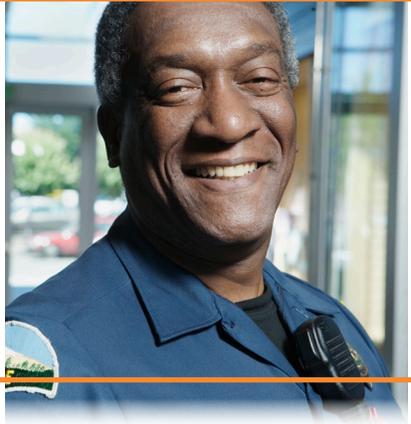


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1st Quarter 2017 Manager Newsletter



Three workplace trends to expect in 2017

The world is full of change. And the workplace isn't immune. With new technology, shifting demographics and other changes, it can help to know what's on the horizon. **More...**



Five signs you're expecting your team to achieve the impossible

It's not only short-staffed teams that can have trouble reaching their metrics and goals. Sometimes there's just too much to do. Or the bar is set too high for them to jump over. **More...**



Supporting a diverse workplace starts with you

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The world is full of change. And the workplace isn't immune. With new technology, shifting demographics and other changes, it can help to know what's on the horizon.

So here are three workplace trends you might see in 2017.

Generation Z

Just when you thought you'd adjusted to Millennials at work, here comes Generation Z. These are the folks born between the mid-1990's and 2010. And they began entering the workplace in 2016. So we'll see even more generations at work as we move forward.

This may create some challenges for managers. Generation Z, a group that was raised in the Internet age, will create an even wider digital gap with their Baby Boomer counterparts. And following the existing narrative of generational conflict, Millennials seems to view Generation Z as lazy.¹ So, as a manager, you may need to prepare yourself for possible conflicts between employees of varying ages.

A wider definition of wellness

There's nothing new about wellness initiatives in the workplace. But moving forward, we may see more of these kinds of programs. And they're likely to be more focused on emotional wellbeing and more expansive than the traditional "call this number" approach.

One thing affecting this change is a growing appreciation for mental health. Groups like The Campaign to Change Direction have focused on raising awareness and reducing stigma. In fact, due to demand, the National Council recently expanded their Mental Health First Aid training to address concerns specific to the workplace.

In the future, your wellness programs likely won't distinguish between mental health and physical health. You'll probably see an effort to highlight more emotional wellbeing through education and techniques like mindfulness and deep breathing.

More frequent performance reviews

Some experts are predicting that the age of annual or bi-annual reviews will soon be a thing of the past.² What will they do instead? Already, more companies are choosing to provide employees with informal and immediate feedback tied to their individual goals.

And there's merit to this change. First, many workers prefer more regular performance check-ins. Secondly, it can be hard to remember the details of a project you worked on six months ago when talking about your accomplishments. Finally, traditional reviews tend to emphasize the past rather than focusing on current performance and future development. And as a manager, current performance and growing your talent is the meat and potatoes of skill development.

We don't know for sure which, if any, of our predictions will materialize this year. The one thing we know is that while you can't always predict what will change, you can be sure that change will happen.

¹ www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2016/11/01/workplace-trends-2017/#6f6af9793457

² hbr.org/2016/10/the-performance-management-revolution

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Five signs you're expecting your team to achieve the impossible

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It's not only short-staffed teams that can have trouble reaching their metrics and goals. Sometimes there's just too much to do. Or the bar is set too high for them to jump over.

Your team members likely want to be at their best. But you can't be too surprised if they stop jumping after getting hurt from trying too hard.

Here are five signs your employees simply can't accomplish what you're asking:

- 1. They use the "u" word.** That's right, they feel unappreciated. Be sure to recognize the good work they're doing.
- 2. They aren't meeting the goals you've set.** Most employees want to please their bosses. But if they don't, take a good look at whether it's because they can't. Do you hear experienced workers complaining that you're setting unreachable goals? If so, you run the risk of burning out your team. And you may want to reconsider the ways you're measuring success.
- 3. Team members seem anxious to move to another area or company.** Chronically expecting too much can motivate your employees in a way you may not have intended — to leave.
- 4. No one talks about significant barriers to success.** All teams run into problems. But a lack of transparency can really hurt your team's morale. That's especially true if your culture doesn't encourage open and honest two-way communication.
- 5. You feel as if you're trying to achieve the impossible.** Your own stress level might be a good indicator of your team's.

Have you seen any of the above signs? If your answer is yes, take stock of your team and company culture. Think about where expectations may be unrealistic.

Find tasks your team is performing that don't add value or meet customer needs. Then decide together to stop doing those things. That can free up extra time and energy to meet the results that matter most. The more you talk about it in a spirit of open and friendly collaboration, the more ideas you'll have to choose between.

Sometimes there's a fine line between expecting the best and demanding the impossible. Remember: A culture of continuous improvement shouldn't cross the line to a state of "never good enough," or worse, "never good." Success should be recognized and celebrated.

Be sure to protect your team from unachievable goals. Consistent praise and realistic expectations go a long way toward building your team's morale.

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Supporting a diverse workplace starts with you

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Today's workforce is becoming more diverse. And that means the workplace needs to adjust. While change can be hard, encouraging understanding and acceptance within your staff is important. Consider these facts¹:

- 34 percent of employees report having more diversity at work than in their personal lives
- 58 percent of employed Americans report seeing or hearing about discrimination or bias at their workplace
- 47 percent of millennials (the fastest growing workplace population) report they consider the diversity and inclusion of a workplace to be important when searching for a job

As a manager, you set the tone for your workplace. So if you want to create an inclusive environment, there's no better place to start than with yourself.

Different kinds of bias

Before we do the work of self-examination, let's take a moment to break down this concept of bias. Technically, bias is negative feeling or opinion about a group. You may have bias toward someone because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation or more.

There are two kinds of bias:

- **Explicit bias.** This bias is something that lives in your conscious awareness. This is the bias you know about and show in your behavior. Explicit bias is unpopular. So it tends to be tempered because people don't want to be seen as prejudiced.
- **Implicit bias.** This bias resides in our unconscious but it can still affect our actions. It's a lot harder to recognize and address.

Finding your bias

Almost everyone has some kind of bias. Even when they care deeply about diversity and inclusion. Take, for example, Mahzarin Banaji, a Harvard professor and immigrant who is passionate about issues of racial equality. She developed a test to show whether or not a person harbors unconscious racial bias.

The test told her she was biased. And no, it wasn't broken. (You can test yourself here — www.implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/)²

So, now we've established that you probably have some kind of bias, take a few moments to examine your own beliefs and behaviors. Ask yourself:

- Where do I tend to have bias in my life?
- Which groups make me feel uncomfortable?
- Where does my bias come from?
- How do I show my bias in my daily life?

Addressing your bias

Knowing about your own bias is an important step. Because things outside of your control may influence your behavior without you knowing it. Once you recognize it, you can work to make sure you're supporting a diverse workplace.

Start noticing your reactions to different coworkers, supervisors and employees. Before you talk to someone who "rubs you the wrong way," take a pause. Think about how you might be biased toward him or her. And strive to see the person for who he or she is, instead of letting your brain run on autopilot.

Diverse workplaces are strong workplaces.³ They attract more talent and retain better employees. And managers who are self-aware not only make better managers, they create better organizations.

¹ www.instituteforpr.org/nearly-half-american-millennials-say-diverse-inclusive-workplace-important-factor-job-search/

² www.upworthy.com/this-test-will-tell-you-whether-youre-prejudiced-without-knowing-it-heres-how-it-works

³ www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2012/07/12/11900/the-top-10-economic-facts-of-diversity-in-the-workplace/

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