

Journal 1

My first month as an intern was very challenging, as many of them did not believe the branch could turn around to be profitable. Previous branch director had given them the impression this branch may close down due to the long - standing losses. I was appointed as a team leader to bring some new changes to the marketing department for turning around the accrued losses. I had separate discussion with each department, I met up with the Head of Department one by one, I gave them the hope and I took the lead to source for new businesses, I negotiated with Head Quarter and my direct superior to change certain business strategies, seek their support to empower me on some business decisions based on the unique business environment. I worked late most of the days, and I also sacrificed my weekend to expand my business network on the golf courses, business lunches and dinners.

Whenever any department achieved a small success, no matter how small it was, I would praise them to the whole team. If the success could bring in some financial gain to the branch, I would buy them a lunch or gave them small gifts to show my appreciation. My hard work and never give up attitude, where I was the actor on stage to demonstrate my confidence with the market place and my teammates proved to be worth while.

My voice of encouragement, my choice of business strategies and my control over the business risks and people emotion were the foundation of my success. The major thing that changed was to lead the team differently. The theory of strategic leadership and change was applied to bring in the desired results. I was seeking to give guidance and vision to the whole team. We have had a bonus system based on each one's area. Meaning that a finance people, would have a finance target, for example, percentage of overdue invoices, whereas a sales person would have a revenue target.

The course of action I took was

1. Listened to the entire team patiently and asked them to share their concerns - it was cathartic.
2. Discuss my planned approach with them - invited their feedback & got their buy-in for delivering on their part of the commitment.
3. Discussed the situation and my remedial actions with the Client CEO and got his endorsement for the changes I was about to make.
4. Insulated them from the client by asking the client to route every interaction to me as I will be operating out of the warehouse for 30 days as I implement the changes and ensure they are internalised.

5. Introduced processes that improved efficiencies and cut out the interference and interventions from the Client.
6. Addressed the backlash from the Client Officials in front of the team - showing them my commitment to supporting them and protecting them in hostile situations and also in some way educating them how issues can be resolved by diplomatically handling them backed by processes that have been put in place.

Here my listening skill helped me to understand my team member's perspective, what is working and what is not working in their opinion, how should be the best way to work, how each one would like to work etc. I took a lot of notes and work a lot trying to find some similarities to present to them the "perfect" way to work. After this I noticed the perfect way was what they decided to work on as a team, if I decided by myself, even with all inputs from them, they will not feel they are part of this and create the sense of purpose

Journal 2

Some months ago, one of my best team - mates was showing signs of lack of motivation, mainly due to the changes that were taking place. He was not participating in the team meetings, he was making some indirect comments, and one day we even had a loud discussion, which put us even more apart.

I was always very happy with his work and I trusted him a lot, but I thought he was the kind of quiet guy to whom you give a task and just leave him alone, because he will deliver it on time and on quality.

I noticed he was starting to look around for other options, probably to change the department. At the same period many colleagues have left the department, though none from my team, I was starting to be concerned that someone would leave without having the chance to clarify what was actually going on.

So, I did something that no team leader nor department leaders usually do and invited him to an open face-to-face meeting. I asked him what was going on, why he was not motivated, so I gave him voice and control of the situation. He opened himself saying he was feeling I was not being fair with him because I have promoted and celebrated the achievement of another colleague, who was as good as him, and he was observing he was not being recognized.

I explained to him that I thought he was the kind of guy who does not need to be controlled and that I could trust him so much that I actually very few times needed to interact with him, so I had few opportunities to show appreciation for his work. He told me then what would motivate him and what were his perspectives, and we were actually very aligned, and so at the end all was a lack of communication and misunderstanding of the behaviours of each other's.

I provided this individual with the opportunity to sometimes extend lead the work as I knew that he would appreciate the opportunity. This individual was able to provide ideas, seek ideas from others but also make choices (suggestions) as to what would the priorities be for the next 3, 6, 9 and 12 months. He was able to control a considerable portion of the process (and at the same time given the chance to lead others, which was a fairly new experience for him), which he appreciated very much. As I am one to provide a fair amount of encouragement on a regular basis, I provided the usual encouragements.

I was happily surprised to see the employee come see me following the planning activity to thank me for organizing it and giving the team, and himself, the opportunity to 'take the wheel'.

The 'control' element is certainly the hardest one for me. To give others more control, I need to give up some of the 'controlling'. The other take away is that this employee was very happy to take a more active role in this process, this is

the experience he is looking for through his position. I did notice that other employees seemed happy to be engaged and contribute but not interested in taking on that role.

Now we have a development plan, and he we have a shared purpose that he knows I support.

The result was great, we could save time from the team, be sure there will be no disruption in service if we change the professional, we can train the new members faster and the customers are more satisfied. The team is fully engaged, and they are already bringing new ideas to be implemented.