

Manage to your team's strengths

2nd Quarter 2014 Manager Newsletter



Are you working hard with your team to shore up weaknesses? Try using this quick test to see if it's energy well-spent:

1. Is the team member interested in developing the weakness in question? If so, full speed ahead! If not, go to the next question.
2. Is the team member's weak area an essential skill for his or her job? If so, help him or her bring it up to par. If not, go to the next question.
3. Is the weak area essential for a job the team member wants one day? If so, help him or her bring it up to par.

If the answer to all three questions is "no," maybe your team member doesn't need to develop this weakness. Maybe that energy can be better channeled into building up a strength.

Successful teams focus more on strengths

Think about it. Do you like to do things you're not that good at and don't have an interest in? Most people don't. But when they're using their strengths every day, people often feel happier, more engaged and more productive.

Whenever you can, help your team members shine. You can:

- Praise them during and between performance reviews
- Find out what they're excited to learn
- Assign projects to those you know will excel at them
- Help connect them with mentors who have skills they want to develop
- Give them assignments that lead to growth in directions they want to explore

Sleuthing out hidden strengths

Not everyone knows what they're best at. Some people are still figuring it out.

As a manager, you're in a great position to inspire your team to discover new strengths and start down new development paths. You can search the internet for strength-focused assessments and team-builders to use with your team. Or try asking team members what they think. Then respond with active listening.

You'll find that when your team focuses on strengths, morale, enthusiasm and innovation can really soar. And on a really good day, you can even set a co-worker on a brave new course.