



Heritage Supervisors

Why the Rush for Development

A White Paper

Heritage Supervisors: Why the Rush for Development

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Background

There has been a significant increase over the past 24 months in requests by advanced manufacturing organizations (from additive producers to concrete manufacturers) for support in developing their frontline supervisors' core management skills, including areas such as: coaching, communicating, building teams, business and financial acumen. This increased demand forced Global Corporate College to step back and ask: What is happening? Why the rush for development in frontline supervisors? This inquiry becomes more interesting because of the tenure of these frontline supervisors. Many of them have been on the job and in their role for 15-25 years. In one company we observed, more than half of the frontline supervisor team had over 25 years in their role. At Global Corporate College, we identified this segment of the workforce population as "Heritage Supervisors". What could these Heritage Supervisors possibly need or desire to learn? Why would organizations that historically made minimal investments in non-technical training for the frontline increasingly decide to make this investment? We identified four themes.

Theme One: Meeting the Needs of a New Generation

In recent conversations with a number of clients, Global Corporate College learned that the main driver for investing in these Heritage Supervisors was directly related to the need to recruit and retain the next generation of workers. We all know that the new workforce comes in the door with a desire and belief that they are ready to be the leader of not only their area but also the company. Many Heritage Supervisors initially met this demand by dismissing the employee as unrealistic, arrogant or soft - unwilling to do the work to deserve the role. And, of course, we know how the new generation reacted - they walked. According to Ladan Nikravan of CLO, the millennials are looking to "...the leadership at your organization for coaching on how to become qualified for their next role, not just their current position."¹ Therefore, Heritage Supervisors must receive training so that they are equipped to effectively coach.

Outcome: Retention

Learning Focus: Coaching Fundamentals, Teaching Skills for Managers, Communication

Theme Two: Moving From Opaque Communication to Transparent Communication

Post the economic downturn: leaders have realized that their previously opaque communication put their organizations at significant risk. When downsizing started, there were too many workers caught unaware or shocked that their company was in its current financial state. Workers were not working from a place of reality or personal accountability. As a result, "trust" was grossly violated and has been hard to re-cultivate. Most leaders will share that they only have themselves to blame. What they called transparent communication was really "need-to-know" communication. In order to regain trust and rebuild, leaders recognized they must enlist their Heritage Supervisors to be part of building for the future.

“Create transparency by making information available to all employees, particularly managers, so that they can give the meaningful feedback Millennials crave.”

-Ladan Nikravan, CLO 2014

A broader understanding of how the organization makes money and how each employee fits in to that process is required to re-build trust and meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy.

Outcome: Personal Accountability, Trust, Engagement

Learning Focus: Accountability, Trust, Understanding The Language Of Business, Understanding The Business Cycle, Financial Decision Making

Theme Three: Empowerment Equals Engagement

When employees know they matter they are more engaged. They feel a greater sense of accountability when it is clear where they fit and how their decisions and actions impact the organization. Once Heritage Supervisors are clear on their role and their responsibility, they need and desire the tools to be successful to help their team be successful. According to Mihelich, “...an engaged worker, at a basic-needs level, knows what’s expected of them at work.”² Engagement and job satisfaction are directly related to an individual’s relationship with their manager and the belief that their manager cares about their success and can give them the proper direction to succeed.

Outcome: Engagement

Learning Focus: Maximizing Team Effectiveness, Accountability, Coaching Fundamentals, Coaching for Performance

Theme Four: Innovation Resides in the Mind of the Doer

Heritage Supervisors are closest to where the rubber meets the road and are often an untapped source for process, product and quality innovations that create growth in organizations. However, according to the AMA Enterprise, “Management faces a more risk-averse workforce. A growing proportion of the workforce has become risk-averse, probably due to the sluggish economy and weak job market. Management must assess its own responsibility for this phenomenon and determine if the organization really encourages initiative or risk taking.”³ Heritage Supervisors want to be idea generators. They want to be about more than the execution of other’s ideas, but they want to do that in a safe environment.

Outcome: Innovation, Engagement, Increased Productivity and Profitability

Learning Focus: Innovation Thinking, Problem Solving, Trust

Challenge

The challenge is, of course, obvious. How do you build learning experiences that engage “Heritage Supervisors” whose years of experience often are equated by both themselves and leadership as “enough” when in fact the data shows a considerable gap between experience and demonstrated behavioral competency. At Global Corporate College, we start with learning where the specific gaps exist from the perspective of frontline employees, Heritage Supervisors,

and their managers; then, we design the learning experience to address the Heritage Supervisor's reality. Relevant learning focused on practical application changes the learner's perspective of both their need and their capability resulting in behavioral change and skill mastery. Global Corporate College then works on making it stick by creating on going learning reinforcement through our WrapAround Learning model.

To learn more about Global Corporate College and our guarantee for learning that sticks, go to www.globalcorporatecollege.com or call 440-793-0202.

¹ Nikravan, Ladan. (2014). Chief Learning Officer

² Mihelich, Max. (2014). Chief Learning Officer

³ AMA Enterprise. (April 18, 2014). AMA Reports: 10 Trends Shaping Training & Development, in ATD on line.

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