

Confronting the Career Development Conundrum: 5 Tips for Busy Managers

Tips Article Available – please contact Lindsay Watkins if interested in this excerpt.

Career development appears at the top of many lists. Unfortunately, they tend to be lists focused on what employees desperately want but are not getting from their managers.

As for managers, most appreciate the value of career development and really wish they could do it - more frequently and more effectively. But let's face it: a manager's day-to-day reality is a kaleidoscopic blur of meetings, responsibilities, and shifting priorities. Helping employees to develop and grow is one of many activities that is continually pushed out in time... to that elusive 'someday' that too rarely comes.

How can managers get past this conundrum? How can they make career development happen within the pressure-cooker reality that is business today? The answer is definitely NOT new systems, checklists, processes, or forms. Those have actually contributed to the problem.

Instead, the answer lies in a new mindset - a different way of thinking about what career development is - and a few key behaviors that operate at the speed of business. Here are 5 tips designed to help managers engage in useful conversations with their direct reports.

Transfer ownership - Managers don't own their employees' careers. Employees do. All that managers can (and should) feel accountable for is guiding, encouraging, collaborating on, and supporting the effort. When a manager really internalizes this reality, it can produce a powerful energetic shift. The weight of responsibility lifts, allowing managers to approach this task with greater energy and creativity than when it was another of their many 'duties.' This transfer also ensures that employees have some skin in the game. Personal ownership enhances their engagement, interest, commitment, and results.

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