

Career Notes

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Priscilla

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Management Development for "Natural Managers"

Eileen Adler and I just completed the exciting, if intensive, experience of training every manager in the company, both in a large insurance company and in a dot com. After several workshops, we found we began to get a real feel for the culture of each organization and what it took to be a successful manager in each.

It was easy to spot the "natural" managers. Although the cultures of the two companies are different, they stood out. Natural managers all receive a great deal of personal satisfaction out of managing and developing others.

In both companies, there was a group of managers whose management careers had started in high school, either in retail stores as assistant managers or in fast food operations as shift managers. They knew they couldn't develop a command-and-control style of management or they wouldn't have gotten their teen-aged friends to work for them. They learned to manage by influencing skills, not by strong-arm tactics. These managers chose managing early on in their careers and have always loved it. They are natural managers.

For the "naturals," it's easy to coach and counsel, give helpful feedback, assess skills, give the right person the right growth assignment and be a leader. Since almost all management development training is "managing down," these are the people who always do well in management development courses. If these people are so good at managing others, why don't all of them move up the corporate ladder easily? Why do some of them get stuck in first or second level management positions? We think we have some of the answers.

First, their expectations of their bosses are higher. Because they are natural managers, they think it is easy to be a manager. They have the same expectations for their own manager as they do for themselves. So, they feel resentful when their manager doesn't give performance feedback or communicate regularly with them. Anything they know how to do well, they believe is something their manager should also do well, even when that is not the case. In the most exaggerated version of this resentment, a manager can bond with his or her subordinates against the higher bosses. A sure career-killing move.

Second, the natural managers frequently downplay their own skills so much that the people who work for them get the reputation and the visibility, and sometimes the promotion that they deserve.

Third, they don't always use their superior influencing skills with their peers. They rarely treat their peers as well as they treat their customers. Expecting their colleagues to know what they know, they are too free with both advice and judgements.

Yes, most "natural" managers do make it up the chain of command. But we need all the management talent we can get! Too many of them are stuck in first-level management jobs. Too many are shifted to individual contributor positions because they made the boss angry.

We need to create a targeted development program for these "natural" managers. It should include: managing up, strategic thinking, how to take a corporate-wide perspective, and influencing your peers, along with plenty of coaching and feedback.

Success Stories

Some facts have been changed to maintain confidentiality

Mark Makes a Change

An extremely smart and engaging person, Mark was the youngest Vice President in his company. He was clearly on track to be CEO some day. The only problem was that Mark had the same expectations of the people who worked for him that he had for himself. And those expectations were very high and unforgiving.

Nothing seemed to work, neither management development courses nor personal coaching. Mark still put managing his people at the bottom of his priority list. He developed a reputation as a terrible manager. But, because of his brilliant strategic insights, his CEO continued to value him highly.

With Career Strategies' help, Mark reevaluated his career and his personal core competencies. He loved his job; he just didn't get any personal satisfaction out of the

managing part of it. Maybe CEO wasn't the right career direction for him. Were there people in other companies that were Vice Presidents or higher who didn't have to manage people?

We told him there were. In High Tech companies there are frequently high level technical expert jobs that don't include management. Or, in financial services, fund managers have the same kind of role.

With our help, Mark presented a version of this new role to his CEO, who instantly accepted Mark's offer. But to make sure that Mark was managing his career, not just getting a different job, we helped Mark plan a consulting career option so that he could always work in the way that gave him personal satisfaction.

NEW ON THE WEB

New to our web site in April -
A presentation to Suffolk University MBA students on 3/20/01 and to Boston University Executive MBA students on 4/6/01.

◆
"Why Would Anyone Want to Be a Leader Today?"

by Priscilla Claman.
A recent PowerPoint presentation (from 11/27/00) presented to Boston area alumni of Harvard Business School

Check it out at:
www.career-strategies.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

AAIM Conferences

Compensation 2001 with
Priscilla Claman and George Mullen
Tuesday, May 8 and
Wednesday, May 9
Beachwood Hotel
Worcester
9 am - 4 pm

Career Development with
Priscilla Claman
Thursday, May 10
Holiday Inn, Peabody
9 am - 4 pm

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For more information regarding these upcoming events, please call our office at:
(617) 227-5517
or e-mail us at:
info@career-strategies.com

Success Stories

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Carl Learns How to Present Himself

Carl came to Career Strategies angry, frustrated and ready to quit. A star performer for over twenty years at his firm, he still didn't feel he had the respect he deserved. He had started as a clerk in high school and quickly became the assistant supervisor, and then supervisor, of his department. After a brief stint in the military, Carl came back and worked his way up the ladder while getting his BA and MBA at night using his company's tuition reimbursement program. In each of his promotions, he was recognized for his ability to manage and develop others, but in the last five years, Carl had managed major organizational change projects, not people.

In many ways, Carl was a logical choice for these assignments. The project leader had to be a person of great internal credibility, who knew the organization inside and out, and who didn't need to get all the credit himself. All of these attributes Carl had in spades. Each one had been presented as a "real challenge" that was of great importance to the organization. "Only you could do this, Carl."

Carl had been so good at managing and developing others in the course of his career, that people who had worked for him were managers all over the corporation. They all helped Carl get his projects accomplished, but when Carl told them, they were the ones who got promoted to good positions while he got another "challenging project" with little or no resources. That's what Carl meant by "respect." And besides, Carl missed managing people.

With our help, Carl prepared to present himself and his strengths both inside and outside of his firm. Carl learned how to take advantage of his successes to develop his reputation. As he grew more confident presenting himself, he dropped his resentment and frustration. Before he turned to his outside search, he proactively used his contacts to identify a project that would turn into a line job. He worked hard on his presentation of himself and got the chance he was looking for. Six months later, he has a line job he wanted and is once again developing talent for his organization.

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