

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERS

PART THREE: LEADER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

By John Cornelius, PMP

Marjorie and her Supervisor Team

Marjorie sat at her desk, looking at her email Inbox, long after the work day had ended. She wondered how in the world she was going to be able to pull her team of supervisors together and provide them with the support they needed to become more effective in their jobs. Something had to change.

At 35, she was one of the youngest department managers in the company. She was acutely aware that it wasn't that long ago that she had struggled, as a group supervisor, with some of the same challenges that members of her leadership team were struggling with today. She decided to take inventory in order to isolate the specific developmental needs of each member of her supervisor team. Here are her conclusions:

Case #1: Constance

Constance was a *constant* challenge. Her lack of focus and poor sense of urgency had brought the two of them together more than once for frank discussions about changes Constance needed to make in her approach to her job. Marjorie knew that the issue was not her technical knowledge; it seemed to be more of a motivational issue and a lack of commitment on her part to "take care of business." Marjorie realized that Constance was facing a "must change" situation; something had to be done soon.

Case #2: Donovan

Donovan had recently joined the company after his service with the military. He was always at work on time, volunteered for different projects, and had an upbeat personality.

Series Overview

Part One Recap

In [Part One](#) of the series, [Developing Effective Leaders](#), readers learned that a fundamental principle of effective coaching is that a leader's beliefs and biases about people at work have consequences that are often manifest in the motivation and performance of others. A self-scoring beliefs inventory accompanies the article to help the leader practice self-coaching before coaching others.

Part Two Recap

In [Part Two](#) of the series, readers explored a process map for creating a simple and effective approach to helping others with their leadership development. The process called for setting desired leadership competencies, identifying skill and performance gaps, and developing a plan customized to the individual's needs. Readers were provided with a model leadership development support plan and worksheet.

Part Three

This month's third and final article in the series features four highly effective strategies managers can use for preparing their leaders for the critical challenges they face.

Marjorie knew that he had a lot of “*get-up-and-go*,” but the problem was that he did not always go in the right direction. He often invested too much of his time and energy in projects that were low in priority and not enough time on the critical tasks his team should be focusing on. If only he had better time management awareness and skills!

Case #3: Emilio

Emilio’s engineering degree and technical experience in his previous job made him upper management’s choice for a temporary assignment as Project Manager of an important project in Indonesia. Although he was a great supervisor and a good engineer, he did not have any training or experience in project management.

Case #4: Audrey

Audrey was a mid-career professional, with eighteen years of supervisory experience. She was good at her job, had great people skills, and was highly dependable. Like others in her peer group, she had received little or no continuing education over the years. Marjorie knew that a leadership “tune-up” would be good for everyone, including Audrey.

FOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR MANAGERS

An effective leadership development portfolio consists of at least four specific strategies for helping leaders achieve their success potential. They are:

1. Provide targeted help and support for leaders facing a “*must change*” situation.
2. Provide coaching and/or training on *specific skills* for *specific* challenges.
3. Help leaders prepare for *new assignments* or changes in their job roles and responsibilities.
4. Provide *continuing education*, professional development, and mentoring opportunities.

Strategy #1

Provide targeted help and support for leaders facing a “must change” situation.

When there is business urgency for a supervisor to change and when his/her performance has become job threatening, the manager needs



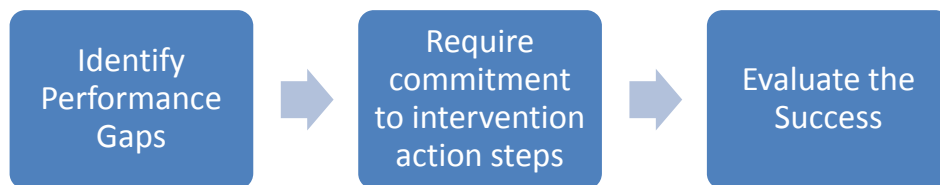
to take immediate action. This requires a collaborative effort and corresponding commitment by both the supervisor and the manager.

In Case #1, above, Constance had not shown any improvement despite the coaching conferences and discussions about her performance. Marjorie recognizes this and commits to a specific intervention involving three steps:

Step #1: Identify the performance gaps and the positive outcomes expected

Step #2: Require a commitment to intervention action steps with specific success milestones. The intervention might include *coaching, training, work practice changes, or more.*

Step #3: Evaluate success in closing the performance gaps and achieving the outcomes desired.



With this intervention, Marjorie and Constance agree on the specific performance gaps, agree on intervention action steps that each will take, periodic success milestones, and a follow up meeting to review and evaluate the outcome.

Strategy #2

Provide coaching and/or training on specific skills for specific problems or situations

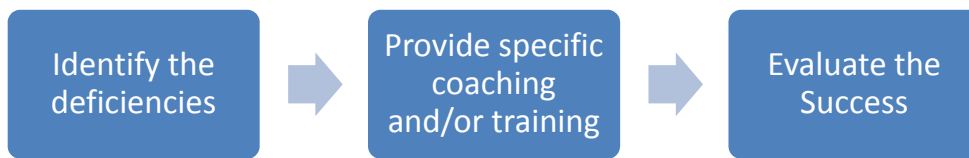
When motivation and job ownership is not an issue, specific coaching and/or training to address specific needs is a good strategy. Typically the person is performing to expectations in virtually all areas of the job with the exception of one or two specific skill or knowledge related issues that have become obstacles to the person's present or future success.

In Case #2, above, Donovan's motivation and energy are high but he struggles with the basic skills of prioritizing tasks and using time effectively. To help Donovan, Marjorie should:

Step #1: Identify the skill or knowledge deficiency

Step #2: Arrange specific coaching and/or training to provide the necessary information or skills

Step #3: Evaluate the success of the intervention



Donovan needed help in understanding and applying basic principles of time and task management in the prioritizing of his work. With some training and coaching he should be able to direct his energy toward higher valued tasks for his area of responsibility.

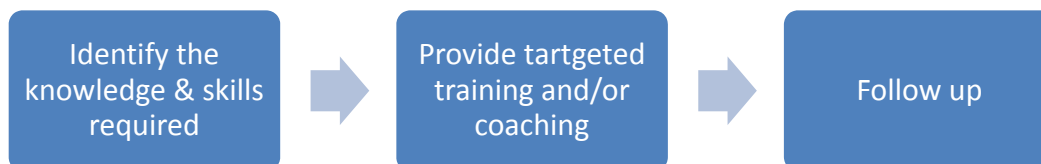
Strategy #3

Help the person prepare for a new assignment or change in job role

Managers can significantly increase the likelihood of success for their leaders facing a new assignment or change in roles and responsibilities by providing some targeted help. Typically the person will have the core skills and talent required for the job but can benefit from some specialized coaching to ensure that his/her transition is seamless and free of complications.

In case #3, Marjorie recognized Emilio's need, although he was a talented engineer and functioned well in his job. She knew that the Indonesian assignment required special skills he did not have and an understanding of project management principles to enable him to perform at the highest level. Marjorie committed to taking the following steps:

- Step #1: Identify the knowledge and skills required to successfully accomplish the task
- Step #2: Provide targeted training and/or coaching necessary to prepare him for the assignment
- Step #3: Follow up; provide additional help as necessary



By setting a project management training agenda and by using the instructor as a coach to help him apply the principles, Marjorie was successful in increasing the probability that the assignment would be successful for both Emilio and the company.

Strategy #4

Provide continuing education, professional development, and mentoring opportunities

Successful organizations believe in continuous learning workplace environments. For leaders, this includes, but is not limited to, periodic training in the following subjects:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Human relations | 7. Supervisory skills |
| 2. Communication | 8. Managerial skills |
| 3. Leadership | 9. Project Management |
| 4. Teamwork | 10. Leading Teams |
| 5. Interpersonal skills | 11. Developing People |
| 6. Coaching and conflict skills | 12. Other |

In Case #4, above, Marjorie recognized that Audrey- and the entire leadership team- would benefit from an on-going learning and development program. She also understood that talent management includes *talent development*. In keeping with the concepts of the earlier articles in this series, the continuing education, leadership development and mentoring should include building upon an established leadership foundation and promotion of desired leadership competencies.

SUMMARY

In this article we learned that a one-size-fits-all solution to developing effective leaders is not the right answer. Marjorie knew that she had to create *unique* growth opportunities to meet the corresponding *unique* challenges that each supervisor faced. The cases were indicative of the four most common types of development challenges managers face for their supervisors:

1. Provide targeted help and support for leaders facing a “**must change**” situation.
2. Provide coaching and/or training on **specific skills** for *specific* challenges.
3. Help leaders prepare for **new assignments** or changes in their job roles and responsibilities.
4. Provide **continuing education**, professional development, and mentoring opportunities.

INTERVENTION DIAGNOSIS AND PLANNING TOOL

The [management development tool](#) that accompanies this article helps the manager discern the type of intervention assistance that is situationally appropriate of their leaders. He or she may discover that one or more of the four strategies, if effectively planned and applied, would help the leader team and the organization in achieving shared key performance goals.

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