5 REASONS YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE NOT SOLVING PROBLEMS

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#1 *YOU* SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS

TIP #1 Change their perspective by turning "problems" into opportunities.

When your employees come to you with challenges, use the coaching strategy of "ask, don't tell".

Ask them the following 3 questions:

1. What ideas do they have?
2. What have they already tried?
3. What solutions do they recommend to solve the problem?

As an experienced manager or business owner it may be easy to fix your employees' problems, but it doesn't allow them to grow into independent decision makers. By empowering your employees to take initiative, you are allowing their unique talents to flourish so they can become an essential part of your team.

#2 UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS

TIP #2 Set clear expectations around problem solving.

Be transparent to your employees about your expectations of problem solving. As much as we'd like them to, our employees cannot read our minds, which is why it is so important to clearly communicate that you would like them to strengthen their problem solving skills. Have a dialogue about problem solving and be very clear about your expectations and exactly how you would like your employees to approach challenges.

#3 LACK OF PROCESS

TIP #3 Establish a clear problem solving process.

Problem solving is one of the most challenging cognitive functions. With proper systems and strategies set up, problem solving can be easier, more rewarding and longer-lasting. After all, who has time to solve the same problem again and again?! When coming up with a strategy for your team to follow, think about the following concepts:

1. What is the root cause of the problem?
2. What are all the possible options to solve the problem?
3. What option will create the best outcome and why?

Look for a 3-5 step process to consistently follow and encourage your team to do the same.

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L E A D E R S

Be intentional in setting clear expectations about problem solving. Create an environment where the quality of thinking matters, where discipline is valued, and where problem solving can flourish.

#4 ABSENCE OF CRITICAL THINKING

TIP #4 Encourage critical thinking.

Our ability to problem solve is correlated to the quality of our thinking. Critical thinking is not just thinking harder or thinking more. It requires that we think in a way that is free from assumptions, biases, emotions or even social pressure. Coach your employees to be mindful of the way they think in order to improve their problem-solving abilities. Encourage evidence based, fact based thinking.

#5 DESIRE FOR IMMEDIATE RESULTS

TIP #5 Consider this an investment and be patient for the return.

We all want to see results fast, and sometimes it is tempting to jump in and help instead of allowing the (sometimes) lengthy process of problem solving to unfold. But, be strategically patient with your employees during the process. If you jump in too quickly you can inadvertently squash the very skill you are trying to instill, while undermining confidence at the same time. Some employees will have the natural ability to solve problems fast, while others may need time for theirs to develop.