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By Bob Kustka

Are You Developing Your People?

For years, I've been asking groups of business professionals and managers this question: If a developmental manager is someone who engages you in conversations about your progress and looks for opportunities for you to develop further, how many of you have ever worked for a developmental manager in your career?

Usually about a third of the room will say they have had one boss or manager like that. Almost no one raises their hands when I ask if they've had more than one. While not very scientific, this demonstrates that we still need to improve our focus on developing people.

Here's how to start:

1. Create a folder for everyone who reports directly to you. In it, put the top three things that would help them improve both themselves and their contribution to the business.
2. Schedule regular planning sessions with each individual. These can happen monthly, but should occur at least quarterly. Ask them to come to the meeting prepared to talk about their own development.
3. Be open and honest in the meeting. Tell them what you're prepared to do and what you're not. Don't make promises.
4. Ask them what they would like you to help with. Tell them you're prepared to assist, but the onus for development rests ultimately with them.
5. Give them homework, something they must think about or do before the next meeting.

Follow these steps and you'll increase the value you get from each and every one of your employees.

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