

## Introduction

The objective of this book is to provide managers with an approach to the challenge of good solid team performance that is within their reach. This is an approach that evolved through twenty plus years of managing and leading multi-discipline, multi-ethnic teams.

This strategy for team management enriches the work environment by facilitating input into what individuals do and how they do it. This shift in focus towards individual development increases the level of interest and focus on the work. Productivity goes up!

The approach is applicable to many types of teams such as accounting, project management, sales, administration, and so on. In addition, improvements in performance can happen very quickly. There is no expensive project that must be completed before the benefits begin to arrive.

The book is written at a level high enough to be applicable to many situations and low enough to be practically useful for managers at all levels. It is a concise and pithy read for the busy manager.

After reading this book:

- Management mentors will have discussion points to use with mentees.
- Managers at all levels will be encouraged to try new things they may have previously contemplated.
- Newer organizations will have a different approach to management and leadership to consider.

After a successful implementation of the individual development approach to management proposed in this book, there are several big wins that will be attractive to investors, managers, and employees alike:

1. Sustainable productivity will go up.
2. The value of the organization will go up.
3. The value of individuals in the organization will go up.
4. The time devoted to more interesting and valuable aspects of the management work relative to supervision and oversight will go up.
5. Teams will be more robust and capable of adapting to change.

In maturity, the team will have two mutually supportive characteristics:

1. Leadership qualities that develop and maintain a work culture where expertise and creativity can flourish.
2. Management skills to apply tools that guide the team toward its goals through a series of objectives and in-year results.

These two characteristics do not just happen. They cannot be mandated or directed. They evolve when there is sincere interest in the team's well-being and engaging the team's interest in its work.

The implementation should not need any special investment or any especially high-performing, talented people. In my eight teams, I used the normal budget, and I accepted the people I inherited. As people moved on, the best reasonably available

person for the job was chosen as the replacement. The process to maturity took about two years. The benefits were commensurate with the level of effort applied and felt almost immediately—in the positive side of: productivity, costs, absenteeism, administrative issues, quality of work, or morale in general.

The right work environment, which is critical to success, forms when the leadership and management necessary for the type of work involved is distributed throughout the team. An appropriate culture develops and provides a measure of sustainability and resilience. Over the years, I noticed that teams that work well have a feel to them. It presents itself in the work environment and such teams are a joy to be around. They pop!

Each workplace is different. There is no one correct approach, and in the details, each approach must vary. Hence, this book remains at a relatively high level to describe what must be accomplished and how that should be approached.

To succeed in this writing challenge, I structured the book in three parts.

The four sections in part one, provide an overview of my thinking on the problem, the approach to solving it, the overall solution, and implementation. After reading this part, the reader should have an appreciation of the overall intent of the strategy.

There are eleven chapters in part two, ten of which group and describe the elements of the solution. These elements are found in many if not all workplaces and should be familiar to managers. The eleventh chapter is the conclusion. This is not a prescriptive book. There will be workplaces that perhaps do not use all these elements or have additional elements or groups of elements. That is not important. What is important is that the strategy described facilitates all these management elements working together with the same overall intent as

described in part one. It is not easy to get to this point, but when you get there, excellence is achieved—teams pop!

Each of the sections in part one and the chapters in part two, ends with a summary of key points. Some people may wish to read these first to assess the chapter's value to them.

Part three is comprised of three sections, one that includes all the key points from the book as an aide-mémoire, another that provides insight into how the ideas expressed in the book evolved over the years, and the last acknowledges my support team, who were vital to me to complete this writing challenge.

## Preparatory Housekeeping

There are a few words that are important to the text that come into use before they are dealt with in later chapters.

*Policies, Procedures, Processes, and Practices (the 4 P's).* Together, policies, procedures, processes, and practices describe the formal and informal bureaucracy for an organization. They are so important to our topic that chapter 3 is devoted to them.

It is not unusual that the use of procedures and processes becomes intermingled. In this book, procedures are a series of actions conducted in a certain order or manner, while processes are a series of actions or steps toward achieving a particular end. When procedures and processes are intermingled, they may become overly complex and impede performance.

The word “practice” is used both as a noun—the customary or expected procedure or way of doing something—and a verb—the actual application or use of a plan or method as opposed to the theories relating to it.

*Supervising manager.* This is anyone who finds themselves managing and leading a team of people at any level in the

organization, top to bottom. The critical point is that they have line responsibility for the performance of a group of people.

*Team.* A group of people who work together for a common purpose. A good team is more than a loose collection of individuals. A good team works to make the sum of the whole greater than its constituent parts. Teams, good and not so good, exist in all walks of life.

I hope you enjoy the read and find the content useful.

Good management, makes good managers, makes teams that pop!

## Introduction: Key Points

- The objective of this book is to provide managers with an approach to solving the problem of team performance that is within their reach.
- A significant direct investment should not be required.
- The emphasis is on enriching the work environment.
- The book is not about a specific team or industry. It is written to apply to many types of teams.
- There are several big wins that are attractive to investors, managers, and employees alike.
- The solution features leadership qualities to develop and maintain a suitable work culture and management skills to guide the team toward its goals.

**BOTTOM LINE: Good management, makes good managers, makes teams that pop!**

X

BRENDAN NOLAN

# Notes