

# What Leadership Development Can Do For Your Company



## Leadership Development is Critical to Your Future Success

Why should you worry about leadership development? Gallup's famous American Workplace survey found that approximately 66% of American employees are either not engaged or are actively disengaged and that's costing corporations \$483 - \$605 billion per year in lost productivity.<sup>1</sup> At the same time there's an increasing dissatisfaction in current leadership as well as future leadership potential.

If that's not reason enough, many companies also experience high employee turnover, workplace conflict, poor communication, ineffective teams, poor performance, and low productivity.

Some companies have considerably fewer problems – those who have an established program to train supervisors, managers, and executives to be effective leaders. One organization that does this extremely well is the U.S. military. A 2019 Gallup poll shows the military has been one of and often the most respected institution in the country for the last 20 years.<sup>2</sup> In large part, that's

Liane Hornsey, a former vice president at Google, once commented in an interview that she had been in a management position for 15 years before she understood how to lead. Statistics compiled by Zenger/Folkman show there is generally a 10 to 11 year gap between the time a person is promoted to a management position and their first exposure to leadership training.<sup>3</sup> We call this the lost decade. Think about what might have been accomplished in those years if managers had developed the skills to more effectively lead their people.

### What is a lack of leadership development costing you?

High employee turnover

Low productivity

Absenteeism

EEO complaints

Shrinkage

Reduced efficiency

Poor communication

Ineffective teams

<sup>1</sup> State of the American Workplace, Gallup, 2017

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Zenger/Folkman Database

because the military understands the value of leadership development, emphasizing leadership training beginning at the earliest supervisory level. Such a leadership development philosophy develops into a culture that expects leaders at all levels to perform in a similar way.

### **Benefits of Developing Leaders**

There are generally two ways to improve profitability: increase revenue or decrease costs. Developing leaders does both. No matter what the economic climate is, smart cost cutting always has a positive effect on a company's profitability. Unfortunately, cost cutting often looks at the "low hanging fruit" that's easy to see and cut without looking beyond that to areas which are probably costing much more.

Of course you consider expenses every day: cost of material, plant and equipment, pay and benefits, and many more. But there's another expense which, although you may not think about it, is very significant. It's those supervisors and managers who spend the most time directly interacting day-in and day-out with the workers accomplishing the

company's mission. Are they trained for that leadership role?

That's the cost of ineffective supervisors and managers.

Why are your supervisors and managers promoted into their current positions? Most supervisors and managers are promoted because they're good at their job. That's not unreasonable. The problem is, technical proficiency is only part of being a manager. A large part of their responsibility is leading other workers to accomplish the company's goals.

Many experts don't consider supervisors and managers to be real leaders. After all, executives in the C-suite make the big decisions and set the direction of the company. But supervisors and managers have a definite leadership role that in many ways is just as important, as leaders in the C-suite. They set schedules, work with new employees, and deal with conflict among their team members. Your managers and supervisors are the leaders who are on the floor dealing with the day-to-day issues that occur in any organization.

### **Challenges Today's Leaders Face**

Changing environments

Multiple generations

Economic uncertainty

Workplace conflict

Lack of engagement

Ever changing technology

## What Leaders Need to Know

Leaders, especially at the supervisory and management level, have a significant challenge. Not only are they expected to know the technical details of the job, they also become responsible for the rules and procedures for management of their section, the basics of human resources, and paperwork that goes with their new responsibility. What's often missing is the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective leader.

Effective leaders another knowledge set. We find that when a manager masters leadership skills, their management role becomes much easier.

First and foremost, effective leaders understand themselves. They know their values, what they expect, their priorities, what they stand for and what they won't stand for. They also need to know how they cope with stress and how they expect other people to communicate with them. This may seem simple, but too few leaders have given this much thought. Effective leaders know how to communicate – not just talk, but successfully get their message across while also listening to what others have to say. Poor communication is one of the biggest problems in leadership today.

Effective leaders understand motivation and that although they can't motivate people they can create an environment where people achieve their own motivations. This is the biggest secret to employee engagement.

### What's Your Leadership Philosophy?

When a new leader takes charge, do you ask yourself who they are, what they know, what they expect, and what they believe? Do you realize that your people asked that about you? Did you answer the questions, even if they didn't ask them out loud?

As an effective leader you should develop a leadership philosophy and ensure everyone on your team has a chance to read and discuss it. A good leadership philosophy will help you make a good impression and start off on the right foot. Your leadership philosophy should contain:

- Your personal values
- Your vision for the team
- The team's mission
- Your priorities
- What you expect from your team
- What your team can expect from you
- Your communication policy

Effective leaders understand how to set goals and bring a team together to accomplish those goals.

Effective leaders develop coaching skills that develop their team and help others succeed.

### **What's the Best Leadership Development Model?**

There are many different leadership development programs and models available and it's hard to choose the best one. Leadership is not a static subject and while the basic principles of good leadership haven't changed, effective application of those principles is very fluid. Also, leadership is primarily learned on-the-job. While training is important to learn skills and techniques, the application of those skills and techniques is where the real learning occurs. To help leaders put theory into practice, coaching is critical to a leadership development program.

It's also important to evaluate the people conducting the training. Do they have real leadership experience? There are many providers who are very knowledgeable about leadership theory, but they have little or no actual hands-on experience. Researching leadership and doing leadership are two very different things.

### **What to Look for in a Leadership Development Provider**

1. Does the provider offer genuine leadership experience? Academia and consulting is good, but actual hands-on leadership experience is vitally important. You want someone who has been in the trenches and who has extensive first hand leadership experience.
2. Do they strive to learn what issues you face and training you really need, or try to push a pre-written curriculum? It's easier to develop standard curricula and try to force your company into that mold. But each company is different. Programs must be shaped to fit your needs. One size will not fit all!
3. Does the training provider advertise the latest and greatest leadership theories and thinking? If so, be cautious. A good leadership development program offers sound, proven leadership techniques, not the latest fads.
4. Do they strive to understand your business unique needs?
5. Do they provide follow-on coaching? Leadership is learned in application. That's when questions arise and your supervisors and managers become good leaders.

## About the Authors

Steve Alltop and Bob Mason are dedicated to leadership development and concentrate on developing leadership skills in supervisors and managers. Their approach stems from their firm belief, backed by extensive experience, that leadership doesn't have to be complicated. Leadership is simply getting things done through people and when supervisors and managers understand themselves, their purpose, and their team they become effective leaders.

To learn how The Daedalus Group can help your supervisors and managers accelerate your business performance, contact us at [team@dleadershipgroup.com](mailto:team@dleadershipgroup.com) or call Bob at 505-453-5266.



Steve Alltop is a former U.S. Air Force fighter pilot. His military career took him from pilot training to high-performance jet aircraft in combat to an assortment of command and leadership positions. Retiring from the Air Force after 24 years of service, Steve joined the corporate world as a project manager supporting diverse projects which provided high-tech solutions to the modern warfighter.

Steve is a free-lance project manager serving in the high-tech space industry. But he thoroughly enjoys spending time with his leadership students when he can and believes he is enriching lives by helping folks find the great leader within themselves and by having a lasting effect on those that they lead.

Steve is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy with a B.S. in Astronautical Engineering. He holds a Masters of Aeronautical Sciences, a Masters of Business Administration and is a certified Project Management Professional. He currently resides in Colorado Springs, Colorado where he enjoys his family and powered paragliding.

During a 30-year career in the U.S. Air Force, Bob Mason worked in aircraft and munitions maintenance and was a crew member in combat rescue. Early in his career he was given the opportunity to lead ever larger and more complex teams, eventually commanding four different squadrons, including a deployed aircraft maintenance squadron and the Air Force's largest munitions squadron.

When Bob retired from the Air Force he started a company dedicated to helping others learn the skills that he has found make leaders successful. He has studied leadership extensively, but more importantly has been there, working with real people, making hard decisions, and experiencing the results.

Bob is a professional speaker and author and a Past President of the New Mexico chapter of the National Speakers Association. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Resource Management, a Master of Science in Aeronautics, and a Master of Business Administration in Aviation. He is the author of four books on leadership. Bob lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico where he and his wife enjoy hiking and exploring the history of the Southwest.



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