



Being a Credible Manager

Managerial credibility comes not only from being trustworthy but also from:

Communicating effectively one-on-one and before groups. Recognize that half of your job is communications-related.

Demonstrating and supporting initiative. Not only must you exhibit out-of-the-box thinking yourself but you must have the courage to create a culture that encourages staff members to step out of their boxes.

Being solution-oriented. As a credible professional, you should be someone who truly views problems as opportunities and mistakes as progress.

Leading courageously. Here, in particular, you need to walk the talk. For instance, you don't only preach the importance of customer service, you demonstrate it. You not only tell staff you expect them to arrive at meetings on time, you build a reputation as someone who is always at meetings and appointments on time.

Focus. As a credible manager, you plan your time and work your plan.

Reaching out to others. You aren't just a good team leader—you are a great team player.

To develop the skills of a credible manager, attend one of AMA's management courses. Visit www.amanet.org/seminars

What Can U.S. Firms Do About Anti-Americanism Abroad?

That's the question that Dick Martin answers in his book *Rebuilding Brand America: What We Must Do to Restore Our Reputation and Safeguard the Future of American Business Abroad* (AMACOM, 2007). Martin, executive vice president of public relations, employee communications, and brand management for AT&T from 1997 to 2002, challenges business leaders to accept their share of responsibility for re-affirming our nation's core values and competence.

Martin suggests that anti-Americanism is a complex mixture of emotions, including envy and anger, provoked by a range of faults and offenses, both real and imagined. The antidote isn't pumping out more information, packaging it more seductively, or changing policy to win a hypothetical popularity contest. "The real issue is understanding," Martin stresses. "Not primarily others' understanding of America, but America's understanding of them."

Martin offers these suggestions for U.S. businesses:

■ **Sink roots, don't just spread branches.** To succeed in any foreign country, an American-born business must understand and respect local culture, history, customs, habits, and diet, as well as grasp the nuances of local language. Hiring local managers can pay off tremendously. By making a personal investment in Chinese talent, for



instance, P&G has become the most successful foreign marketer in China. In addition to hiring and developing local managers, P&G dispatches hundreds of researchers to live with Chinese families

and observe how they approach everyday tasks, from changing the baby to brushing their teeth. The resulting knowledge plays into product names, positioning, and advertising. And, wherever possible, P&G formulates products using local flavors, colors, and textures. Jasmine-flavored Crest toothpaste, for example, capitalizes on the Chinese belief that tea is good for controlling bad breath.

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AMA Statistics

Why is strategic execution so important to corporations? The AMA/HRI study *The Keys to Strategy Execution* identified the following five goals:

1. Being seen as an innovative industry leader
2. Being customer-focused
3. Being well managed with integrated systems
4. Being the quality leader
5. Being the low-cost provider

Visit www.amanet.org/research for more survey findings.

The Five Principles of Coaching

As a manager, there are some definite skills you need as a coach. These are the same skills the best sports coaches have.

1. Gathering information. A good coach knows how to get information from an individual without making that person feel as if he or she is being interrogated. Such information is important in making numerous decisions, ranging from identifying a skill deficiency or the existence of any confusion about how to do a particular job to finding out an employee's interests and aspirations so as to redesign his or her job and thereby stimulate above-standard performance.

2. Listening. Asking the right questions means little if you don't listen to the replies. A good coach is able to listen with a "third ear," paying as much attention to the nonverbal signals and body posture of the speaker as to his or her words in order to determine the feelings behind the response as well as its truthfulness.

That same coach also knows how to use body language to communicate interest in what the speaker has to say.

3. Being aware of what's happening around you. You should talk frequently to your employees to see if there are morale problems or other causes of distress in the workplace that could

lower productivity or generate attitudinal problems or, better, signs that an employee is not only willing but ready and able to assume more responsibility.

4. Instructing employees. A good coach is able to train employees, either singly or in a group. Even before that, he



or she is able to conduct a training needs assessment to determine gaps in knowledge that must be filled.

5. Giving feedback. There is no such thing as too little time to provide praise for a job well done or to provide corrective feedback, including suggestions for improvement that tell the employee that

the manager believes that he or she is capable of doing the work right. In short, a good coach doesn't allow today's lean organizations to provide an excuse for not positively reinforcing good work or not providing corrective feedback in a positive manner.

Of these five, feedback may be most important. When is feedback needed? The answer is all the time—not only when errors occur repeatedly in an employee's work, or his or her performance doesn't meet expectations.

While you should schedule regular coaching sessions with your employees to ensure that work meets, if not exceeds, goals, you want to meet and coach a staff member in particular when his or her work habits disturb you, when progress has been made on a work problem and acknowledgement is in order, when a problem unrelated to the employee's effort surfaces and the individual needs guidance, and when an employee asks you how he or she is doing.

Adapted from *Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring, 2nd Edition* by Florence Stone (AMACOM, 2007). For more information on this book and others, visit www.amanet.org/amabooks

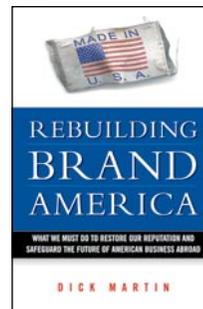
Check out AMA's seminars on coaching at www.amanet.org/seminars

What Can U.S. Firms Do About Anti-Americanism Abroad? continued from preceding page

■ **Go local.** One of the highest priorities for successful global companies is to adopt a local face. When McDonald's restaurants in France came under attack as a symbol of American culinary and cultural imperialism, the chain's local managers began making fun of Americans and their food choices in a series of ads. One depicted a beefy American cowboy and said that, although McDonald's was born in the United States, its food was made in France using French products. The president of McDonald's in Europe, a Frenchman who started behind the counter in a restaurant outside Paris, understood the issue being addressed and had no qualms about approving the ads. "We don't *act* local; we *are* local,"

stressed McDonald's spokesman Walt Riker.

■ **Share your customers' cares.** To a greater degree than in the United States, global consumers accurately see multinational companies as the most powerful institutions on the planet and capable of doing more than "charity." U.S.-based companies that win foreign customers' respect and loyalty practice social responsibility and social activism. Pfizer's Global Health Fellows program, for instance, matches its employees' investments in nongovernmental organizations in developing countries to help fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. The



NGOs receive skills in analyzing, planning, and training, while Pfizer gains an on-the-ground understanding of treating infectious diseases.

■ **Share your customers' dreams.** People use global brands to create an identity that they share with like-minded people, without regard to their national affiliation. Dove's convention-defying Campaign for Real Beauty, for example, resonated with women in Canada, Brazil, and Argentina, as well as the U.S.

For more information about *Rebuilding Brand America* by Dick Martin and other AMA titles, visit www.amanet.org/books

Ten Suggestions for Managing Innovation

BY CYNTHIA BERRYMAN-FINK AND CHARLES B. FINK

There are several ways an executive or a manager can encourage creativity and innovation on the job:

1. Cultivate a sense of enjoyment at work. Innovation rarely occurs when tasks involve drudgery. Executives can create a work culture that is fun and enjoyable. Indeed, employees who enjoy their work will be more productive than those who dislike their jobs. Managers should develop strategies to enhance the enjoyment of work.

2. Encourage risk taking. Rewarding employees for unusual ideas will foster innovative thinking, just as encouraging a childlike sense of play stimulates creativity.

3. Allow a balance of thinking and resting. A relaxed mind is more likely to generate innovative ideas than will a stressed mind. Executives and managers who burden their employees with inordinate amounts of work and unreasonable deadlines hinder innovative thinking and creativity among their staff.

4. Change organizational routines. Organizations thrive on established procedures and regular routines. Since a routine calls for repetitive behavior, it precludes original or innovative approaches. One way of enhancing innovation is to eliminate routines and to have employees function in ways they think best.

5. Rely on instincts, intuition, and hunches. Often, we fail to realize that for



knowledgeable and experienced managers and employees, instincts are not random but informed. Intuition is based on recall of past experiences, keen observations, the combining of ideas, and analogous reasoning. Such gut-level reasoning is a most valid form of decision making.

6. Seek unfamiliar views. The nonexpert on a task may bring a very different perspective to a problem than will experts. The layperson may have an innovative approach to a task that experts cannot see because they are blinded by past practice. Outsiders to a problem—be they consultants, clients, customers, or employees from a different function—should be valued for their unique perspectives and creative insights.

7. Think in terms of opposites. Consider doing the very opposite of what you would normally do on a task, problem, or decision. This strategy breaks

with established patterns of thinking and keeps managers from getting conditioned to respond in predictable ways.

8. Use trial and error. Many new discoveries occurred because of an accident or an error. When attempting to solve a problem, try various approaches until discovering the one that works best. Remember, creativity involves a willingness to take risks, even risks that prove to be wrong.

9. Ask hypothetical questions. Questioning assumptions allows for speculation and theorizing. It leads to the imagining of alternatives. Like a child, ask, “What would happen if...?” when dealing with a task.

10. Practice envisioning. Most managers get so caught up in the immediate, day-to-day activities that there is little time to envision new things. To have vision is to imagine the future, to think, to contemplate, to speculate. In other words, envisioning is part of managing innovation.

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To encourage a creative culture and develop your own creative thinking, check out and register for AMA's seminar on innovation at www.amanet.org/seminars

Obstacles to Strategic Execution

American Management Association commissioned the Human Resource Institute to study what hinders and what drives the execution of strategy. The study observed that developing a sound strategy is only half the battle—the more difficult task is confronting the obstacles that prevent leaders from executing their strategies. They include:

Lack of adequate resources. Not having enough resources surfaced as the top factor hindering an organization's ability to execute its strategic plans today. Too often, it seems, top managers' strategic

ambitions outstrip the resources they're willing or able to allocate in order to attain their goals.

Competitive pressures and changing conditions. Pressures related to competition and the economy present organizations today with challenges that sometimes stymie their ability to execute their strategic plans, and those challenges are expected to become even more difficult 10 years from now. The prevalence of unfavorable economic conditions is expected to become the top barrier to execution in 10 years, and competitive

pressure is predicted to climb in importance too, earning it a position as the number-two future barrier to execution.

The role of corporate structures. A changing economy and competitive landscape can also influence corporate structures, which, in turn, affect organizations' abilities to align their structures with their strategies.

To find out what it takes to execute strategy, read the survey results at www.amanet.org/research

To develop your management competence, review and register for one of AMA's seminars on management. For details, visit www.amanet.org/seminars



Here's what you'll find on the
AMA Members-only Website www.amamember.org

MANAGEMENT

Get the Most from Your People: Give 'em What They Want. Smart managers understand that the key to productivity is deceptively simple: treat people the way they want to be treated.

LEADERSHIP

Taking Organizational Values into the Real World. Unless corporate values become integrated into processes, policies, and organizational behavior, they're nothing but lofty platitudes.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Office Romance: Worth the Risk? Today's professionals spend so much time at the

office that the possibility of an office romance is both alluring and practical. But before you follow your heart, think about the risks.

SALES & MARKETING

The Four Factors of Risk. Can't clinch the sale? Help your customer overcome his sense of risk so that he'll feel secure and confident enough to sign on the dotted line.

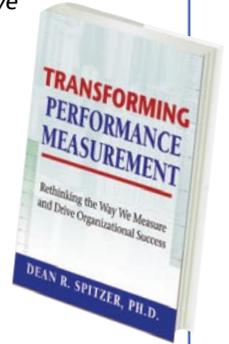
HR/TRAINING

Strategic Workforce Planning—A New Way to Boost Productivity. A new study examines how organizations are using an innovative management process called Strategic Workforce Planning to forecast what talent they need to successfully execute their business strategy.

Transforming Performance Measurement: Rethinking the Way We Measure and Drive Organizational Success

by Dean R. Spitzer, Ph.D.

The author, a performance measurement guru at IBM, presents a breakthrough approach that promotes alignment with business strategy and encourages people to work collaboratively to drive value throughout an organization.



For more information about this book and AMACOM's extensive catalog of business titles, visit www.amanet.org/books

AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

FEBRUARY 28 FREE WEBCAST • The Nature of Leadership: Reptiles, Mammals, and the Challenge of Becoming a Great Leader.

B. Joseph White, President of the University of Illinois, has gotten to know notable leaders—Steve Jobs, Madeleine Albright, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and many more. In this webcast, Dr. White shares what he has learned about the blend of capabilities it takes to lead successfully—and the secrets to truly great leaders

MARCH 7 FREE WEBCAST • The Successful Insider: Internal Consulting Skills for the HR Professional.

HR professionals must recognize and analyze an issue and develop a plan and solution for moving forward and implementing project goals that are in align-

ment with the overall organizational goals. In order to do so, it is crucial to view themselves as internal consultants to the functional areas they support.

MARCH 21 FREE WEBCAST • High-Impact Communications: Engaging Your Audience with Storytelling.

Whether you know it or not, stories are fundamental to the way we communicate, learn, and think. Many times our stories go unheard because of the constant noise surrounding us. This Webcast will touch on a few techniques for embedding the use of stories into your communications for impact, so you are heard "above the noise."

MARCH 28 FREE WEBCAST • Leadership Smarts—Hardwired for Success! Maximize

potential in yourself and others! This Webcast will introduce a new assessment that will help you identify any individual's top strengths and weaknesses in key management areas. Then discover how those innate strengths can be utilized and leveraged across jobs, tasks, and projects to produce highly effective teams and organizations.

APRIL 4 FREE WEBCAST • Who Are You? Applying the MBTI® Instrument for Organizational Success.

Now that you are qualified in using the MBTI® instrument, learn to develop your leadership, communication, and managerial skills through practical application.

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