

MaxPerformers - Great Management is the Key to Great Employee Performance

By Jay Forte

Nearly everyday we hear that in tough economic times we need more from our employees. We need them to have more control of expenses, a greater focus on efficiency, greater effort, and more innovation. If you wait until times are tough to ask these things from your employees, you are already in trouble. Great organizations insist on great things from their employees at all times - in strong or weak economies. Strong organizations invest in the right people who, on a daily basis, cut waste, spend wisely, hunt for opportunities, and constantly make the organization better. This isn't by accident. These employees are well chosen, well coached and well developed. In short, employees who are well managed can become Maxperformers.

Maxperformers create opportunities out of daily events. Maxperformers connect with customers and are passionate about their work. Maxperformers remind us of the truth in the statement: *our people are our profits*.

Management is the key to great performance. Successful intellectual-age managers know how to engage, inspire and connect with their employees. They know how to develop the ordinary employee into the Maxperformer. Review the following five areas to create Maxperformers in your organization.

1. Hire employees who exhibit the right talents for the right role. In today's intellectual workplace, we know employees must think their way through the day. We also know thinking is unique to each of us and therefore not everyone is a good fit for every role. Maxperformers are employees who work in areas that match their talents because it connects them intellectually to their work. They feel capable, confident and competent. The key to achieving great performance, as described by Marcus Buckingham in *First Break All the Rules*, is to ensure that employees have the natural talents *and* are cast into roles that allow them to fully use their talents. Great cooks who work as warehouse supervisors will never be known for their (maxperformance) culinary genius. Great salesmen who work as accountants will never be known for their (maxperformance) selling prowess. Employees become Maxperformers because they know their talents *and* work in roles that allow these talents to be fully developed.

2. Customize employees' roles around their talents, interests and values. Average performers are bored with their work; Maxperformers are excited about their work - they enjoy what they do. Successful managers learn all they can about their employees and then build the employees' roles to include tasks and responsibilities that both appeal to the employee *and* build organizational value. The more the role is customized (sculpted) for the employee, the more emotionally connected (engaged) the employee becomes; this translates into dynamic performance. Have a salesman (who also loves to teach and share information) coordinate and present new product education to employees and customers. Have a driver (who also enjoys connecting with customers) create and implement a new customer loyalty survey. Each excites the employee and addresses a specific business



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need. Employees become Maxperformers when they are connected emotionally to what they do.

3. Establish performance expectations so employees can own their performance. Maxperformers take full ownership for their performance and for their impact. Managers encourage this process by clearly defining each employee's performance expectations (including financial expectations) and allowing employee input in creating the plan to achieve the expectation. This activates an employee's sense of performance ownership and moves the ordinary performer to a Maxperformer. It may be a retail sales associate who is asked to create the plan to achieve a performance expectation that modifies the retail space layout in order to sell 10 percent more of a particular product. It may be an accounting employee who is asked to develop monthly reporting that will encourage a better review of operational spending to save an additional two percent in the next six months. Managers move ordinary employees to Maxperformers by defining performance expectations and allowing employees to own the implementation plans.

4. Spend time with each employee to provide recurring performance feedback. Maxperformers want to constantly learn, improve and acquire new skills. Managers who provide constant performance feedback regularly provide instruction, coaching and skill guidance; they are always watching for the teachable moment and use it to encourage great performance and redirect poor performance. Employees who are given the regular opportunity to improve quickly become Maxperformers; they welcome effective feedback and use it to increase their performance, contribution and impact.

5. Spend time with each employee talking about the future. Employees think about today; Maxperformers plan for the future. Managers who spend time discussing the employee's future - new directions, opportunities for growth and contribution - engage employees for the long term. A career development discussion builds a strong relationship between the employee and manager because the manager shows interest in the long-term contribution and development of the employee. Average performers are kept in the dark; Maxperformers have a clear vision of the future, a voice in its direction and the support from their manager to implement it.

Effective management is the key to developing average employees into Maxperformers. Connect employees intellectually and emotionally to their work and workplace. Not only will they develop into Maxperformers who build your workplace brand, but they will generate consistently extraordinary results.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jay Forte is a speaker, consultant and nationally ranked thought leader. He applies years of research, along with his training as a CPA, working with organizations that want to successfully activate and inspire exceptional employee performance. Renowned for producing results, Jay's first book "Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition" is due March, 2009. For information on keynotes, speaking, consulting or to see the daily "BLOGucation," visit: www.humanmetricsllc.com or www.FireUpYourEmployees.com or call: 401-338-3505.

