	165.49	(1,073.84)	14,872.00	8,473.00	(6,399.00)	(4.73)	14,872.00	(6,399.00)	(4.73)	\$ (639,900)	\$ (639,900)	\$ 100.00	
Program 5	11	1,239.33	255.81	(983.52)	14,872.00	6,397.00	(8,475.00)	(6.27)	14,872.00	(8,475.00)	(6.27)	\$ (847,500)	\$ (847,500)	\$ 100.00	
Program 6	15	1,690.00	3.25	(1,686.75)	20,280.00	2,567.00	(17,713.00)	(13.10)	20,280.00	(17,713.00)	(13.10)	\$ (1,771,300)	\$ (1,771,300)	\$ 100.00	
Program 7	7	788.67	62.10	(726.57)	9,464.00	1,254.00	(8,210.00)	(6.07)	9,464.00	(8,210.00)	(6.07)	\$ (821,000)	\$ (821,000)	\$ 100.00	
Program 8	9	1,014.00	110.00	(904.00)	12,168.00	2,635.00	(9,533.00)	(7.05)	12,168.00	(9,533.00)	(7.05)	\$ (953,300)	\$ (953,300)	\$ 100.00	
Program 9	10	1,126.67	32.6	(1,094.07)	13,520.00	1,567.00	(11,953.00)	(8.84)	13,520.00	(11,953.00)	(8.84)	\$ (1,195,300)	\$ (1,195,300)	\$ 100.00	
Medical Team (MD/APN/NP) @ 70%	4	485.33	190.11	(295.22)	5,824.00	2,896.00	(2,928.00)	(2.01)	5,824.00	(2,928.00)	(2.01)	\$ (658,800)	\$ (658,800)	\$ 225.00	
Total Unrealized Capacity	111.5	12,662.00	1,588.60	(11,073.40)	151,944.00	59,930.00	(92,014.00)	(67.63)	151,944.00	(92,014.00)	(67.63)	\$ (9,567,400)	\$ (9,567,400)		
Therapist/CM @ 65% of Available Time	1352														
MD/APN % 70% of Available Time	1456														

Rates are based on average Rates for one hour of service



What Motivates Staff?

Depending on the culture, the fewer distractions in the workplace, it takes very little reinforcement to keep people on task. If there are a lot of distractions available, it takes a lot of reinforcement to keep people focused. As you identify your team members within the middle 60% you will need to identify what distractions in the environment that are keeping them meeting the organizations expectations. Think of your work environment and the organizational culture. What motivates you, what motivates your employees?

Rewarding achievement toward agency expectations

Through our work with providers across the country the main issue that keeps coming up is how to reward middle and high performers and still maintain equity in the system. The answer is easy. Be fair, not equal.

By providing specific performance expectations and the rewards and sanctions that go along with the achievement of or lack of performance. All members of the team have the ability to achieve optimal performance.

In my work with providers, they give the same 3% COLA to everyone, regardless of their contribution to the agency achieving goals. Middle and High performers become disgruntled with this model, as they realize very quickly that they are achieving or are close to the goal while others are not. They say: Why should I work so hard when the guy in the cubicle next to me gets the same raise as I do?

By varying the level of merit increases based on the achievement of performance objectives, the middle and top achievers find the internal motivation to keep them engaged in the organization. This also allows you as a manager to document lower performers' results and move them up or out of the organization. By holding staff accountable at all levels of the organization, morale improves, retention increases, and customer satisfaction improves.

The key to employee evaluation and reward is by breaking down employees into three categories. High Performers, Middle Performers and Low Performers. As a manager you already know which of your team fits into each category. We spend too much time on the Low Performers in our organizations. Now the challenge is to coach up the Middle Performers to High Performers and to reward and stay out of the way of the High Performers!

High Performers: These employees consistently exceed expectations. Your role is to celebrate them and give them opportunities for success. Highlight their performance. Make sure they have the tools to do their jobs (laptops, tablets, etc.). Have them be mentors to middle or low performers.



Middle Performers: These team members have some of the qualities of High Performer performance but have inconsistent follow through on a daily basis. There is some systemic or individual area of performance that they struggle with that creates their inability to achieve optimal performance. Encourage them, point out areas of improvement, pair them with a High Performer mentor, develop short term solution plans and review their performance data with them in order to define and resolve barriers to optimal consistent performance.

Low Performers: Fortune Magazine has said failure to effectively manage low performers is the **#1 reason why leaders fail and lose their jobs** and 87% of employees say working with a low performer has decreased their productivity, hampered their development, and made them want to change jobs. No matter how many resources and amount of coaching you provide for your low performing team members, they are not usually interested in meeting the agency performance expectations. They have usually been placed on plans of correction multiple times and are frequently not meeting goals. Their attitude and negativity tend to impact the entire team. These are the team members that would be better coached out of the organization as they are not a good fit for the new expectations.

I have always said that a good employee can find a job anywhere. If top employees move on, what is the organization left with? By identifying what motivates team members, having consistent performance expectations and the right amount of motivation and rewards in the system, your organization can move from merely surviving to thriving in the new healthcare environment.

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