

Building a More Productive Team – Seven New Year’s Resolutions for Managers

The New Year is the time for taking stock of achievements and planning positive changes for the upcoming year. For example – stop smoking, lose weight, get fit, etc. As a manager, you can resolve to improve your team’s; attitude, production, quality, accountability, engagement, etc. It doesn’t have to take a lot of time to create results.

Here are some simple resolutions you can use to build a better team:

RESOLUTIONS	ACTIVITIES
1 Communicate regularly with your employees to make sure their jobs are meeting their expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a process that’s not working; organize a cross functional team to spend a day or two working together to fix something. Empower your HR person to be the facilitator and agree to implement their others’ ideas.
2 Recognize and value your employees’ contributions to getting the things done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take your highest performing /most valuable employees to lunch at least quarterly – tell them what you appreciate about their work and how their efforts impacts the company goals.
3 Create opportunities for feedback and coaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to low performers to understand what is interfering with them doing well. Develop plans to help resolve their issues. Get your team together to share with them what <i>you</i> are doing well as a leader and what <i>you</i> could do better. Ask them for their feedback and ideas. Choose a few suggestions you commit to implement. Take a couple of your direct reports to interview your five best customers or suppliers to understand why your company does well and what it could do better. Lead a brainstorming /implementation meeting upon your return. Establish the ground rules, no idea is a bad idea. Hire a leadership coach from HR Insights Consulting to help <i>you</i> to be a better leader. It will be more than worth the investment!
4 Look for signs of stress from overwork and work/life imbalances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor employees use of time off and encourage people to take time to “recharge their batteries”.
5 Make sure to demonstrate credibility – walk the talk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do more "management by walking around" and ask people how they are feeling and doing. Show curiosity about people’s work activities.
6 Be a better delegator by identifying opportunities for people to learn new skills, knowledge, and abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about all of the tasks you do in your job. Pick two you would like to delegate, that would be developmental for a couple of your direct reports and delegate them. Follow up, as appropriate.
7 Enhance your employees’ knowledge about the business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a couple of people on a field trip to visit a company you admire - do some benchmarking, have a meeting to discuss the what can be applied in your company. Organize a "Blue Sky" strategic planning session for your team.