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7 Vital Functions for Managers

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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

The First Class Manager Coach

Magnetic Managers: Their Secret to Success

There are thousands of books and articles about management. I couldn't possibly write anything new for you about the topic in this ezine. What I am going to do, however, is highlight the wisdom from scores of expert authors and deliver it to you as simply and directly as I can. While deciding upon the key points I want to share, I considered my own experiences in management roles. When push comes to shove, what matters most? What **MUST** you do to get the results you are being paid to obtain? What **MUST** you learn and implement in order to succeed?

Recently I had lunch with a woman who has held top management positions for decades. Through the course of our conversation she told me about all the good things she is doing at work. She informed me of the conferences her staff attends, the policies she has written and upholds, the professional standards she demands. I heard about her commitment to hiring the best people and her dedication to conducting annual performance reviews. And

while she was talking? I sat there remembering occasions when some of her employees told me privately how they feel uninspired every single day...how they think about leaving...how they resent their boss. Over six months I've gotten two very different pictures of the same environment. This sort of thing happens all the time. The disconnect I describe here is rather common.

So what exactly is the problem? Candidly speaking, many managers spend a lot of hours on tasks and projects that don't proactively build their people and the culture in a way that produces results everybody needs and loves. They are busy, but I often wonder what the focus of "busy" really is. Does "busy" mean filling time and creating unnecessary stress, or does it mean doing what absolutely has to happen to motivate employees so that they want to work in partnership with you to deliver the best possible product or service? If you are a manager, look at the functions I identify and discuss briefly below. While there may be many others, these are the functions you absolutely must know and live.

Sylvia

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FEATURE ARTICLE

7 Vital Functions for Managers

It's true that the best managers are proactive about everything: pursuing their own learning; creating their professional image; making decisions; inspiring employees, managing time, planning projects; foreseeing problems; dealing with loss; and anticipating change. Proactivity is essential if you want to succeed and you want to last. Passivity isn't going to serve you.

That said, you have to embrace the following seven functions if you are a manager. You can't step around them, jump over them, or simply ignore them. They are as vital to you as your arms, hands, legs and feet.

1. Set clear expectations.

Communicate what you need and want as clearly and specifically as possible. In some cases it may be best to put this in writing—just for the record. Consider more than the end results. Discuss priorities, processes and procedures, particular approach, voice tone, and time frames. The point is that you can avoid misunderstandings and bad outcomes. Make sure other people grasp your instructions, guidance, and expectations. Ask them to tell you what they think they heard, especially with issues that are critically important.

2. Model the behavior you want to see.

Remember that people are watching you

even when you think they aren't. Because this is true, you need to be conscious of what folks are observing. Employees notice your body language, listen to your voice tone, and inspect your appearance. Most of this occurs silently without you knowing it. They see how you deal with conflict, how you handle stress, how you facilitate meetings, how you integrate change, how you give feedback, and how you probe to gain more information about a topic or situation. Not only do they see it, but they imitate it. Periodically ask yourself if you'd be proud to have staff copy most of your behavior.

3. Serve as a resource.

While you don't need to have all the answers to every problem, you do need to know where to go to find them. You also need to know how you think and feel about various types of circumstances, possibilities, and challenges. Be available to provide input to employees' questions. Be ready to show them



how to move forward with a project when they're stuck. Be willing to expand their view about something. Be able to help them transfer certain skills from one situation to another. In short, support your staff in ways that have meaning to them.

4. Solve problems as they arise.

Problems don't automatically dissolve. You must address them. And you have to address them sooner rather than later to prevent them from growing. Sweeping problems under the rug simply doesn't work. If an employee hasn't delivered projects on time for three weeks in a row, you have a problem to confront. Schedule a private meeting with the person, share the facts, discuss the impact, and partner with her to create a viable solution. If you choose to ignore it, you only end up getting more of the same poor performance. Don't let that happen.

5. Face reality.

Truth can be difficult. Life is easier if you look the other way, isn't it? But as a manager you can't afford to do that. You need to stare at everything straight in the eye. It's the best way to be effective. For example, if sales are down 25% during the last quarter, you need to face this and then find out why. Pretending the drop in sales didn't occur is irresponsible, and the game of pretend isn't in your job description. Examine the truth about each situation, each employee, each issue. Take action accordingly.

6. Develop your staff.

Your employees really are your most valuable asset. Treat them as if you believe that with your whole heart. Employee development may include sending them off to conferences across the country, but it includes a great deal more. It involves an investment from YOU. This investment takes the form of training, instructing, guiding, coaching, mentoring, empathizing, correcting, stretching, assessing, evaluating, praising, and rewarding. You reap what you sow. Nothing in...nothing back. Unquestionably, investing in your staff is THE BEST use of your time and energy.

7. Establish appropriate boundaries.

As a busy manager, you need to set boundaries around your emotions, your time, your relationships, and your work. Boundaries keep you healthy. Boundaries send certain messages. Boundaries allow people to feel secure. Here are examples of some reasonable boundaries: You control your anger; you end the day at 6:00 PM instead of 8:00; you close your office door for an

hour each afternoon; you don't socialize with direct reports; you let people know they can't interrupt you for the next thirty minutes; you don't tolerate a staffer's degrading remarks.

If you're in a management position and you consciously incorporate the above seven functions into your day, YOU can be successful beyond your wildest imaginings!

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Offers and Opportunities

FREE Teleseminar With Sylvia

OVERLOADED and OVERWHELMED? 10 STRATEGIES FOR GAINING CONTROL

July 25, 2012

1:00 PM EDT

Most of my private coaching clients are dealing with feelings of overwhelm in every aspect of their lives. Is this true for YOU too? I am offering a FREE one hour teleseminar that focuses exclusively on the topic of overwhelm and how to handle it.

[Click here](#) to send an email if you are interested and want to register.

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Launching Leaders With Sylvia: 5 Essentials for First Time Managers

Ideal for anyone who recently started a management position or expects a promotion.



Content focuses on:

- Mindset for managing
- Time management
- Professional image
- Supervision
- Trust building

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RESOURCES

If you only have time to read one book—or part of a book- about management this summer, pick up a copy of Marcus Buckingham's *The One Thing You Need to Know About Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success* (Free Press, 2005). I value his cut to the chase writing style and rich content filled with anecdotes that help you remember the major points. Buckingham has a unique way of getting you

to think about information you may already know from an entirely different angle. Some of his strategies for dealing effectively with employees are golden! Price: under \$20 on Amazon.

The Ten Commandments for Managers by Greg Blencoe is a quick read that focuses on how to develop highly productive employees who eagerly work with you to fulfill organizational objectives. This 2004 book published by August Publishing centers around the premise that there is no big secret to managing people except learning to apply some basic common sense. The commandments are strategies which equip you to mesh hard and soft approaches—both being necessary to achieve optimal results. A used copy is available on Amazon for under \$10.

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TIP

I invite you to answer the following questions TODAY, and then plan your week accordingly.

- ✓ What expectation do you have of your staff that you have not shared yet or have not communicated clearly?
- ✓ What behavior do you want to see in your staff that you are not modeling for them in a way they can observe and understand?
- ✓ How are you not serving as a resource for your employees?
- ✓ What problem must be solved but you haven't dealt with it yet?
- ✓ What reality are you unwilling to face?
- ✓ What is one thing you can do this week to develop and grow each of your direct reports?
- ✓ Where do you know you need to set a boundary but you've been reluctant to do so?

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On May 24, 2012 Sylvia presented a workshop on “the human likeability factor” as it relates to **Capital Blue Cross’s** sales executives and their professional image. Conducted during a retreat for 30 people, this highly interactive, provocative experience was well received by all participants.



Join Sylvia on these social networks!

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About This Ezine

This Ezine is 1) to provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to both personal and professional growth and 2) to invite them to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC is an executive coach based in South Central PA. Her mission is to support corporate and nonprofit executives and business owners as they solve problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives. Her background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales. A [certified executive coach](#) through The Rescue Institute in Colorado and a participant in extensive continuing education, Sylvia is a platinum level expert author on ezinearticles.com. She has produced an audio CD entitled, "Making Change", [three special reports](#) for persons in management positions, and an audio product designed for new managers. More information is available at her

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is an executive coaching company located in South Central PA. Its mission is to support managers and executives to solve their most pressing problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives utilizing a holistic approach. Launching Lives focuses on BUILDING PEOPLE through individual private coaching, group coaching, specialized products, workshops, speeches, and retreats. Most coaching takes place by phone.

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching is the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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