

In business, Rank does matter.

As much as we all want to be fair and equitable to our employees, we still must consider how we spend our valuable time as leaders in an organization. If you think about your team, which you supervise, where do you spend the most amount of time? Do you spend time with the "superstars" who are getting everything accomplished, or with the "bottom tier" who need continual assistance? It is time to work with the leaders of tomorrow, not the time mongers of today.

Marc Ankerman, president of Ankerman Training Solutions in Columbus Ohio, (www.trainingsolved.com) sees the time we spend as leaders with the potential for growth as an important element in time management and leadership in business.

Ankerman suggests four components in managing your team.

? Rank your employees. Who is your number one? Not the person whom you may like the best, but the one person on your team you could count on if you were not there. Take each of your team members and identify the most important competencies for their jobs. Rank order them with no ties in the ordering. If you have 7 employees, you need to have 7 slots, 1-7! It is not easy, but it certainly makes you look at the time you spend with certain team members in a completely different way.

? Change your focus of energy. This concept of ranking does not mean ignoring the bottom players; it just means you need to focus your time and energy with a different emphasis. If you give everyone the same opportunity for your personal one on one time, you need to increase at the higher levels, and spend time with your "superstars". They are the ones you don't "need" to follow up on because they do the job. WRONG! Find out how they are doing it so well. Listen to them, get ideas, and spend some quality time with your quality players.

? Create opportunities for learning. If you tend to have to balance your schedule for meetings with individuals, it is likely that the top tier take up little of your time. Identify a specific meeting or project where you can work one on one with your top employees. The time spent should be efficient and productive. It sends a message to the others, that the top players' get the top assignments. If the middle level is inspired to work harder, give them opportunities as well. A great way to learn a skill is to have to "teach" it to others. Give your top leaders the chance to mentor to others on your team. Show them the unique way in which you lead your team by creating learning opportunities.

? Share your knowledge with "superstars": Identify a time when you can share an intimate part of your job with your top employees. Do you know the person on your team who will replace you when you get promoted, or leave the position? It is a feather in your cap as a leader if you have a thoughtful succession plan in mind, and drives your top leaders into realizing they are prepared for their next steps as well. Even if you don't have a good feeling about the next step, sharing part of your job with your team is a way to show the "superstar" more about the boss' work and effort in the team. The appreciation of the ranking of your team will go a long way to helping your time and effort show great results.

IN SUMMARY:

Rank your employees – have a lineup for each player on your team

Change your focus of energy – provide a clear approach to your time

Create opportunities for learning – new projects or mentoring engage your team

Share your knowledge with "superstars"- impart wisdom on the top tier players

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