

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Managers

Most of us have had an opportunity to read or at least hear about Stephen Covey's bestseller, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, but here I would like to offer a corollary of habits that can differentiate highly effective managers.

1. **Exercise Self-Discipline-** Most of us can do our best work when we are highly motivated, we are in high spirits and just generally feel good. The true test is how do we behave when we don't feel particularly motivated, don't feel good, or just don't like our assignment. Whether or not we like it, we are role models every day. One blow up can ruin years of exemplary performance.
2. **Kindness Does Have A Place At Work-** Effective managers treat everyone with kindness and respect all the time. Relying on your "power" or position to get people to do things is very short sighted. None of us can do everything by ourselves and people have very long memories for others who treat them well and those who don't. Consideration for others is free and will generally reap good results and make you feel better about yourself.
3. **Personal Goal Setting-** Highly effective managers have a plan. It doesn't need to be cast in concrete, but having a plan and communicating it significantly increases your chances of achieving your personal and professional goals. Encouraging your staff to do the same kind of planning also allows you to be "coach" and "facilitator" rather than boss, which in my opinion is a much more respect-based relationship.
4. **Actively Seek Feedback-** People who constantly seek and incorporate feedback have distinct advantages over the rest of us. They are able to make changes real time, they are perceived as open and flexible and people will seek them out as mentors, and thought partners at all levels of the organization.
5. **Focus on Solutions, Not Blame-** It doesn't take any particular talent to criticize or find fault with someone else's idea or to publicly disagree with a decision from "above". The ability to actively support an idea that you may not entirely disagree with is part of your job. You should either propose a more appropriate solution or do your part. Most people see a whiner as either ineffective or disloyal, sometimes both.
6. **Enthusiasm is Contagious-** Working around people with a tremendous amount of energy and excitement is a benefit in itself. It catches on when you demonstrate a positive attitude and a commitment to do the best job possible.
7. **Go For It!** – Don't wait for opportunities to contribute to the business to show up at your doorstep. In most organizations there are all kinds of opportunities to make the organization a better place, solve a problem, or contribute. They may not be in your immediate span of control, but don't let that stop you. Look for the opportunity to collaborate and share the success. Remember, he who hesitates is lost.

I am not arrogant enough to present myself as a role model that I do these seven things consistently, but I am committed to working at it, think about an environment where you, your peers and your staff were committed to following these "habits" on a consistent basis. I would be willing to state that your productivity and the work environment would

be positively impacted to a significant degree. It starts with one person – maybe that person is you.

Mark F Herbert & Associates, Inc is a management-consulting firm offering organizationally specific solutions to companies and organizations on a regional and national basis. Mark F. Herbert is president and principal consultant. He has been a speaker regionally and nationally on HR related topics.