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| SIDE BAR design-final-PNG-02 | Performance Management  Be the Boss Everyone Wants to Work for or the Employee Every Boss Wants to Keep  Presented by:  Mary Kay LaBrie |

Performance Management

# Introduction

Times have changed.  Companies are no longer loyal to employees and employees often stay in a place of employment for only an average of five years.   We’ve known for many years now that “Managers Trump Companies.”  People don’t leave companies, they leave bad bosses.  Additionally there are many (often false) narratives about work ethic and generational differences that cloud a boss’s perception of an employee and how that person approaches his or her work.   In this fast-paced two hour session, bosses will discover the elements of an effective performance management system which will help employees define and reach goals and will also provide clear direction and a method of feedback.  But what if you don’t currently supervise anyone?  This session is also for you as you’ll discover work habits that annoy bosses, how to replace bad habits with productive ones, and how to manage your own performance so that your boss doesn’t feel the need to micromanage.  Go from getting looked over for promotion to becoming “Indispensible you.”

# Topics

Discard false narratives

Develop an effective performance management system

Set clear goals, define expectations, and provide feedback

Avoid work habits that annoy bosses

Replace bad habits with productive practices

Manage your own performance

# The Danger of Creating False Narratives

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, “A **narrative** or **story** is any [report](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report) of connected events, [actual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonfiction) or [imaginary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiction), presented in a sequence of written or spoken words, or still or [moving](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_picture) images.”

False narratives are based largely on our perceptions. While it’s true that “perception is reality,” our reality isn’t always centered in fact or solid evidence. More often it is a product of our emotions, our world view, or our interpretation. When we interpret a situation or event, we often delete or distort information to fit our false narrative. The danger in doing so is that this can cause us to make sweeping generalizations.

Think about the current political cycle and all of the colorful dialogue that’s you’ve been hearing on the television or reading about. Political polarization occurs when people look at the same event or a person or situation in completely different ways. Politicians count on our innate human tendency to interpret things in the way we most comfortable hearing them. That is why even though politicians post their position papers online, even those who take the time to read them often go with the interpretation based on their own core belief system even if that clouds the facts which might be right in front of them. From there, we go on to make these “sweeping generalizations.”

Sweeping generalizations aren’t always negative. Read those sentences to yourself and try to insert both positive and negative meanings into the blanks.

### Examples:

“People who (do or don’t) believe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (are or aren’t) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

“People who are a fan of this TV show (are or aren’t) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

“People who believe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

## Why is this Mindset Dangerous?

Interestingly, whether or not the generalization we make is positive or negative, we feel good about going there. Sometimes we even feel smug about it. We are right in our view, and no matter what anyone else says or does it’s not going to change our mind.

Unless you have a very high level of self-awareness, few of us are immune to making even the occasional sweeping generalization. The problem lies in when we go there so often that it begins to impact our health and well being in our life or at work.

Author Todd Henry writes about how false narratives can “derail your life:”

**Life Example:** “I really can’t afford a new car, but unless I drive a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ my clients won’t think I’m successful.” So you buy a car you can’t afford and you go into debt.

**Work Example:** “That employee is extremely technical so I will keep him in spite of the fact that he doesn’t get along well with other team members.” The employee engages in conflict with other team members and several good employees resign as they can’t work with him.

The first example can be devastating to your budget. The second can be devastating to your team and your own success as a manager.

## THE WORK ETHIC UMBRELLA

Poor behaviors need to be addressed and addressed in a timely manner, period. But don’t fall into the common trap that many managers make by generalizing the behavior into something that cannot be communicated. One of the most common “false narratives” that managers make is tying the behavior they are observing to an “umbrella” such as “work ethic.”

SCENARIO:

You are sitting at lunch with another manager and she says to you,

“I may need to let John go. He doesn’t seem to have a very good work ethic.”

What thoughts would run through your mind at that moment? What generalizations might you make about what’s happening or not happening with John’s performance? Even before you begin to ask questions of your colleague, chances are you would fall into the trap of forming pre conceived notions about what is going on with John. Those “pre conceived” notions might keep you from asking certain questions that would bring actual light or clarification to the surface. This may cause you to add words to your questions; you might ask “leading questions” which would cause you to hear what you want to hear rather than find out what’s actually going on.

Label



Real Problem

Here is an example – Here is a short list of the five common elements of efficient work ethic from -

Globalpost.com

Honest

Refrains from Gossip

Values diversity

Respects others

Cooperative

Do you agree?

If not, what is and what is not on your list and why?

## BREAKING WORK ETHIC DOWN

The first and most evident point of the exercise you just completed is that we may or may not all agree on what comprises a good work ethic. Chances are that the employee and you might not look at “work ethic” in the same way. If you tell something that you are questioning their work ethic, there are numerous different ways the person might interpret that.

The second point we want you to take away is that even if and the employee agree on what comprises work ethic, when we go “long” with our feedback, meaning we are too broad with it, confusion in interpretation can still occur.

Imagine both you and your employee think that gossip is counter-productive to work ethic. When you say to your employee, “You need to stop all of the gossip,” you are, essentially “going long.” You’re letting the employee fill in too many of the blanks. The employee might even become defensive is what he or she interprets as gossip isn’t what he or she thinks they are actually doing.

“I am not a gossip! I needed to vent about George!”

## GOING “NARROW”

So, how can you go “narrow,” meaning how can you give feedback that is narrow enough to impact employee behavior?

### Exercise”

Let’s take the word “cooperative.” Think of a time when you had to give an employee feedback on being either cooperative or uncooperative. Your group will be assigned one word to cover for the exercise.

What did cooperative or uncooperative look like?

What behaviors were exhibited?

What didn’t happen or wasn’t happening?

What was the “tipping point?”

Note: A “tipping point” is a behavior or incident that made you want to talk to the individual about the behavior. If you are not currently in a manager role, think of a time when you saw these characteristics in others and if you were their manager, how would you define the behavior?

Once you have outlined your answers to the four questions (above), I want you to think about your opening statement to the employee based on the most critical point of the conversation; what do you want them to do or stop doing immediately?

YOU WILL GET THE BEST RESULTS WITH FEEDBACK IF YOU ARE SPECIFIC!

## A NOTE ABOUT LABELS – THE SELF-FULLFILLING PROPHOCY

When we label employees as being lazy, disorganized, slow to learn, the employee often puts on the label. You’ll want to make sure that you’re not creating a monster by unfairly labeling a behavior. The best way to do that is to start with what you are seeing versus not seeing and then ask the employee, “What’s going on.” Let the employee tell you what’s really happening. You might be surprised.

## Generational Differences

One of the top concerns among baby boomer and Generation X managers is how to manage the millennial worker. Watch this video and use this space to take notes:

So what about Millennials?

What problems, if any, have you seen in your workplace?

What solutions have you tried?

Have those solutions been successful or unsuccessful?

What else might work?

## Busting False Awareness

One of the most common reasons that managers use umbrella statements or go “long” when they give feedback is that the manager isn’t fully immersed in the “moment.”

Take a look at this video. How aware were you of what was really going on?

Everyone is busy. The more aware you are about your surroundings and the more willing you are as a manager to put aside any false narratives in favor of productive feedback, the more effective you will likely be in resolving performance issues.

# Your Performance Management System

The website Aboutmoney.com determined the following list of performance management tools that any manager can deploy in his or her own department regardless of your organization’s global performance development process. The two areas which are bolded are the areas we are going to discuss in more detail.

Develop yourself first - Are you ready to lead?

Develop an atmosphere of trust – Do your employees trust your motives?

Turn meetings into learning opportunities – Lunch and learns and think tanks work!

Ask questions – Share the big and little picture.

Delegate – Don’t get stuck doing all the work you did before you were promoted.

Give stretch assignments - Challenge employees

Help employees navigate politics and the culture – Do you understand it?

## An Atmosphere of Trust

Do you engage in gossip?

Do you play favorites?

Are you friends with people you supervise?

Do you make your personal feelings known?

Do you make decisions subjectively?

Do you know how to listen?



## Ask Questions - The Big and the Little Picture



Challenge: Think of a common situation which occurs in your workplace. What’s the big versus the little picture?

# Expectations and Directions that People Can Follow

Supervisors and managers often leave employees to work in a vacuum. Employees are often left without much support and without much task structure. On the flipside, there is always the concern about micro-managing.

Leadership styles or strategies can be selected to reflect the need for support or structure. A leader needs to demonstrate his or her ability to adjust their approach to these two dimensions of managerial leadership.

This ***Work Order Game A*** simulates a typical patient test or task assignment. Participants are delegated a task with clear output criteria but without any useful performance support or structure.

The second round of the activity (***Game B***) will utilize “coaching cards.”

Both activities use Tangram puzzles. Tangram puzzles were invented in ancient China and have been used for centuries. They were popular in Victorian England.

Tangram puzzles make use of a set of seven pieces cut from a square.

Listen carefully for instructions from the facilitator before you attempt to being this exercise.

USE THIS SPACE TO TAKE NOTES AFTER EACH EXERCISE:

## Make_a_tangramSummary of Learning Points – Game A

Level of challenge was reasonably high.

The pressure was on!

The performance problems were made to be the employee’s fault.

Dubious reward systems were applied.

Employees worked in a vacuum.

Pure delegation was used instead of a coaching or instructing style.

Couldn’t really “learn” from the experience.

## Summary of Learning Points – Game B

Coaching was used instead of delegating.

Plenty of support and structure were provided – also instruction – more information and feedback.

# Six Work Habits that Annoy Bosses – The Hub Business

Procrastination

Negative thinking

Dishonesty

Lateness

Gossiping

Resisting change

Poor personal hygiene is also cited as a pet peeve.

Which of the above have you been guilty of in the past?

Was there any outside factor which caused you to fall into that trap?

How did you take personal responsibility in getting out of that rut?

“In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.”   
― [***Eleanor Roosevelt***](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/44566.Eleanor_Roosevelt)

# Replace Bad Habits with Productive Practices – Business News Daily

Act immediately on phone messages.

Prepare for tomorrow until today.

Don’t sit at a desk all day.

Organize your tasks.

Stand up when you take phone calls.

Stick to a schedule.

Learn to say no.

Don’t let email take over your day.

Stay off of social media while at work.

Use technology.

# Manage Your Own Performance – Various Sources

Identify your strengths

Use your strengths to perform

Develop good management skills to help you perform at your best

Create more discretionary time (time which you control)

Find energy sources and use that energy to be re-charged, refreshed and creative

Focus on delivering meaningful outcomes

Get the right work-life balance

# Final Thoughts

You’ve probably taken away something valuable from this session, but in two hours we can only cover so much.

Let’s take a few moments and discuss what else you need to be “The boss everyone wants to work for or the employee everyone wants to keep.”

Our list along with extra tips will be emailed to anyone who signs up on the “I want more information lists” at the end of each of your tables. Please write your email address clearly.

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