

## Six Effective Leadership Strategies to Manage Your Team



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In a separate article, we discussed the eight things to remember when dealing with poor performance. At the end of the article, I mentioned that if staff member are not meeting performance, it is an individual staff issue. If many staff are not meeting performance expectations, it may be your approach and leadership. In order for a manager to be effective, there are several strategies we should consider to develop the most productive team as possible.

### **I. Assess your team's competency.**

The first step is to assess your leadership team. The relationship staff has with their managers or supervisor is key to success. Management is a fine art. It is the act of getting employees to meet their key performance indicators of production, documentation and compliance, while at the same time, earning their respect. When working with teams across the country, many Leaders ask, "Do I have the right leadership team?" Many times, we have promoted great clinicians to management roles. A great clinician does not always make a great manager. Great managers are leaders of their team, mentoring them along the way, so that they may someday grow into a higher position. Great managers ensure that the work is done, and at the same time, coach and teach their employees why their job is so important to the overall picture.

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In order to solve today's strategic business problems and tomorrow's leadership challenges we must define the skills and expertise we need in our key staff positions and develop processes to assess and develop them. The steps for ensuring that you have the right staff with the right experience and knowledge at the right time we need to conduct an assessment of the needs and knowledge requirements for critical executive, management and line positions. Do this both for the present and for your "ideal business" in the future.

Once you have the right managers supervising the right teams then we can move on to the next strategies.

## **2. Be fair, but have firm expectations.**

Employees need to know what their performance expectations are, and it is up to you as the manager to make sure team members know what these are.

Times have changed in the workforce and employees are no longer willing to work for dictators. Managers should always treat their employees with respect and be fair to them. This is not to say you should be a pushover, but you should treat each employee with respect and dignity. Consistency is key. If you discipline or praise one employee for an action or good job, you should be prepared to do the same for all employees who engage in similar activities.

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*Being an effective manager means being a business partner with your team*

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## **3. Ensure that your instructions are clear.**

One of the biggest mistakes a manager makes is to assume his or her employees understand directions they have been given just because the employee affirms, nods, or even smiles at them after the directions have been explained. Employees know that you hold the key to their success; we must create an environment where team members can feel comfortable to speak up if our instructions are not clear. Whenever you give your employees directions, use concise language. You should also ask the employee to paraphrase back the assignment, and follow up with their progress often. A good manager inspects what they expect, and this simple follow up could save you many challenges and rework later on. What manager hasn't assigned a project at least once in their career and later discovered that their employees did the opposite of what was really asked of them because they did not understand the instructions?

## **4. Get to know your employees.**

The morale of your department can go up almost instantly if your employees feel that you, as their manager, are invested in their success. Remember to be friendly, but not their friend. When you stop and say hello to your employees, and ask them how their day is going, this will go a long way and make them feel more comfortable around you. Work with them to problem solve solutions that create inefficiencies and redundant workflows that make them "busy but not billable". They will open up to you, and this may lead to them giving you helpful insight to make the workplace run even more smoothly. Employees have good ideas and will share them if they know you are listening.

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**5. Allow your employees to have ownership of their work and projects.**

In today's environment high performing team members do not like to be micro-managed or constantly have their manager looking over their shoulder; this leads some employees to feel as though you do not trust them or that they are too incompetent to do the work. Employees who feel empowered to own their projects will often produce better results than those who just work as a human machine. People, by nature, feel a sense of accomplishment when they complete something all on their own. Since you are the manager, you are held accountable for making sure that the work is done, so you should empower your employees to do their best.

**6. Lead by example!**

This may seem like an obvious skill that any manager would know, but it is shocking the number of managers who forget this. Employees look at their managers as the leaders of the company and often will mimic what they see, as this is what they determine to be acceptable. I have told managers that I have worked with that they live in the proverbial "bubble" as we are always being watched. Team members watch what we do and most importantly, what we do not do. We should always remember that our attitudes and behaviors are being watched. As a manager, you should always display the ethics you want your employees to abide by. A hardworking manager who comes to work with a positive "can do" attitude will reap the rewards of having happy employees.

Being an effective manager means being a business partner with your team. It is your job to teach them and help them grow within their careers. Communication is a key element to being a successful leader.

Employees look to their manager to set the example at work, and to be fair to them. In any healthcare company, it takes the helping hand of employees and management to grow the business and meet the changing demands in our industry.

**About the Author:** *Michael Flora, MBA, M.A.Ed, LCPC is the Senior Operation' and Management Consultant for MTM Services and a National Council Senior Consultant. Mr. Flora is the CEO of a multimillion dollar behavioral healthcare organization and its four subsidiaries, and a renowned consultant, speaker, and author. He has extensive experience in strategic planning, marketing, performance improvement, workforce development, leadership coaching and training, board governance, and healthcare mergers and acquisitions. He has been recognized as Behavioral Health Champion and his organization is a recipient of the SAMHSA Science and Service Award for prevention programs. He has over 25 years of clinical and administrative experience. Consult engagement scheduling and copies of his current featured book Co-Authored with other MTM Services experts Operationalizing Health Reform may be arranged through contacting [marian.bradley@mtmservices.org](mailto:marian.bradley@mtmservices.org) .*

