



## Productivity

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### **More Than a Manager: How to Become a Coaching Leader**

Traditional wisdom tells us the professional and the personal just don't mix. This principle can be seen in many corporate cultures in which workers are required to leave their private concerns at the door. Yet, as the talent pool shrinks, more and more employees are opting for organizations that take an active interest in both the personal and professional needs of their workforce.

In the past, money was the main motivator for high-performing talent to switch jobs. But today, many people take pay cuts for the opportunity to do more rewarding work, be part of a better culture, or work with more interesting people.

Companies that respond positively to this paradigm shift will experience greater productivity and higher retention rates than those that do not, said Daniel Harkavy, CEO of Building Champions, an executive and leadership coaching firm.

"Employees are looking at the workplace differently today than they did 30 years ago — today's workforce wants to belong, and they're looking at their work as something that is more than just a paycheck," he said. "They want to experience more and become more, not just on the job but outside of work, as well."

In his book, "Becoming a Coaching Leader," Harkavy outlines the "core four" principles that leaders can use to help their team members experience more success in both their personal and professional lives.

Leaders who take a proactive interest in helping their workers develop a full life plan, define their business vision, execute a business plan and improve their priority-management skills will have a positive impact on their team members' lives and experience an increase in their teams' productivity, he said.

For instance, one of Building Champions' clients, a national financial services company with about 2,000 salespeople, recently compared the performance of workers partnered with a

coaching leader with those who were not. Depending on their starting performance level, the employees who were coached outperformed those who were not by 22 percent to 66 percent, Harkavy said.

Workers' relationships with first-line managers often determine whether they stay with or leave an organization, so cultivating trusting, sincere relationships between leaders and their teams also helps reduce turnover, Harkavy said.

Having close ties with their workforce also can help leaders address personal problems that can reduce an individual's productivity, he explained. Being close enough with a team member to be aware of his or her personal concerns and offering some form of assistance puts leaders in a position to keep that worker on track during tough times and reduces the risk of decreased productivity and, potentially, termination, he said.

Leaders who understand their team members' personal lives and have a rapport that allows them to intercede when things go wrong are much more effective than those who ignore these kinds of problems and simply hire someone new when a worker's routine breaks down.

"I think we fool ourselves to think that we're going to get employees who are going to have this healthy succession in how their lives go. We're smarter to understand that employees are going to encounter challenges," Harkavy said. "What we do as coaching leaders is surround ourselves with good outsourcing partners that we have confidence in, so that when we do have an employee dealing with a problem, we know where to direct them."

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*Article by Tegan Jones, associate editor for Talent Management Magazine. Published May 2007.*