

Ten New Year's Resolutions for Managers

By Dr. Jan Ferri-Reed

When a new year arrives it becomes customary to formulate some resolutions for the next 12 months. But rather than wrestle with the usual goals about of money, health, or relationships, managers may wish to consider resolutions dealing with ways to improve their supervisory skills and maximize success for themselves and their employees. Below are goals to consider for a productive, successful year ahead. So, for 2017 managers should consider the following resolutions:

Set S.M.A.R.T. goals with each employee

Employees need to be fully involved in deciding what needs to be accomplished, how it should be done and by when. But to be effective they also need to be SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. This is the best way to assure goals are met.

Manage by Walking Around

Don't fall into the trap of holing up in your office completing paperwork, filling out forms, making phone calls, and writing reports. Get out of your office regularly and put in a little 'face time' with each of your employees. They'll appreciate the personal touch and you'll benefit by keeping close tabs on their progress.

Cultivate your own replacement

Any supervisor interested in moving up the organization has to make sure that somebody below them is also ready to move up to your position. If you're too invaluable to your own department you may be doomed to stay in that position forever.

Listen, listen, and listen!

Contrary to what many managers believe listening is not a passive activity, but a skill to be practiced every day. The first rule of effective listening is to shut up! The second rule is to make sure you've heard the other person accurately. The skill of listening may be the most important tool in the manager's toolbox and the tool used the least.

Tackle your time wasters

We all have them. Tasks, obligations, busywork, reports, and many other pursuits that dominate our time but probably yield few concrete results. But time wasters have a way of making us feel we're accomplishing something when we're actually accomplishing little of true importance. You have to stick with tasks that have the most impact on your employees and your organization.

Don't take yourself (too) seriously

A manager's job is making sure employees have the necessary tools and direction to get the job done. Not to do the work itself. Managers are far less vital to the final results than workers are. If the employees in any given department mysteriously

disappeared the work would come to a grinding halt. If that same department's manager disappeared instead the work would probably continue as before.

Give delegation a chance

Many managers have a problem delegating effectively. That's because delegating is more than just assigning a task to be completed. To delegate effectively managers also have to be willing to give up their authority, and possibly a certain amount of power as well. But, if we expect the task to be done properly we have to give up both responsibility and authority.

Polish your crystal ball

Nobody knows for certain what the future holds. Still, it's a manager's job to anticipate needs, problems, opportunities and threats that may impact his or her employees. Thinking about potential threats and opportunities is the best way to avoid problems down the road. Failing to plan ahead could well be planning to fail. Keep that Crystal Ball polished!

Embrace conflict

Most people prefer to avoid conflict and managers are no exception. But conflict may also be the lubrication that smooth's the way to the future. The clash of ideas, as well as the clash of personalities, can either be instructive or destructive. It's up to each of us to embrace one or the other. We may not always wish to promote conflict but we need to recognize that without conflict there might not be progress. So get out your pencil and paper and start making that list of resolutions that will drive your departmental success over the coming year!

ABOUT JAN:

Jan is a seasoned consultant and President of KEYGroup®, a 35-year international speaking, training, coaching and assessment firm and co-author of ***Keeping the Millennials: Why Companies are Losing Billions in Turnover to This Generation and What To Do About It***, and the author of ***Millennials 2.0: Empowering Generation Y***. Jan's work focuses on creating productive workplaces and retaining talent while increasing the bottom line.

Publications and media that have called on Jan and KEYGroup® for advice and guidance include Industry Week, TIME, Diversity Executive, NPR and Forbes, to name a few.

