



Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

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Excel's Mission Statement

To help business leaders create a high performance culture that unleashes the talents of all associates and achieves higher profits.

Thought for October

"The leader...is rarely the brightest person in the group. Rather, they have extraordinary taste, which makes them more curators than creators. They are appreciators of talent and nurturers of talent and they have the ability to recognize valuable ideas."

-Warren Bennis



As an effective leader, you can create your own high octane culture based on greater levels of employee engagement and discretionary effort. Your culture will in turn contribute directly to producing sustainable world-class results and higher profits. Therefore, despite the current recession and all its related challenges to your bottom line, you should continue investing in the development of your own skills and those of your leadership team.

We have been discussing those competencies that distinguish outstanding leaders from their peers. Thus far, we have touched on twelve: high integrity, visioning, communication, change agent or catalyst, resilience, personal power, initiative or bias for action, achievement drive, empathy, intentionality, powerful influence and organizational awareness.

This month, I'd like to talk about the competency of developing others and its connection to effective leadership. Developing others is a competency that is a little more easily understood than some of the others we have talked about. It can be thought of as accurately assessing the development needs of others and taking the appropriate action to strengthen their abilities. Leaders who are strong in this area demonstrate a clear and genuine interest in helping others improve their capabilities and performance. With that in mind, let's discuss a few coaching tips that you and your leadership team can employ to become more effective in developing your team:

1. Conduct planned development meetings. Be proactive here and don't wait for the employee to take the initiative. Schedule frequent, planned meetings with your team members and allow them to discuss their goals, aspirations and areas where they want to improve.
2. Request development plans. Ask each member of your team to create a development plan that they can share with you. Also, be willing to share yours with them as a critical first step in this process. This will give them a good template to work with.
3. Identify challenging assignments. As I look back, some of the best growth opportunities in my career were assignments my bosses gave me to "stretch" my abilities. Consider giving your team members projects that will help them grow, especially in an area where they have expressed a desire to learn more. This approach will provide them with the needed motivation to try something new and to perform well.
4. Observe and provide feedback. Carefully track each person's progress and provide specific feedback on where they are doing well and where further improvement is possible. Also, it

is always a good idea to ensure that the feedback is timely...soon after the performance. That is why it is a “best practice” to hold frequent development discussions as pointed out in coaching tip #1.

5. Make feedback constructive. Ensure that the feedback you give is tied to performance and not the person. In other words, make it objective. Focus on the connection between actual performance and results, not the person.

These are a few of the many areas where investing in coaching can really pay off. I encourage you to try these steps to help improve your ability to develop others in your company. Let me know how they work for you. Also, if you have encountered any other “best practices” that have worked for you in this area, please do share them. Next month, we will review another critical dimension or characteristic: building trust.

As always, I encourage readers to contact me anytime at mike@excelleadership.net with your comments and questions. Also, if I can be of assistance to you with your leadership challenges, please contact me. I'll talk to you again in November. Be well and best regards.

Join our Web-based “community” devoted to open and honest discussions on topics related to leadership challenges and solutions. To join, simply visit TheExcelLeadershipGroup.net and click on “Community.”



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*Experience what coaching can do for you and others
on your company's leadership team.*