

Getting maximum results from  
your staff

Success Strategies for Today's Workplace

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## Getting maximum results from your staff

Being in middle management is quite the balancing act. You have directives from 'C' level employees that you must carry out. On the other hand you must motivate and get buy in from those who report to you.



In order to effectively make both of those things happen you must become a strong advocate to senior staff on behalf of your employees. Understanding of course, that you will not always walk away with a favorable outcome.

To your staff, YOU are the face of management. To the 'C'

level executives, YOU are the face of the rank and file. Of course, this is why they call it, "middle management."

When senior staff establishes a course of action, you cannot take the position that it's "us" versus "them" or this is something that the "big guys" want done. You are the representative of senior staff to your people. If senior executives want something to happen, by default it becomes a priority for you and your staff. That is your duty as a middle manager. To that end, here are a few tips to insure that your staff operates at maximum efficiency as often as possible:

Promote continuous training. Most managers belong to various professional organizations that announce training opportunities via in-person seminars, webinars, books and newsletters. Some of these will provide useful training for credit staff in improving skills in financial statement analysis, collection techniques and bankruptcies for example. Continue training even during economic downturns. When the economy goes south, that is the moment when credit professionals shine. They cannot shine without proper training.

Cut ties with Malcontents and Poor Performers. Employees fail to see how their behavior comes across to others. It is so much easier to drag people down versus lifting them up. If managers don't rectify the situation quickly, it sends a subtle signal to the other team members that poor performance and inappropriate behavior is acceptable. Once team believes this way it will be twice as difficult to turn them around.

Oftentimes, managers will hang on to sub par employees in hopes that they will "turn around." If training, mentoring and counseling don't work, do yourself a favor and cut your losses. It is better for both parties to move on.



Review and Update Your Active Customer Files at Regular Intervals. In today's business environment, a customer that was doing well a year ago might have hit a rough patch, or even closed its' doors. The nature of your business will dictate whether you update every month for example versus once per year. If you fail to update your credit files periodically, it's almost guaranteed a certain

percentage of problem accounts will sneak up on you. The best course of action is to maintain a policy of updating all active customer files reviewed on a regular basis.

Supporting the executive agenda as established by your superiors. The credit department is in a unique position to facilitate the sales process and provide value beyond their expected traditional roles. Look for ways to safely make the marginal sale happen. Communicate with sales ahead of time to lay groundwork for potential business opportunities. At the end of the day the credit department must be seen as an important ally in helping the company reach its' sales and profit targets.

Look for opportunities to demonstrate how your department contributes to the bottom line of the organization. Provide examples to your department

of how the goals of the department align with the goals of the organization. Drawing such parallels will most likely inspire your staff to do their best work. Evaluate employee progress and provide regular feedback so they don't lose direction or enthusiasm.

Maintain an open door policy. This is not an invitation for griping or negativity. It is an opportunity to discuss issues as they arise and share solutions. Enhance communication and manage change by soliciting feedback and input from employees and involve them in planning and implementing change. Many times the most savvy improvements come from the people who are "in the trenches" performing their jobs.

Seek winnable opportunities for employees to grow. In order to do this you must have knowledge of your team members' strong and weak points. Is one team member especially proficient in analyzing financials? Does another team member have a talent for problem solving? Consider informally identifying them as the "go to" person for the particular situation that suits them.

By delegating important projects, you are showing confidence in your staff. As individual employees consistently achieve identified goals their confidence will grow along with the ability to handle even tougher challenges.



## Works Cited

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