

The mentoring manager: Career success improves by bringing others up

Written by Julie Desmond
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Forget everything you know about job security. There isn't any such thing. Today, you're only as good as your next success. Some managers worry that someone younger-newer-brighter will come on board and take over, pushing them out of the way, and possibly off the payroll. It happens. Their response to this anxiety is to control everything. They hoard more work than they delegate, and leave resentful and empty handed when the job "doesn't work out."

Excellent managers, on the other hand, know that success is not about doing the job better than anyone else. Rather, it is about finding other people who can do the job better than you can, and overseeing them effectively, making yourself look good in the process. By interacting effectively, delegating wisely and helping others achieve their goals, your role as a leader solidifies and your work and life balance remains intact.

Excellent managers interact on a mentorship level with their teams. Coaching rather than correcting, leading by listening, and urging people to challenge themselves, you help your team realize their potential and you give yourself a stronger team to tap into going forward.

The word Manager refers to an organizer: somebody who is responsible for directing and controlling the work and staff of a business or of a department within a business.

Companies often have hands-on expectations for managers, but that does not mean yours are the only hands on the work. Just because you know how to run reports doesn't mean you are the only one who can run them. By delegating tasks that others are capable of, you free yourself up to focus on other matters. The bonus here is that others recognize your trust in them and in their capabilities, and they in turn may be willing to take on other assignments, helping you achieve your goals more efficiently.

Chances are good that you will eventually leave your current position and move up or out to another company. Look around you. Would your team members cheer, or be sorry to see you go? Would they follow you out the door? Could you one day be reporting to someone who currently reports to you?

There is plenty of room at the top, and we all climb separate ladders. Never hold back when you can help someone step up in his career. There's an old song that says, "Be nice to people on the way up; you're gonna see them on the way back down." Hopefully not. But be a leader who promotes from within and you'll all be glad to be there when you get to the top together.

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