



TRAINING THAT TRANSFORMS

# The 5 Hidden Triggers that Sabotage Team Communication (And How to Fix Them Fast)

A close-up portrait of a smiling woman with dark hair and blue eyes. She is wearing a light-colored blouse, a necklace with a small pendant, and a silver bracelet. Her hand is resting against her chin. The background is a blurred city skyline at dusk or night.

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# THE CHICAGO REALITY: WHY FRONTLINE LEADERSHIP IS HARDER HERE

Frontline managers in Chicago aren't failing—they're leading in one of the toughest labor markets in the country.

## What's happening locally:

- Persistent labor shortages in healthcare, manufacturing, warehousing, hospitality, and construction
- High turnover is driven by managers' lack of interpersonal and leadership skills.
- Rising cost of living, increasing pressure on hourly workers
- Multigenerational, culturally diverse teams with very different expectations of leadership

## Many frontline managers were:

- Promoted for being strong individual contributors
- Given responsibility without leadership training
- Expected to "figure it out" while still covering shifts, hitting numbers, and handling HR issues

## The result:

Managers get overwhelmed. Conflict becomes normal. Turnover stays expensive.

## TRIGGER #1

# Shifting Priorities with No Explanation

### What it looks like ?

- People hear three different answers to the same question
- The team stops asking and starts assuming

### Fix it fast

- Name the priority in one sentence at the start of every shift
- Explain the why in one sentence, every time

### Why it happens here

- Fast pace operations and constant staffing gaps force changes
- But the team experiences it as chaos

### Script

- Here is what matters most today.
- Here is why.
- Here is what can wait.

## TRIGGER #2

# Unspoken Standards

### What it looks like ?

- One supervisor enforces it, another ignores it
- The team calls it favoritism

### Why it happens here

- High turnover creates constant retraining
- Standards live in people's heads instead of in a shared system

### Fix it fast

- Write the standard in plain language, one page max
- Review it weekly for five minutes This is the standard.
- This is what it looks like when it is done right.

## TRIGGER #3

# Conflict Avoidance that turns into Side Conversations

### What it looks like ?

- Meetings feel polite, hallways feel tense
- Small issues become culture issues

### Fix it fast

- Address the issue within 24 hours, privately
- Close the loop publicly without naming names

### Why it happens here

- Pressure is high and trust is fragile
- People choose silence because it feels safer

### Script

- I noticed something that will hurt the team if we ignore it. Let's fix it now.

## TRIGGER #4

# Feedback that is either Harsh or missing

### What it looks like ?

- Managers only speak up when something goes wrong
- High performers feel invisible

### Fix it fast

- Give one specific win per person per week
- Give corrective feedback with dignity and direction

### Why it happens here

- Managers are overloaded and default to task completion
- But people interpret silence as not being valued

### Script

- Here is what you did well.
- Here is what needs to change.
- Here is what I expect next time.

## TRIGGER #5

# No Coaching Rhythm

### What it looks like ?

- Everything is urgent
- Nothing is developed

### Why it happens here

- Operations consume every minute
- But without coaching, the same fires repeat

### Fix it fast

- Put coaching into the day, two minutes per interaction
- Hold one weekly reset with the same three questions

# WHAT “GOOD” ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE IN FRONTLINE LEADERSHIP

High-performing frontline managers don’t work harder — they work differently.



**Clarity Over Control**



**Consistency Builds Trust**



**Coaching Is Built Into the Day**



**Accountability Without Drama**



**Managers Develop Leaders,  
Not Dependence**

*If you want consistency on the floor and not just good intentions.....*

*Book a Leadership Clarity Session*



*For questions, please email [ddg@drinksomewaterllc.com](mailto:ddg@drinksomewaterllc.com)*