

Best Business Practices (12/04/17)

Web Article

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8 Best Practices in Business Management

A great business leader is someone who can motivate their team and follow business management best practices for success. Business management is the process by which a company gets its employees to produce the greatest results with the least amount of effort using the resources available to them. Attending a **master's degree program in business administration** allows you to study what motivates employees to work efficiently and shows you some best practices for making an organization culturally effective. Based on the work of **Patrick Lencioni**, the best-selling author of 10 business management books, the following eight practices can transform a struggling business into a streamlined system in which employees are inspired to produce their best work.

1. Engage Workers

Alienated workers do not care about performing their jobs. All they care about is getting a paycheck and advancing their own interests. The first thing a manager needs to do is find out how to make his employees care about the company's vision. **Engaged workers** are not only more enthusiastic and productive; they also become less passive, taking responsibility for their performance and attracting fresh talent to the company.

2. Reward Effort

No one likes their work to go unrecognized. Recognition of effort and achievement – **thanks** for a job well done – makes employees feel valued. It seems like an obvious point, but often business management training overlooks the positive impact of appreciation. Some managers might even feel that being too "touchy-feely" undermines their authority. On the contrary, reward motivates people to achieve more and helps to build company loyalty.

3. Be Vulnerable

Vulnerability is a recurring theme in Lencioni's business management articles. He believes that managers need to stop being anonymous figures in the lives of junior employees and that getting to know employees

is one of the best ways for management to engage their workers. He also sees vulnerability as crucial in team dynamics; without being able to speak openly and put one's ideas on the spot, it is impossible for teams to build trust.

4. Stay Committed

When team members don't trust each other, they devote a lot of time to avoiding conflict rather than airing their real opinions and working to find common ground. A state of perpetual ambiguity ensues, in which clear goals and strategies fail to emerge out of group discussion. Lencioni labels this **lack of commitment** the "third dysfunction" of team dynamics. It can lead to poor decision making and stifle productivity. Staying committed to the team's initiative means creating an atmosphere where conflict is welcomed, not feared, because differing perspectives help to shape a clear goal.

5. Seek Clarity

A problem with many companies is a lack of alignment among managers, who either stop working to fulfill the company's vision or never understood what that vision was. Lencioni points out that company's need to focus on alignment of core principles by asking the following **six questions**:

- Why do we exist?
- How do we behave?
- What do we do?
- How will we succeed?
- What is most important, right now?
- Who must do what?

Without leaders developing – and sharing – a clear sense of the company's vision, its values, its strategic goals, and its delegation of responsibilities, the best business management education in the world won't matter, because the company will lack purpose and direction.

6. Create Cultural Cohesiveness

Here, "culture" doesn't refer to socioeconomic status or ethnicity. Rather, it means a sense of shared values that, with the right level of engagement, will lead to the development of productive and efficient outcomes. It is a good business management practice to make new hires based on an alignment with the company's core values and its vision, because workers with shared values make good team members. Diversity of race, gender, and socioeconomic status is a positive thing because it increases collective insight. But, diversity in values can lead to a company's downfall.

7. Focus Team Effort

Sometimes managers invest the bulk of their energy on making sure that the team gets off on the right foot, hosting retreats to boost solidarity and being attentive to ideas as they first come out. It's essential to focus on ongoing team dynamics, however, to make sure that members don't get distracted by individual activities that lead them off track. Consistent reassessment and realignment of team goals is the way to achieve the best results.

8. Hold Regular Meetings

In an overview of his book, **The Advantage**, Lencioni has this to say about the importance of meetings to a company's success: "No action, activity or process is more central to creating a healthy organization than the meeting." He suggests that, in order to be fully successful, management should do the following:

- Create separate meetings for **tactical and strategic** business planning.
- Assess a tactical agenda only after the team has reviewed its progress against goals.
- Make sure there is enough time allocated for the clarification, debate, and resolution of major issues.
- Meet quarterly outside the office to review what is happening in the industry, the company, and the team.

Meetings provide the organization with a regular forum on core values, allowing members to realign principles and give perspective on business practices.

In order to succeed in a competitive field like business management, you need to stay true to yourself before you can hope to have a meaningful impact on the organization you represent. Ultimately, the best practices are ones that focus on your developing authentic connections among yourself, the junior employees, and the company as a whole.