

Middle Management Development - How Do Organizations Effectively Develop Management Talent?

Middle Management Development

Developing Leaders and Empowering Them to Sell with Confidence

You have a group of middle managers who understand management of people on their level, having been there before, but although they can handle the functional, technical and administrative side of the job, the leading and developing of their people is highly variable. Prior to being middle management, their attitudes have become defensive through feelings of lack of support and a sense of criticism from all directions. The result is incomplete middle management development and untapped strength and potential. The road to improvement and middle management development is in the boosting of potential and confidence through exercises in effective presentations, coaching and mentoring, and feedback driven sessions using video images of subjects in training and audience reaction, too.

Middle managers are competitive in nature because they have run the gauntlet of promotion and influence, and efforts to work together for the benefit of increased collective performance are a challenge. The creation of true management teams, in which groups cannot avoid the consequences of not working trustingly together, is the goal. They must be encouraged to consider and implement options for positive collective behavior.

Partners in Marketing – Some have said that we are all salespersons, and the sales mentality should permeate the whole management team, not just middle management. The basic sales function is education of the client. We are all in that business. Middle management should be practiced and developed in the art of competent and confident actions to win and retain business in the face of competition. Managers should be sharp to respond to customer signals and presenting solutions to their needs without overt sales pressure. The relaxed and professional approach with focus on customer process management is important. Through the method of rehearsal and feedback with mentoring, managers can learn more effectiveness in customer relationships.

With the cooperation of HR, consultants, and key sales individuals on the team, a training course can be designed to sharpen middle management skill in personnel development and sales oriented thinking. Such a curriculum could be as follows:

1. Influencing and negotiating with impact- An introduction to basics, disciplines and self-awareness. New middle management needs development in negotiating internally to achieve cooperation between workgroups.
2. Business negotiation – strategy and execution, tactics and confident behavior. Middle managers need development in handling internal and external customers.

3. Influence and communications – Personal effectiveness and authority in business situations is an essential development requirement for middle managers.

4. Leading and making your point in meetings – Best practice techniques for management to lead their work groups and execute effective meetings.

5. Problem solving and decision making – Fact-based and lateral thinking tools. Every manager needs development in problem solving to keep his people on track.

6. Presentation skills – Presentation design, delivery and self-management. Management without development in presentation skills don’t appear as competent and therefore will not be as influential.

7. Effective business writing – Impact, clarity and style in e-mails, letters and reports. Management must develop written communication skills to be effective in today’s fast-paced business environment.

8. Managing difficult people – Advising, instructing, counseling, discipline interviewing. Management must be developed and skilled in heading off problems with challenging people.

9. Performance management – Management coaching, targeting, appraisal and review. Managers who can’t manage employee performance can undermine the performance of everybody.

10. Team leadership – In-depth practical leadership behavior and management development.

Participation should be limited to a maximum of eight in all sessions. This may be an on-going function to encompass all middle managers at HQ and satellite locations and new additions to the team.

In addition, Toastmaster International has programs that can be limited to in-house membership. This is an excellent on-going presentations training method that runs the gamut of basic training, advanced training, contests with other groups, evaluation of presentations, extemporaneous speaking practice (the most fun), rotating functions of Toastmaster of the day, chief evaluator, invocator, and grammarian. Generally, three speeches are given at every meeting.