

The Top Performing Manager

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There's an increasing demand and pressure on managers today. Apart from managing budgets, costs and achieving profits, managers have to juggle a number of different tasks in order to prosper. From my findings when coaching and consulting with top performing managers of today, world class if you will, they are able to execute the following roles very well:

- They recruit and select people effectively.
- They set expectations and define clear goals for each person.
- They motivate their staff by focusing on their strengths and manage around their weaknesses.
- They help them to grow into the most suitable roles for the company as well as for them selves.
- They make tough and timely decisions.
- They grow the business with the help of their staff - i.e. they delegate.
- They excel at turning each team member's unique talent into performance.
- They have quarterly, one-on-one, review meetings with their key staff.

The above is simply what the top performing manager loves to do and it's also the key role of a manager. The starting point is therefore each employee's talents. The top performing manager will do what ever it takes to figure out the best way to transform these talents into performance. The only way for a manager to serve the company is therefore to serve the employee first. He knows his staff and therefore manages them differently depending on their needs, personality and performance. He can easily determine who is, or will become, a top performer among his staff. He knows what ambitions they have, how they work, behave and their individual personality profile. How well do you know your key staff?

If there's anything that has been etched into my mind throughout all these years, all these coaching sessions and all these interviews I have had with managers it is the following:

*"To beat your competition and have a successful life and career,
You need to perform at your best - all the time".*

"Perform to win" might be a slogan or a fad in your mind. For me, it's a proven concept that has been going on for many years. Of all the successful managers I have consulted and worked with they all tried to meet the following needs:

- You need to recruit and keep the best people you can find.
- You need to clearly define what you expect from each person and reward them accordingly.
- You need to focus on their strengths and manage around their weaknesses.
- You need to challenge them to grow with the company and steer them towards roles that truly fit them.
- You need to show them the opportunities and let them go for it.

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When these needs are met the whole organization, or at least most of the people, are ready, willing and able to **PERFORM TO WIN**.

Today many business leaders (CEO's) aren't satisfied until their organization is no. 1 or no. 2 in the market place. This may be on a global level, in a niche market or segment. If they can't be among the top 2 (or maybe three) contenders they simply sell off their business or re-organize the whole operation in order to be more productive and competitive.

This put a lot of pressure on you, the manager. Most top performing managers therefore implement a so called performance based organization today. Basically this means that they divide the staff in three performance levels:

- 1. The top performers (around 15-20% of the staff)**
The top performers will have the best salary raises, bonuses and perks. They will often be the heroes in the company and will usually have great careers. The top performers will often have a lot of freedom but they are also expected to perform at top - all the time.
- 2. The solid performers (around 70% of the staff)**
The average/solid performers, who are the majority of the staff, will have normal salary raises, bonuses and perks. They will have a good working life as well. They are the "oil that makes the engine run". In short, they are crucial for the company's long-term success.
- 3. The poor performers (around 10-15% of the staff)**
The poor performers are the people who can't or won't perform as per expectations. They will sooner or later be asked to leave. As many managers have told me: "we have no time to focus on the non-performers, they either shape up or they have to ship out". This might be a tough message, but it's a reality today.

Even though the above classification might seem tough, but that's what's happening today. Managers don't waste time on people who don't want to be part of the future, who refuse to change and who don't want to perform. However, the top performing manager guides and leads everyone who has the motivation and inspiration to grow the business towards the company vision. It's basically a win-win situation.

The top performing manager is always fascinated by the future. He is optimistic, believes in change and doesn't like the status quo. On the contrary, he believes in constant progress and development. He constantly thinks and talks about tomorrow - a better future. He likes to simplify and streamline the organization. He talks about a flat and flexible organization, all in the name of being competitive.

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The top performing manager often says: "I see a lot of opportunities here". He defines and communicates a compelling and motivating future for his company, division or team (depending on what level he is). He then leads and rallies his team towards this vision. This vision or image of the future is always on his mind. He is usually not satisfied with the present situation, instead, he is excited by what can be done and achieved tomorrow. The top performing manager is therefore truly optimistic - nothing can undermine his faith that things can and will get better.

The top performing manager creates confidence in the organization. He is actually very good at that. By being confident himself and very optimistic about the future he has a unique talent to get people going. Why, because they trust him, and they want to follow him. He achieves this by being extremely clear; he defines the future through actions, words, images, pictures and what the key goals are. He makes sure that all can see this future image. In short - he truly loves to inspire everyone towards the vision. So what about you, are you confident about the future, do you create enough confidence in your organization? Do you guide your team towards a compelling vision?

The top performing manager defines and makes sure that his team members focus on the "real customers" - the most important customers, the ones you must serve. He makes sure that people utilize their key strengths as individuals, and as a team, in order to compete and win. With his optimistic outlook he helps his team to persevere and fight for the future. Do you have a crystal clear picture of who you need to serve - who you need to do that little extra with?

From all of my interviews with successful business managers throughout the world there is clearly one message they are giving me: "we are here to win". They often say: "we create opportunities for the right people with the right talents". This means that they have a vision and a mission of what they want to do and what type of people they want to have in their organization.

Finally, the main focus of a top performing manager can be described as follows:

"To make sure each team member shines and performs by developing and utilizing his/her unique talents in the right work role".

In order to do this the top performing manager recruits the right people with the right talent, he sets clear expectations, he monitors their performance, he rewards and recognizes excellence and above all - he truly cares for his staff. So, if you are a manager, take a deep look at yourself. Do you behave and manage as the top performing manager I have described in this chapter. If not, what are you going to do about it?

If you wish to know more about how Henrik Essen can support you and your organization in order to "*Perform to Win*" please contact him at:

Henrik Essen, Executive Coach
Email: essen.essen@pacific.net.sg