

Management Rites of Passage

BY GREG SCHINKEL

We learn best from experience. Even though the school of hard knocks is time consuming and expensive, no amount of management training can completely prepare you for what you will experience as a manager. On your leadership journey, seek out and savour these valuable lessons:

Enjoying Success and Experiencing Failure

While most of us prefer success over failure, managers can get spoiled by success. During good times, it's important to think about what is contributing to the success so you can repeat it in future situations. A challenging or even disastrous project is also a good teacher if you can observe what went wrong and how to avoid it the next time. Humility is acquired through disappointment and is a great antidote for excess ego.

Operating in Luxury and on a Shoe String

Managers can get spoiled by having lots of financial and human resources at their disposal. It's good to learn how to extract maximum performance in these situations. It helps to experience how to manage when money is tight and there aren't many people around to help. Challenge builds character.

Working for a Great Boss and Working for a Terrible Boss

Having a supportive, encouraging and motivating boss is preferred in terms of overall personal growth. A manager can also learn a lot from a boss who is either too easy on peo-



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ple or too bossy. The lessons learned help the manager decide what approaches he or she will use and which will be avoided.

Hiring the Right Person and Hiring the Wrong Person

Despite improvements in interviewing techniques and pre-employment testing, there is still a high degree of variation in hiring success. A great hiring decision pays for itself many times over while a bad hire will create much aggravation and soak up lots of time in addressing performance issues.

Losing a High Performer and Not Confronting a Poor Performer

Having a high performer leave your organization can be a major blow and it can provide good management lessons on how to retain top talent. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the poor performer who the manager avoids confronting, or gives too many chances and ultimately terminates and then wishes he had done so weeks or months earlier.

Dealing with Customers, Selling your Product or Service

Working in sales and marketing, especially if it requires dealing directly with customers, can give the manager insight and sensitivity to how decisions impact customers. Since the lifeblood of an organization is revenue, the manager can enlighten her staff on how to balance keeping customers happy with applying company policies.

Dealing with Conflict

Conflict is essential for organizational health and continuous improvement. The manager plays the role of antagonist, negotiator, and peace keeper. Rather than avoiding conflict, the manager learns to embrace and work through conflict as a necessary companion to change.

Battle scars help managers achieve success and be more adaptable to a wide variety of scenarios and situations. It increases both opportunity for future promotion and increases value within the organization. If you aspire to management excellence, seek out these learning experiences. If you are looking to groom leaders for succession, put them in situations where they can learn these valuable lessons.

Greg Schinkel presents his **Business Breakthrough Seminar Feb. 26 at the Caboto Club. Register at www.LeadershipWizard.com.**



Greg Schinkel is a speaker, trainer and author as well as president of Unique Training & Development, Inc. Contact him at www.LeadershipWizard.com



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