

Being an Engaging Manager

Hi, there. Well, today we are going to be exploring what engaging managers do. Why engaging? The reason is pretty simple. If you're not engaging the people around you, then guess what, you're probably not doing your job as a manager. So, we're gonna share with you three things that managers do that help them engage better.

Tip #1 – Make Yourself Available

Most managers seem to think that in order to impress their subordinates, they've got to appear really really busy. So we end up rushing from deadline to deadline, meeting to meeting, you know just sort of buzzing around the office looking really really hassled. Guess what, if you're looking so busy and so hassled that your subordinates are not feeling comfortable approaching you because they think that their issues are so trivial. They're gonna find that guidance somewhere else, and the dangerous thing is, that somewhere else might be in a different organisation. So do yourselves a favour, make yourself available.

So how do you know that you've actually made yourself available? Here's something simple that you can do. Why don't you open up your diary and check your calendar. Is there a slot in there that is dedicated to your teams and for your team members to approach you. If not, then you probably have not made yourself available.

Tip #2 – Tough Love

There are two types of managers I've had the fortune or misfortune to work with. First type of managers, I call them "The Bullies". The bullies are the kind of managers who you know, give unnecessary work, really really tight deadlines, they pass cruel remarks about the quality of work that's produced. They do this on the context of making people stronger, making people more resilient but what they actually end up doing is basically driving people further and further away from them. The second type of manager, is what I call "The Mollycoddler", the mollycoddler is the exact opposite of the bully. We smother the people with love, we care for them so much by protecting them from the harshness of life. We defend them against tough bosses, and when really tough work comes their way we say, "Its okay, I love you so much. I'll do it for you".

Well engaging managers are basically a balance between the two, and this is the concept of tough love. To be able to be tough but fair, to say that, I understand what you're going through but I will not back down on the high standards that I have set for you. This is really difficult to implement while the concept is simple, you've got to be tough but fair, and I keep emphasising because that is really really important. So tough love basically says, look do they know why you're being tough on them? And do they know how they're gonna benefit by you being hard on them?

Tip #3 – You’ve got to help people see the possibilities

What do I mean by this? Most of the time, the managers that I work with, they help other people see impossibilities than possibilities. We tell them about their KPIs, we tell them about their KRAs, we tell them about what we want them to achieve and then unfortunately, we proceed to tell them about all the different ways they will never be able to achieve this things because it’s too difficult, you know, the things that you’re doing are wrong, I’ve done it before, so it can’t be done that way and so on and so forth. Engaging managers have got to learn to build a balance between telling them what is realistic but at the same time allowing them the creativity and the freedom to try, even if it sometimes means failure. Now of course, you provide a safe environment for them to fail but sometimes failure is the best lesson itself.

So helping people see possibilities comes from two perspectives, possibilities in terms of work that they do. While we may think we have done it all before, in our learning curve and in our experiences, guess what, you probably haven’t. The other aspect of learning to see possibilities, is helping them see possibilities in themselves. Unleashing potential. So sometimes in the journey and allowing them to fail, helps them see and open up possibilities and potential about themselves that previously may not have seen before, and that's what engaging managers really really do well in.

But you know, not too long ago, managers needed to be masters at their job. Then after a while, they were required to become teachers of the job. Well in today’s day and age, in the age of technology and the age of information, you don't really need that anymore. What we do need, are masters of engagement, managers who are able to inspire and encourage growth by allowing the freedom and the creativity for a person to blossom into their true potential. So if you’re not doing that, then I would like to suggest you start practicing the three tips that we have just shared with you.