



People Development Skills for Leaders Who Hate Developing People

Many leaders find it hard to develop others. They are confused with why they should do it and how they should do it, so they ultimately end up avoiding the task all together. The aversion often starts with a set of beliefs that assumes people can do it on their own and should know what do with minimal direction. These leaders may also point to their perception that nobody held their hand, so why should they hold the hand of others? That perspective is often overstated and certainly expensive. Lack or delay of key skills in top talent is arguably one of the biggest inhibitors to high performance in an organization. Development of talent is a key requirement of leaders, whether they like it or not.

Below you will find Gary's **9 Keys to Successful People Development for Leaders who Hate Developing People:**

1. Accept the role. When you accept a leadership position, it means you have to be more than an individual contributor. Leadership means taking responsibility for helping people grow.
2. Have real development conversations. Real development conversations generate clarity around a behavior or skill that will enhance performance. Examples include being able to lead with influence, creating value through collaboration, or increasing productivity through innovation. Poor conversations result in simple regurgitation of goals that are part of the job, such as setting up a team to better handle corrective actions.
3. Put the onus on the person being developed to come up with potential ideas. Don't fall into the trap of having to scratch your head on what they need. DO prime the pump by giving examples of goals that might apply.
4. Distinguish between the skeleton of a goal and the guts of a goal. People can mistake a "SMART" goal for a complete goal. It is not; it is merely the bare skeleton. The "guts" of a goal requires more. I use the acronym GAS: a gap the person cares about, alignment with the organization, and significance in terms of making a material impact on the organization. It does not matter if the goal is logical. Goals must be emotionally engaging to the person and mean something to them and the organization.
5. Go back to the four buckets. Nearly all leadership activities can be boiled down to four buckets of activity: operating results, people development (including recruiting and retaining talent), innovation, and strategy. Goals for development can be related to or support any of these four.
6. DNSSSM (Do not suffer sloppy success measures). Successful people do not suffer fools easily. Neither should they suffer success measures that are fuzzy or merely state a step that will be taken. The person you are developing must be able to come up with

qualitative or quantitative evidence that they have improved. Sloppy: I will have meetings to generate innovation ideas with my team. Better: My team will formally generate more ideas to improve time to cash. At least one will be proposed to division management.

7. Distill and calendar. Be sure the product of the conversation (goal, steps, and success measures) is distilled in writing. If it is not written down, it will not happen because “it” will have evaporated or become watered down. Ensure a cadence of accountability and just put scheduled follow-up in the calendar—right now.
8. Make it feel good to win. If the development goal is done correctly, then it will be important (perhaps imperative) to achieve. If so, then link to rewards: financial, advancement, or recognition.
9. Delegate but not abdicate. Sometimes the best thing a leader can do is get their top performers an outside expert to assist in the goal and plan development. Using outside coaches is common. Many leaders often get outside support in the context of formal leadership programs. Outside resources like these can help free up a leader’s valuable time. That does not, however, relieve the leader from playing a key role to support the process, keeping the bar high, and measuring results.

It is common for high performers to themselves struggle with how to support the development of others. Having the right mindset is key. The keys to success outlined have been proven to help many others with the same challenge. Who knows, these leaders may even find that they actually enjoy developing others.

For more information on how to get the best out of yourself and others, please feel free to contact me directly.

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