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Ways to Set Your Employees Up for Success

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You've heard it before, but it bears repeating: your people are your most important asset.



Motivating, retaining, and developing employees is mission critical for sustained business growth and innovation. This is because a small percentage of 'top talent' or 'high potentials' have an enormously outsized impact on the overall success of your organization.

Studies by McKinsey show that high performers are 400% more productive than average ones. In the case of more complex occupations, such as managers or software developers, this disparity in productivity widens to an astonishing 800 percent.

This, along with a shortage of skilled professionals, has ignited a talent war, and it's keeping CEOs up at night. Case in point: research from Development Dimensions International concludes retaining top talent ranks second among CEOs' top worries. With that in mind, HR professionals and other business leaders should do everything they can to identify, attract, develop, and retain these talented individuals.

Here are four ways to ensure the workforce stays motivated, productive, and engaged with your company:

1

Give Employees a Sense of Purpose

Employees want more from your company than a paycheck. They want a sense of purpose. From the receptionist to the CEO, everyone in your company should understand why they do what they do. Ambitious and high-performing team members in particular want to know that their work is aligned and actively contributing to the organization's mission and top priorities. To develop a sense of purpose among your top talent, consciously and regularly communicate to employees how their work impacts the business as a whole. Just this one act can have a significant impact on retaining your top performers.

DDI defines purpose as “an aspirational reason for being that inspires and provides a call to action for the organization, its partners, stakeholders, and society as a whole.”

“In any industry or organization, making sure everyone can clearly see where they fit in and what their purpose is critical to success. For example, my company makes medical devices for people with chronic back and leg pains. As an HR leader, my purpose is to ensure that our everyone at the business, from those involved in designing our products to the receptionists greeting visitors to our offices, understand that we help people live pain free and that they have an important role to play in achieving this mission. And this increased level of motivation doesn't just make people feel good; companies that clearly define and act on a sense of purpose have been shown to outperform the market by 42%.”



Lori Ciano,
Chief Human Resources Officer,
Nevro



Set and Manage Effective Goals For Personal and Professional Development

2

When workers can connect their day-to-day activities to the organization's big picture objectives, employee engagement increases by 3.5X. Employee engagement isn't just about making your employees feel good. With unmotivated workforces costing the US economy as much as \$550 billion in lost productivity each year, having clear and aligned goals can directly impact your company's bottom line. Your personal success as a business leader hinges on your ability to motivate and engage the workforce.

Unfortunately, about half of employees simply don't know what's expected of them at work. Managers should work with employees to set goals that align with corporate objectives—and then empower them to meet those goals. Managers should also check in with employees frequently to track their progress and find out what's getting in the way of their success.

Finally, employee goals should include development goals that address what they want to achieve in their own lives and careers. To successfully engage and retain ambitious team members, we advise business leaders to explicitly align individuals' personal career goals to the future needs and goals of the organization. This affords you the benefit of hiring and/or promoting from within, and reduces the risk that employees will feel the need to explore growth options elsewhere.

"Shifting the conversation around an employee's performance to a more forward-looking, development-focused stance is a great way to improve motivation. As part of their quarterly conversations, our managers now collaborate with their reports to set one professional development goal, such as 'how can we get you to the next level as a welder?' The result is that instead of feeling like their managers are micromanaging them or questioning their work, our workers feel invested in and motivated to get to the next level in their career."

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Jeff Cash,
Vice President of Sales,
Arch Fab

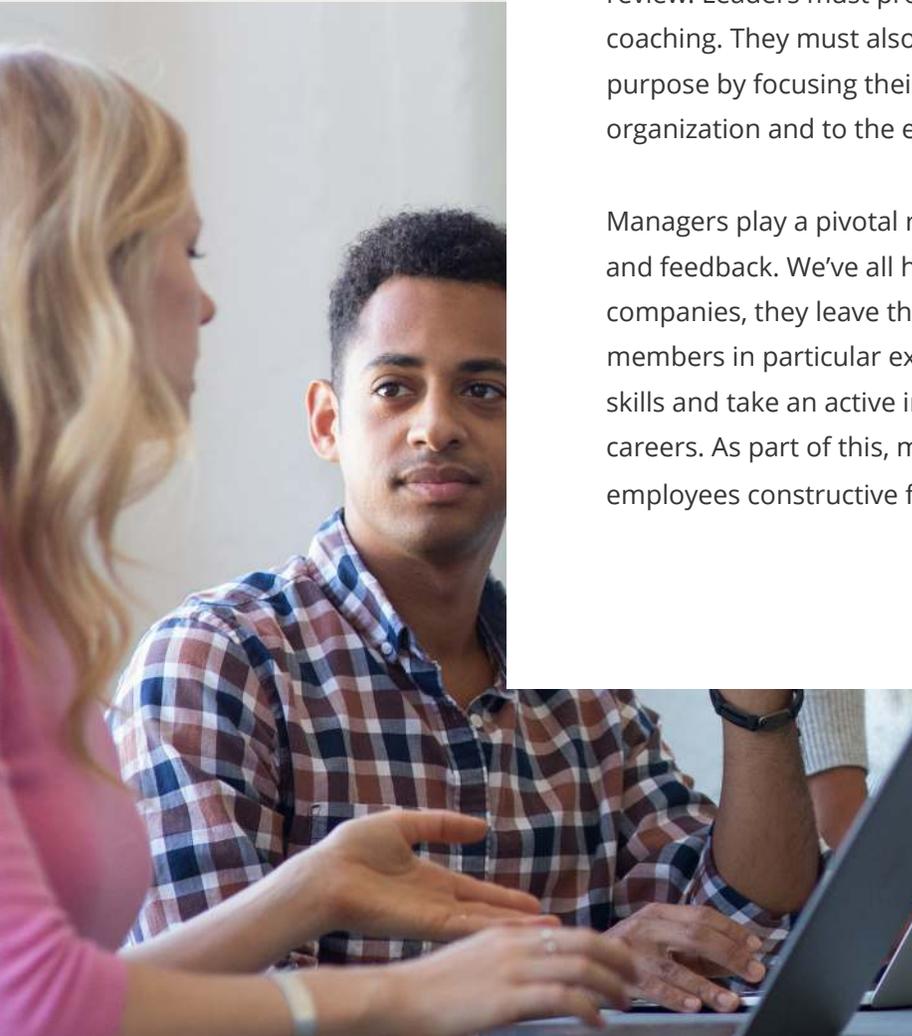
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Give Employees Continuous Coaching and Ongoing, Effective Feedback

Today's employees demand ongoing feedback. In fact, organizations that don't provide meaningful developmental coaching, and opportunities for growth and advancement, risk losing their top talent.

The ongoing motivation and skill development employees crave must be instituted as a continuous process. It's not something that can occur just once a year via a backward-looking performance review. Leaders must provide regular, timely feedback and coaching. They must also engage each employee's sense of purpose by focusing their work on what matters most, both to the organization and to the employee personally.

Managers play a pivotal role in providing continuous coaching and feedback. We've all heard the adage that people don't leave companies, they leave their managers. Your most ambitious team members in particular expect their leaders to help them build their skills and take an active interest in developing and growing their careers. As part of this, managers must master the art of giving employees constructive feedback that motivates and inspires.



Support Continuous Performance Processes with the Right Tools

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Managers need visibility into the goals and progress of every employee. By measuring each employee's impact on the business, managers can identify top talent and ensure their continual growth. HR technology, purpose-built to support continuous performance processes, increases the visibility of individual and team goals, ensures their alignment to an organization's top priorities, and facilitates managers in having the crucial conversations around feedback, development, and recognition that ambitious employees crave.

"Once you've implemented your program, you want to make it part of your company's muscle memory. We're focusing on bringing this to our onboarding, where we can show new employees what performance management looks like at our business, how to connect with their managers, and the importance of a goal-setting mindset. HR professionals should do their best to ensure each employee has the ability to receive quality coaching, performance management, and fair evaluations throughout the year.

Creating a performance management program rooted in forward-facing, frequent, lightweight conversations, and supporting this process with easy-to-use technologies, will allow your business—no matter what size it is—to reduce stress on its performance management process and ensure everyone stays focused on achieving his or her goals, not managing them."

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Karina Young,
People Operations Manager,
Khan Academy

Conclusion



Employees want to succeed, but they can't do it on their own. Business leaders must take an active role in ensuring employee success—after all, that's what it means to be a leader. Help your employees understand how their work contributes to the organization's mission, and support that work with professional and personal goals. Deliver frequent, constructive feedback, and provide visibility into employee progress. These efforts will contribute to the success of your employees, you, and the business.

Betterworks can help align, develop and activate your workforce for business growth. Our award-winning software solution replaces outdated annual review processes with powerful Continuous Performance Management® programs to help organizations ensure everyone is working on what matters most and are having the crucial conversations necessary to inspire and motivate their entire workforce to meet today's goals and tomorrow's challenges.

- [Learn why more than 1,000 managers agreed that their existing talent management programs need serious improvement](#)
- [Resources for Helping Managers be Better Managers](#)
- [Learn more about how to Align Your Workforce](#)
- [Betterworks Product Overview](#)

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