

*Mid-Level Leaders
Are The Glue
Between
Strategy and Execution*

Astute leaders know that training
mid-level leaders is a game changer.



Caliente Leadership

Turning Good Leaders into Great Leaders



Mid-Level Leaders Are The Glue Between Strategy and Execution

Mid-level management jobs and leadership positions are extremely challenging.

In today's flatter organizational structures, mid-level leaders are required to handle and juggle a wide range of ever-increasing responsibilities while coping with constantly changing corporate strategies, greater interpersonal conflicts, and team members who are frequently less than highly engaged.

Despite these challenges, mid-level leaders and managers are "the glue between strategy and execution."



Without strong and skilled mid-level leadership in place, your corporate and divisional strategies will likely to go off track, with results falling short of desired goals.

Additionally, mid-level leaders are usually best placed to orchestrate and implement change. For, as Rosabeth Moss Kanter noted in her Harvard

Business Review article *The Middle Manager as Innovator*, in July/August 2004, mid-level leaders and managers "have their finger on the pulse of the operation and can conceive, suggest, and set in motion new ideas that top managers have not thought of."

And yet, there is a tremendous lack of formal leadership training and development in organizations for mid-level leaders.

Leadership Development

In many organizations, training is primarily focused on developing technical skills — creating managers and individual contributors who are knowledgeable and

competent in their respective jobs but who are not trained in the fundamentals of leading people.

"One area of particular weakness in mid-level leaders and new supervisors that I have noticed in my 25 years of international leadership development training is their inability to give relevant,



useful, and beneficial feedback,” notes leadership author Steven Howard.

“In fact,” he adds, “giving feedback is one of the greatest fears of new leaders at all levels of an organization.”

Because of the lack of training in best-practice feedback methods, mid-level leaders can only rely on the feedback processes they have encountered and experienced from their own managers over the years. As a result, bad habits are repeated and promulgated. What should be a factor in increasing employee engagement is often an undesired key disengagement factor.

This is why our mid-level leadership training programs focus on these key skills:

- Personal leadership philosophy and mindset
- Creating a core set of leadership behaviors aligned with the organization’s culture
- Communicating as a leader
- Improving decision-making skills
- Leading teams and people
- Leading people development
- Leading for results
- Ensuring accountability



Without such training, bad leadership habits cannot be nipped in the bud. These bad leadership habits are formed through:

- What was observed in previous bosses
- Repeating own bad habits
- Lack of understanding of own leadership style
- Leading all team members the same way because they do not understand that each team member requires some level of individualized interaction.

From Individual Contributor to Manager/Leader

Transitioning from a successful individual contributor role into a supervisory or manager position is fraught with challenges, concerns, and

worries. This is a profound change for your employees and comes with high risks of failure, personal dissatisfaction, and team disenchantment or disengagement.

Managing individual contributors differs greatly from managing other managers. This is why the leadership training programs for your senior leaders cannot easily cascade down to new supervisors and mid-level leaders. These folks need programs specifically tailored to their



responsibilities, challenges, difficulties, and concerns.

Mid-level leaders can only be effective when given optimal development and training opportunities that enable them to both lead for results and lead diverse groups of people. One without the other causes more harm than good and will cause your strategies to collapse and fail from poor execution, dismal commitment and buy-in from frontline staff, and a lack of innovative solutions when unexpected hurdles and obstacles are encountered.

Additionally, many mid-level leaders today are millennials, who want:

- Personal/professional improvement
- Coaches and mentors
- On-going education opportunities

When these three important career development elements are not present, millennials are quick to jump to other employment opportunities.

Talent is essential to performance. But leaders are busy producing results. Hence too many leaders, particularly in SMEs and privately-

owned companies, lack sufficient time to develop and hone their people leadership and coaching skills. For an in-depth look at this important topic, download our



free article ***Leadership Pipeline Mistakes of SMEs and Privately-Owned Companies***, available on the Caliente Leadership website under Resources/Downloadable Articles.

Additional benefits of developing a strong cadre of mid-level leaders in your organization include:

- Increased employee engagement
- Reduced frontline employee turnover
- Reduced mid-level leader attrition
- Improved outcomes and results
- Greater execution on strategic initiatives

Also, as noted in the book *The Leadership Pipeline*, organizations that find it difficult to fill higher-level management positions internally can often trace their problems back to the mistakes made when moving individual contributors into their first leadership position without sufficient development or support.

Leading Execution. Producing Results.

Mid-level leaders are charged with interacting with their direct reports and peers to remove obstacles and provide solutions for anything adversely impacting a strategic initiative. They are

typically empowered to make decisions but are often afraid of failure and of being second-guessed by their managers and higher-echelon leaders.



They are expected to achieve results through others, but often lack the requisite skills in people motivation, engagement, feedback, and development. They also have tremendous difficulties in communicating unpopular programs and decisions and in aligning team members with a newly formed strategic vision or change initiatives.

In a recent DDI study, only 10% of middle managers felt well-prepared for the challenges their businesses were facing.

Even more concerning, only 8% felt that driving execution was one of their personal strengths.

However, when exposed to best practices in these areas, and given a

set of usable models and techniques, they often deliver beyond the highest expectations. In fact, the DDI research revealed that when leadership development programs for mid-level leaders are high quality, the impact is seen in both leader quality and organizational performance.

This survey also showed a 650% improvement in leadership quality bench strength and a 270% increase in a high-performing group of financial metrics resulting from high-quality mid-level leadership training programs.



There is no doubt that leading for results is important. But so is knowing how to lead people effectively and motivationally to obtain your desired results. This is not an either/or proposition. Caliente Leadership understands the need to turn good managers into great leaders.

That's why we created our proven three-pillar approach for mid-level leadership development:

- Leadership Mindset
- Leading People
- Leading for Results

It is also why it is important that your organization's leadership development program is not centered around a one-time training event or just a pair of courses. Which is why we build follow-up and learning

reinforcement into all our leadership development programs.

Lastly, 70% of private company executives in a recent survey by Forbes Insights say talent development is either important (43%) or extremely important (26%) to the future growth of their organizations. Not surprisingly, 80% also said they would be implementing more formal training programs in the coming 18 months. Are your competitors in this group?



Talent retention is another challenge for privately owned companies and SMEs. In the Forbes Insights study, 47% of respondents viewed talent retention as significant (33%) or a very significant (13%) challenge.

Most interestingly, that Forbes Insight survey also revealed that experienced mid-level personnel was by far the most difficult group of talent to retain (57% or almost twice as difficult as the second group, experienced senior level personnel at 31%).

Training and continuous learning opportunities were seen as a key driver of talent retention by almost one-third of the executives surveyed.

Your future sustainable growth depends on the continuous development of your leaders across all levels of your organization. As Stephen Covey pointed out, "People are your most valuable asset. Only people can be made to appreciate in value."

Adds Steven Howard, author of *8 Keys to Becoming A Great Leader: With Leadership Lessons and Tips from Gibbs, Yoda and Capt'n Jack Sparrow*, "Continuous training of your employees,

especially in the areas of teamwork, collaboration, and working across boundaries, is the key to scaling every part of your business."

Caliente Leadership

We believe leadership is an art. It is the art of achieving progress through the involvement and actions of others.

We also believe that successful leaders apply a wide range of leadership skills, including adaptability, motivation, coaching, collaboration, decision-making, communications, and continuous personal development to both themselves and the people they lead.

At Caliente Leadership, we understand that SMEs cannot afford the high fees and licensing costs from the major training providers. Which is why we don't charge per participant licensing fees. We can also cost-effectively train groups as small as eight.

Caliente Leadership will bring you the best practices of Fortune 500 training programs into your organization without Fortune 500 costs.

We will help you create a leadership pipeline and a cadre of skilled mid-level leaders that will sustain your rapid growth for many years to come.





We also place great emphasis on the importance of learning reinforcement. We know that leadership development is not a one-time training event or a two-part workshop. It's more. This is why we incorporate on-going learning reinforcement into all our programs.

The art of great leadership means leveraging the emotions of passion, enthusiasm, self-satisfaction, trust, and loyalty of team members to drive creativity, thinking, innovation, energy, and buy-in to your organization's strategies, tactics, and activities in

pursuit of clearly stated goals and objectives.

Our focus at Caliente Leadership is turning good managers and good leaders into great leaders — at all levels of your organization. By revealing to them the best practices of great leadership so that everyone in your organization can become a great leader.

Call us today. We will create and implement a customized leadership development program for you with guaranteed results. Or your money back.

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Steven Howard
Leadership Author
