

## Turn Your Employees into Leaders

Managers should always have an exit strategy. Because if you receive a promotion or new position, you'll need to have a plan in place for your departure including a suggestion for someone to fill your role. And that means you need to be preparing your employees for leadership now.

But being a manager isn't all about you and your goals either. It's important to instill leadership skills in your employees for the good of their careers, too. When they're equipped with management skills, they'll be able to make informed decisions, guide their peers, and be better qualified for opportunities that come their way. And it will make your job as a manager more fulfilling.

As a business owner, you're looking at it a little differently. You are not necessarily preparing them to take over for you (but that may be the case someday); what you're really doing is preparing them to help you succeed in whatever business you own. This will make you more efficient and a better boss.

### **1. Teach Them to Network**

This is so important! I have been networking for a long time (too long!) and this essential skill has helped me to grow many businesses including my own.

Even if you dread the events, even if you find them terribly awkward, force yourself to attend. You will learn how to make connections with strangers, confidently initiate conversations, and ask for something you need or want.

And these are key skills for leaders at any level. That is why, as a manager, you must teach your employees how to effectively network as soon as possible. When they progress into leadership roles, they'll already have valuable contacts, plus the people skills needed to succeed.

If you struggle with this as a manager, or you need a company-wide networking lesson, click [HERE](#)

### **2. Give Them the Right Experience**

As you give out projects and assignments, give some thought to the unique duties you have as a manager. These are the skills that your employees may not know but should if they want to move up within the organization. Then, find ways for your employees to start gaining experience in these areas.

### **3. Allow Them to Struggle a Little**

When an employee needs help with a task, he or she typically comes to you, so you can either take over or provide the information that they need to accomplish the task.

But when you're coaching your employees to become leaders, I've found that it's more beneficial to push them to figure out how to get what they need on their own. This doesn't mean you leave them alone; it just means that little by little you allow your employees to take on more responsibility in figuring it out by asking them questions that will make them think and hopefully solve it by themselves.

#### **4. Be a Mentor**

As you're helping your employees gain leadership skills, you'll likely take on a mentor-mentee relationship with them. And this natural progression is a very beneficial tool to continue honing their leadership skills.

Seek out opportunities to meet with your employees one-on-one to talk about their goals, ideas they want to implement, or any struggles they're facing. Your advice will provide valuable insight and encouragement.

#### **5. Create an Ownership Mentality**

Most importantly, you can coach people in leadership day after day, but they won't actually use those skills unless they feel like a trusted, valued part of the company. Think about it: If you teach your employees how to make smart, informed decisions, but still require that they run every idea by you before they're allowed to make a move, how empowered will they feel?

Creating an ownership mentality starts with trusting your employees and giving them the authority to make certain decisions. This can also mean listening to and implementing some of their ideas.

As you create these five skills as part of your normal routine, and you make your employees feel like integral parts of the company, you will see who naturally rises to the occasion and emerges as leaders.