

## Managing the Masses



### Help High Volume Managers Succeed

**H**ave you ever seen a great working sheepdog? They are amazing. They dart back and forth guiding the sheep away from danger, to the location the farmer points out. Check out this [video](#) about sheepdogs. I found it while I was pondering the ups and downs of managing a high volume of employees. When a sheepdog is a puppy, they begin their training with the farmer; then they are exposed to the sheep. In the [video](#) I laughed out loud when the 5 month old puppy was first introduced to the sheep. The pup just went wild, chasing the sheep back and forth....intense, but not very productive. It was a sharp contrast to the skilled dog at the end of the video. The dog at the end guided the sheep, set boundaries for them and with the slightest move could manipulate the herd like a conductor. That dog brought the farmer measured, daily results.

Managing a large number of people requires a similar high level of skill. It requires perspective, emotional intelligence, decision-making abilities, vision, and the ability to delegate. In high volume environments, like call centers – it can be challenging to try to bring the corporate vision to every employee during the course of a workday. These environments can present additional challenges when the managers of some departments are new to managing. Their experience in the company may have been great, but they need leadership training. Like the sheepdog, a lot of new managers enter the job with pure adrenaline. They enthusiastically try to chase success or intimidate employees into cooperation, when simply setting the boundaries and guiding trained, well-informed employees would bring a lot more success.

#### Train your Managers

Invest in your managers and *prepare them for a leadership role* with sound leadership, and management training. They will be able to solve a higher level of departmental problems before they have to approach leadership about an issue, saving production time and money.

#### Train your Employees

Teach each manager how to fully train their team at the *front end* of their on-boarding process. Invest in thorough training, training materials, and daily operations guides for the employees in each department. If you don't have designated training specialists, and your budget is limited...find a way to get complete information to your employees.

Clearly define, in your training, your employees' scope of decision-making authority. They will be able to interface with your clients with confidence, and when fully armed with information, can handle a majority of situations on their own. They will only contact managers in extreme situations, saving the manager time, and saving the company money. What would it be like if your managers could spend a larger part of their time planning for the future – setting new departmental goals and developing vision?

#### Share Company, Leadership, and Departmental Vision

##### Get your Managers on Board

Managing a large number of people can be stressful. Your managers need to be tapped into company vision. Share your company's big-picture goals with each of your managers, and let them know how their department plays a role in the process. Transparency with internal leadership could give your managerial team a deeper buy-in to company aspirations...it can also help them engage their constituents.

##### Engage the Masses

Get your employees on board through the influence of their managers. The manager of each department has a great influence over the way your company is viewed as a whole. Let your managers know that it is important to have their employees understand, value and align with company goals. Set specific standards for this through arranging a 5-10 minute meeting between managers and employees once a week. (If you are in a call center or time-sensitive environment, you can stagger this time.) This time can be designated to let the employees know what the goals of the company are, where their department and specific role fit in, and what progress has been made to date. Give clear rewards for specific markers in their goals. Employee engagement is probably one of the highest deciding factors in production level. A recent survey revealed that 70% of American workers are disengaged. Yes, 70%. Don't let your managers, your employees or your production levels be a part of this statistic.

##### The Rewards of Progress

Let your management team know when they are doing a good job. They are responsible for a large number of people, and ideally, they are finding ways to recognize their team every day. Recognize progress and daily accomplishments made by your managers, and make it public. Managers, too, need to know that they are valued and should be recognized when they are making a difference at work.

Direct managers have one of the highest levels of employee influence in an organization. They are the face of your corporation to your employees on a daily basis. Invest in their success, listen to and consider their ideas for change, and you will build a reputation for being a great place to work. The beginning of this recovery has been a busy time for many high volume employers. Managers are responsible for an increased number of employees in growing departments. Make sure your managers are prepared to lead with vision, guide with wisdom and succeed with their teams.