Session 2.20 | 3 Challenges with Developing People

In this session, we are going to look at 3 of the top Challenges that leaders experience when Developing People and what to do about these challenges.

Take a moment right now and download the Worksheet for this session and follow along.

Over the past 20 years working with leaders in all types of organizations and many different market segments, we've noticed consistent themes emerging regarding challenges with people and leader development.

One leader told me recently…

The biggest frustration is that no matter what I do, retention and loyalty from team members seems impossible. When I invest in leadership and team development for them, there are so many companies out there looking for good people, my team members often jump to another company when a "carrot" is dangled in front of them. Even if I build a strong, team-centered environment, it is often still not enough. What do I do?

Another leader said recently, *"My current biggest challenge is the motivation of longtime team members who have retirement in their sights."*

We identified along with these and many others, the top three challenges that leaders face when developing people. And I want to share them with you in this session along with some troubleshooting tips to help you make progress in these areas.

1. **Identification - How do I find the right people to invest in?**

The first step to identifying the right people to develop is to clearly define your expectations:

   a) The type of candidate that you seek
   b) The training or mentoring you are going to provide
   c) The outcomes that you and the candidate should expect

Here are a few questions to consider when deciding who to invest in:

   i.   Are they teachable?

One of my first jobs out of college was working for an electrical corporation in Washington D.C. area where I was the Finance Manager for this company. Where my office sat in the building was near a warehouse, and in the warehouse where the electricians, the contractors would come in the afternoons and I could hear them working and talking, working through

projects back there. One afternoon the CEO of the company was out there and working with one of them, and they got into a heated discussion and I could hear almost every word they were saying. At one point, as the CEO was trying to explain to this contractor how to do something the contractor yelled back at the CEO and said, you can't teach me anything that I don't want to know.

I've thought about what he said hundreds of times, since this experience, nearly 30 years ago, It's one of the most profound things that I've ever heard, and it's so true, you really cannot teach someone something they don't want to know.

There's no reason to try to teach someone who thinks they've already figured it out. It's futile to teach someone who thinks that they already know what they need to know. The question is, does the person you are considering having a demonstrated willingness to learn?

     ii.   Are they self-focused?

When the primary concern of a person is their needs and their personal advancement, they're going to have a hard time contributing significant value to the success or well-being of others or to the organization. Invest your time in humble and grateful people.

     iii.   Are they action takers?

Look for people that consistently apply what they have been taught. Why take the time to invest in someone that does not have a track record of applying what they learn?

     iv.   Are they willing to invest in other people?

A proper candidate to develop should not be a stagnant reservoir of information but rather a purveyor of helpful knowledge. Are they already investing in others, and do they have demonstrated willingness to invest in new people?

     v.   Are they making the most of the resources that they currently have?

The best step that you can take is give people the opportunity to step up, volunteer, and take on new responsibilities. Then watch what they do with those opportunities. As you identify people to develop, look for the people who are leveraging their current opportunities. There really isn't a reason to keep pouring into someone who isn't using what they already have.

2. Motivation – How do I motivate the team members?

In today's world, the job of a leader is much more than just providing direction, it is about providing meaning.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

Every one of us knows what it's like to struggle with motivation. Yet, real motivation - sustainable motivation - comes from within. A desperation within.

No one desires to live a mediocre life or sets out to do mediocre work. What we need to do is find that spark within people and help them by fanning that flame. Let's face it, we often want more growth for others than they want for themselves.

Here are a few of the best ways we have found to provide motivation.

a) Help them understand why.

No one wants to spend the irreplaceable hours of their life doing meaningless tasks. Since nearly all of our work is meaningful, help them to provide clarity about why the work that is being done is meaningful and necessary.

b) Help them accept ownership.

You can motivate them by giving them opportunities for their input early in the process. When an individual has had an opportunity to be involved in defining or creating the process, service, or product they are far more likely to take responsibility and have a vested interest in its success. Their thought process becomes, "I don't want this to fail because now I had a part in creating it". So, help them take ownership

c) Measure progress.

It is always motivating for you and for the team to realize you're making progress. Set up checkpoints along the task to recognize small accomplishments to acknowledge progress.

d) Celebrate success.

Once one of those milestones is reached, take the time to celebrate it. By celebrating the victory, you are reinforcing the concept that the work being done is meaningful, and you'll get better results as you move forward into the future.

e) Recognition.

Be generous with praise. Take the time to recognize those that are performing consistently. Whether it's a private recognition or public recognition, sometimes, something as simple as a timely thank you or a kind word can provide all the motivation somebody needs to keep going.

f) Develop positive relationships.

We've talked about this a little bit earlier but it's a good thing to remember here is we think about motivating people. People measure their quality of life and fulfillment by the quality of the relationships they enjoy. When work relationships are positive and uplifting team members are more likely to take initiative. Develop positive relationships both with your peers and those who follow you.

g) Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.

Great leaders are always communicating. They ask for their feedback to ensure the communication came through clearly. While you may not need somebody to motivate you by telling you how good of a job you are doing, everyone is not like you. Communicating with them regularly and seeking their feedback is a critical discipline.

h) Make sure they can be successful with the role and work they are performing.

It kills motivation for a person to attempt something they aren't good at. Or to be working in an area that's not an area of strength where they can't bring their highest and best to it. Sometimes people are just in wrong role so be open, aware, and approachable enough to determine if someone is doing a job, they just are not capable of doing well. Make sure that they're in the right seat.

3. **Retention - How can I retain the people that I develop?**

Rarely is money the only factor when people consider leaving one job to go to another. But the interesting thing is, if all someone wants is more money then you have your answer for what it would take to retain them, and you can decide how to proceed with that individual. For most people, these 7 factors for retaining your best people serve as a great guide. Some of the concepts are related to the areas we covered with motivation. However, there are slight differences in how each factor can be applied.

Let's take a look at 7 factors for retaining your best people:

a) Communication.

Communication is the key to retention also. While it is a two-way street, your side as a leader is most important. Establish processes that ensure there are no kinks in the channels of communication. If you're having a problem with retention, communication is the great place to start when you evaluate your behaviors, your process and the organization structure.

b) Connection.

There should be no doubt in the mind of those that you lead that you have their best interest at heart - that you are unequivocally for them. Invest in building quality relationships with the leaders and team members you desire to retain. Connection is critical to retention.

c) Trust.

Trust is the key to any relationship working. When you maintain a high level of trust you have greater likely in retaining your best people. When trust is broken it becomes difficult if not impossible to retain high performers.

d) Potential.

No one likes to feel like they've reached a dead end or the ceiling in an organization. That doesn't mean that everyone is going to be CEO or president, but it does mean that there should always be opportunity for growth. Create a work culture in which team members can bring their highest and best to their work and role and you'll keep them for a long time.

e) Support.

Your team members should enjoy supportive work conditions and a positive work environment. Who wants to keep showing up in a sea of negativity? Or who wants to hang around in a place where they feel like they get no support? Whenever and wherever possible, eliminate frustrations. It's great to equip people to handle challenges and problems, but there are times when you need to step in and bring support if you want to retain the people that you're developing.

f) Difference.

All leaders want to know that they're making a difference, so make sure that let them know. Yet, it's not something that should just be said. It should be measurable and visible. People will generally stay in situations where they know they are making a difference. So let them know that they're making a difference, thank them for the difference that they are making.

g) Affirm Value.

Let them know how valuable they are. If you want to retain someone don't ever let them think that they are unimportant or insignificant. Become a student of your team members and learn how to communicate appreciation to them. If you do, they'll stick around for a long time.

We've come to the end of Module 2 where we've looked at Finding the Right Tools for developing people around you. We also looked at 5 Fast Action Tips to help you develop people more effectively and the 3 top challenges with developing people around you.

If you haven't already, take just a moment to download the Worksheet for this session and complete the action steps for this session.

Next Session
In the next session, we're going to move into Module 3 Apply and we're going to look at how to apply the learning into sustainable life and work habits.

So I'll see you in Module 3!