Ten Things a Good Manager Won't Ask Employees To Do

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Millions of words have been written and published about what it takes to become a strong leader. We should talk about another aspect of leadership, which is the fact that it's really hard to be a great leader because the corporate and institutional framework make it much easier to manage badly than to manage well.

Every manager who isn't the CEO of his or her own company has a higher-level manager to report to. That leader may not be keen on a strong leader's desire to treat his or her employees like the adults they are. The higher-level leader may only care about production.

It's hard to be a strong leader because strong leaders have to speak their truth on a frequent basis, and that can be very challenging to do.

We all know that it can be scary to tell the truth. Managers are no different from anybody else. They might hesitate to tell their boss when he or she is wrong, or to stand up for an employee. Yet strong managers do it all the time.
It's easy to look at a strong manager and say "Yeah, well, it's easy for him or her to stand up to the executives, because he or she can get another job quickly if they lose this one" but nobody feels that way about their job.

Nobody takes the view "I could get another job in five minutes if I lose this job, so I'm going to tell people the truth and take the consequences!" We all feel fearful at times. We all stammer and stumble over our words when we're on the spot. It isn't any easier for managers to find their voices and their backbones than it is for anyone else!

That's why we must applaud the strong leaders we know for bringing themselves to work so authentically. Here are ten things strong leaders won't ask their employees to do.

**Strong Leaders Won't Ask Their Employees....**

**To lie to a customer or vendor**

Nearly every working person has run into the situation where an unfortunate employee was forced to fib to or mislead a customer or vendor because their employer didn't want to share the truth. That's not fair and it's not reasonable. Nobody gets paid enough for them to have to tell lies on the job.

**To lie to one another**

If it's bad to make employees lie to customers and vendors, it's ten times worse to force them to lie to one another! Yet this issue crops up in many workplaces, too. Employees might be told "Yes, you need help in your department but the job opening you've been waiting to see approved was put on hold because sales were down last quarter" when sales were actually up last quarter. When people don't want to explain why they've made unpopular decisions, often they will just lie about it.

**To take the blame when something goes wrong**

Strong managers take responsibility for everything that happens in their department. They don't blame employees when something goes wrong. After all, they're in charge. The department is their ship! The captain is responsible for everything that happens on the ship. Strong managers would never expect an employee to take the fall when problems occur.

The manager will say "That's on me -- I should have made sure you were trained on that procedure, Stephanie, before I let you close out the month by yourself. Don't feel bad about it -- it's fine."
To cancel or postpone a scheduled vacation without remuneration

Not everybody can get their first choice of days off when it comes to vacation scheduling, but an employee's scheduled vacation is sacrosanct. Once somebody has paid for airline tickets and booked a hotel, their employer must view their time off as unshakable. We wouldn't change the month-end or quarter-end because an employee had a crisis, so why should an employee change their plans because somebody in the company didn't plan ahead?

If you have to change your employee's vacation plans, you should pay him or her a bonus, and not just reimburse them for expenses associated with changing their vacation dates. Nobody should have to worry that their planned vacation might be ruined because their employer decided that they just couldn't go.

To spy on other employees

No right-thinking manager will ask or require their employees to spy on their teammates, but it still happens. Some lousy managers will say "I want to make sure Gabriel understands how to handle product returns -- will you listen to him when he's on the phone, and let me know if he's doing it right?" That is tacky and unprofessional.

If you want to know how Gabriel handles customers on the phone, sit down next to Gabriel and tell him that you're going to coach him live on the phone. Of course, you'll soon find that Gabriel will be open to your coaching if he trusts you, and not so open if he doesn't.

To follow stupid rules and procedures just because they exist

Lots of companies still have outdated and heavy-handed policies on the books. Lots of organizations have dumb, slow and ineffective policies. A manager's job is to talk to whoever they need to talk to in order to evolve past their foolish policies and create smarter ones. Only weak managers force their employees to adhere to stupid rules "just because." Who could respect a manager who doesn't have the nerve to tell the emperor of rules and policies that the emperor has no clothes?

To keep their opinions and ideas to themselves

Strong managers say "I want to hear your ideas!" Weak managers say "Keep your ideas to yourself!"

To accept a bad performance review when they deserve a good one
We heard from Alana, who had just had her third annual performance review on the job. For two years running Alana had gotten the top rating from her manager.

On her third annual performance review, her manager said "I have to give you a less-than-satisfactory rating this year, Alana. It's not because of your work performance. You do a great job, as I've told you many times. I have to give you a less-than-satisfactory rating because our company forces managers to choose a very small number of people who can receive Average and Above Average reviews, and I have to spread them around."

Alana said "That's ridiculous," and her manager said "I know it, but that's just the way it is." Alana started her stealth job search that night, and she has two interviews scheduled already. Do you think that Alana's manager still deserves to have Alana on her team?

To work for hours without mental and physical breaks

Good managers make sure their teammates take breaks and get up and stretch when they need to. They don't care if people spend a few minutes on YouTube or playing solitaire to clear their minds after they've finished a big task. Weak managers don't care how their employees feel. Their motto is "Why can't you do a little more work before you take a break?"

To keep quiet about things that need to be talked about openly

The last thing strong managers never do to their employees is try to muzzle them. They don't silence people who have something to say. Weak managers don't want their department's or their company's dirty laundry to be aired, but strong managers do! They want to discover problems and solve them fast so their team can keep racing forward. Isn't that what your customers want, too?

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