

# The Middle Manager of the Future

## Embracing Coaching Over Commanding

The role of the middle manager is undergoing a significant transformation. The traditional command-and-control model gives way to a more dynamic approach centered around coaching and empowerment. Harvard Business School's recent exploration of this shift highlights how middle managers can thrive by adopting new strategies and mindsets.

### The Changing Role of Middle Managers

Historically, middle managers have been the linchpins of organizational hierarchy, responsible for implementing top-level directives and ensuring that their teams adhere to established processes. This role often heavily emphasized directing and supervising, with little room for flexibility or individual autonomy.

However, the current business environment, characterized by rapid technological advancements and shifting employee expectations, demands a different approach. Middle managers are increasingly seen as executors of plans and as crucial enablers of innovation and employee development.

### The Shift Toward Coaching

One of the most significant changes is the shift from commanding to coaching. The future middle manager is envisioned as a mentor and facilitator rather than merely a supervisor. This approach involves:

1. **Empowering Employees:** Instead of dictating every action, middle managers are encouraged to empower their team members by granting them more autonomy and encouraging decision-making. This boosts morale and fosters a culture of innovation and accountability.
2. **Fostering Development:** Coaching involves focusing on the growth and development of employees. By providing regular feedback and supporting professional growth, middle managers can help their team members acquire new skills and advance their careers.
3. **Building Trust and Collaboration:** Effective coaching requires building strong, trust-based relationships with team members. This collaborative approach ensures that managers are more in tune with their

team's needs and can better support their individual and collective goals.

4. **Adapting to Change:** As businesses face constant change, middle managers who act as coaches are better equipped to guide their teams through transitions. They can help employees navigate challenges and adapt to new strategies or technologies.

### Implementing the Coaching Model

Transitioning from a command-and-control model to a coaching-focused approach is challenging. Below are some suggestions of how managers looking to embrace this shift:

- ▲ **Develop Coaching Skills:** Middle managers should invest in developing their own coaching skills. This might include training in active listening, constructive feedback, and empathetic communication.
- ▲ **Create a Supportive Environment:** Organizations must foster a culture supporting coaching. This involves providing resources for managerial training and encouraging a culture where feedback is seen as a positive force for growth.
- ▲ **Measure Success:** Implementing coaching requires setting clear objectives and measuring success. Managers should track progress through employee feedback, performance metrics, and overall team engagement levels.

The future of middle management lies in the ability to adapt and thrive in a coaching-oriented role. By moving away from traditional commanding approaches and focusing on empowering and developing their teams, middle managers can drive more significant innovation, collaboration, and success within their organizations. Embracing this shift benefits individual employees and contributes to a more agile and resilient business environment.

As businesses continue to evolve, the middle manager's role will remain pivotal. Those who can successfully integrate coaching into their leadership style will be well-positioned to lead their teams through the complexities of the modern business world.

## Helping Middle Management Thrive



### HEAR THEM

The most important thing we can do is to check in with our middle managers, regularly. We need to actively listen to what they're really thinking and feeling.



### HELP THEM TO THE OTHER SIDE

Get rid of organizational hurdles, minimize administrative tasks, and prioritize what will contribute most to the strategic agenda.



### RIGHT SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS

Focus on getting the proper balance. Spend time coaching them on the right skills and behaviors.



### COACHING

Coach Middle Managers, and in turn Middle Managers need to coach their direct reports to enhance engagement retention.



### A SENSE OF PURPOSE WITH PROGRESSION

Help Middle Managers to find a sense of purpose, and position them to take advantage of career progression opportunities.



### DEVELOPMENT, NOT TRAINING

The most effective Middle Manager Development programs are blended with measurable learning outcomes and senior-level engagement throughout.

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#### 2024 Changes to Online Injury Recordkeeping

**Wednesday, August 21, 2024 1:30 PM (PDT)**

January 2024, employers in certain high-hazard industries are required to submit detailed information regarding recordable workplace injuries and illnesses using OSHA's new filing system called Injury Tracking Application (ITA). This webinar will discuss the new requirements and help you determine if they apply to your business.

#### Right Fit Hiring!

**Tuesday, September 10, 2024 2:00 PM (PDT)**

Finding and hiring the right candidate can make all the difference for your organization. This webinar will provide you with valuable insights and practical tools to enhance your recruitment process. We'll explore effective techniques for identifying key skills and qualities that align with your company's needs.

#### How to Handle Anonymous OSHA Complaints *(Updated)*

**Wednesday, September 25, 2024 1:30 PM (PDT)**

The OSHA Complaint Process allows anyone (even your employees) to contact OSHA and level charges against your business. If you are one of the "lucky" ones that are contacted by OSHA and notified of the complaint(s) (rather than them just showing up at your door); there's a chance that you might be able to avoid an onsite comprehensive audit. But you've got to handle your response appropriately.

In this webinar, you will learn what the appropriate steps to take are, if you receive notification from OSHA, that a complaint has been leveled against you.

#### Performance Improvement Plans / Corrective Actions

**Tuesday, October 8, 2024 2:00 PM (PDT)**

We'll delve into the critical process of addressing and resolving employee performance issues. This webinar will cover essential steps for developing and implementing corrective action plans, from identifying root causes to crafting actionable solutions and monitoring progress. We'll cover best practices for documenting issues, engaging with team members constructively, and ensuring long-term improvements.

#### Space Heater Safety: Tips to Prevent Fires

**Wednesday, October 16, 2024 1:30 PM (PDT)**

A space heater can be a popular and effective way to stay warm, but it can also be a fire hazard. In our northwest-region, multiple fatal fires are started by space heaters every year. This webinar will provide tips for keeping your workplace (and home) safe.