

Embracing a Learning Organization

The most dynamic workplaces in America do not see themselves as training organizations, but rather as learning organizations. Each employee embraces the role of a student or learner. It becomes an empowered organization, with personal growth as a way of life. Here are some of the hallmarks of a learning organization:

Select: They select new employees—they are not content to get a 'warm live body' in here.

Day One Experience: They put great effort into the day one experience of a new employee; after all, you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

On Boarding: Great energy is placed into making the year one on boarding experience something that sets the employee up for great success.

Emerging Leaders: With so many baby boomers retiring, it is imperative that new emerging leaders step up to lead.

A Reading Culture: Readers are leaders! Dynamic cultures embrace a reading culture, where staff and management continue to learn and grow.

Cross Departmental Connections: It is important that departmental silos are torn down and bridges are built from one department to another. There are creative ways to create cross departmental connections.

Training Budget: Training is expensive, not training is really expensive! Consider increasing the county training budget.



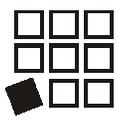
Great vision without great people is irrelevant.



You never get a second chance to make a first impression.



No man is an island!



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Selection Insights From Leading Companies

1. When in doubt – Don't!
2. Hire the smile – Train the skills. (from Nordstrom's)
3. Who trains your people? "Their parents!" (from Nordstrom's)
4. The most important key to your cultural success is hiring correctly.
5. 89% of workplace failures are due to poor cultural fit.
6. Get below the surface. Layer your questions. (100 Ways to Motivate Others)
7. Match your hiring questions with your core values. (Delivering Happiness)
8. Your first interview could be on the phone.
9. If possible, include a peer interview.
10. Don't hire. Select!
11. When it is time to make a people decision, the best act quickly.
(Good to Great)
12. Hire slow – Fire fast! (Wall Street Journal)
13. Create an agreement with the employee before you hire them.
(Carla McCoy)
14. This is the most important decision you will make as a manager.
15. The two non-negotiables: 'Attitude' and 'Are they coachable'?
16. Could you envision this person in a leadership position in 7 years?
(Zappos)
17. Make sure that their 'want to' is for a career, not just a paycheck.
(100 Ways to Motivate Others)
18. Are they empowered and are they engaged?



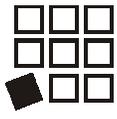
Hiring—the most important leadership decision.



Time spent on hiring is time well spent.



*Hire character.
Train skill.*



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Day One Experience: You never get a second chance to make a first impression. If you want them to contribute to a world class service culture, the way they are brought in better be 'world class.'

- *What makes for a bad day one experience?*

- *What makes for a great day one experience?*



Create a most memorable Day One!

On Boarding: Great organizations create a road map to insure that the new employee has a plan and path to lead them to success.

- *What should an employee know/do after one month?*

- *What should an employee know/do after one year?*

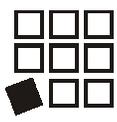
- *What should an employee's leadership development look like after one year?*



*Remove the mystery.
Create a great success plan.*



Leaders are made - not born!



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Emerging Leaders: Your county is much like a major league baseball team. Without a strong minor league system, your success will be short lived. Record numbers of leaders are retiring and new leaders need to step up. It is too important to leave to chance.



Emerging Leaders need:

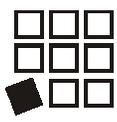
- *Growth opportunities*
- *Increased responsibility*
- *Networking encounters*
- *Shadowing situations*



A Reading Culture: To fully embrace a learning culture, reading will become a foundational part of your workplace culture. It brings a sense of freshness to the entire culture. Most every workplace challenge has been written about. There is no need to suffer in silence. Here are some key concepts:

- *Develop a leadership library*
- *Supervisors read four books each year*
- *Staff members read one book each year*





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Cross Departmental Connections: In the book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, the concept of Team One is brought forth. It states that the health of the entire organization needs to take precedence over individual and departmental aspirations. One key way to do this is by creating healthy cross departmental exchanges. Here are some creative ways to do this:



Destroy silos. Build bridges.

Cross Training:

Team One Bridge Builders:

- Session One: Theme – *Who Are You?*
- Session Two: Theme – *What Do You Do?*
- Session Three: Theme – *What Are Your Challenges?*
- Session Four: Theme – *How Could I Best Help You?*



Walk a mile in someone's shoes.

Training Budget: In the book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins said that the best organizations earmarked 3% - 5% of employee salaries towards ongoing training. Here are some approaches counties are using to creatively train there people:

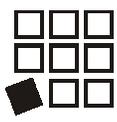
Outside consultants:

Internal mentors:

Collaborative training:



The biggest cost: not training!



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Recommended Reading List

CUSTOMER SERVICE — Raving Fans

by Ken Blanchard

A quick read, but my favorite book on the subject. The premise is this: It is not enough to satisfy customers. Three great ideas on how to create Raving Fans. Every employee in your place should read it.

CHANGE — Who Moved My Cheese

by Spencer Johnson

An interesting story told to help with strategic change within your workplace. Very enjoyable and readable for all staff.

LEADERSHIP — The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

by John C. Maxwell

A superb look at the ingredients of dynamic leadership. Many current examples and illustrations.

RETENTION — Love 'Em or Lose 'Em

by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

This book has been called the bestselling employee retention book in the world. It shows how to get your best people to not only stay, but to be engaged, motivated and producing at their peak.

TEAM DYSFUNCTION — The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

by Patrick Lencioni

This is a fantastic book on what things keep your team from functioning at a high level. I have used this as a guidebook to conduct numerous, productive team building retreats.

COMMUNICATION — Crucial Conversations

by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler

How well you hold crucial conversations makes all the difference. Learn the keys to make the dialogue safe for both parties.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY — Question Behind the Question (QBQ)

by John G. Miller

What a gem of a book. Miller shows how to practice personal accountability and eliminate blame and procrastination. You'll rethink the kind of questions you ask in the future.

MOTIVATING OTHERS— 100 Ways to Motivate Others

by Steve Chandler

Absolutely love this one. Every manager should read it. Fabulous ideas on how to motivate and bring the best out of others.

DESTROYING WORKPLACE NEGATIVITY — The No Complaining Rule

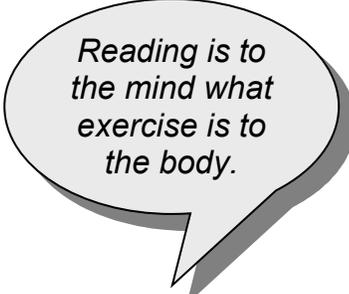
by Jon Gordon

My favorite new book. A doable, substantial way to destroy negativity in the workplace.

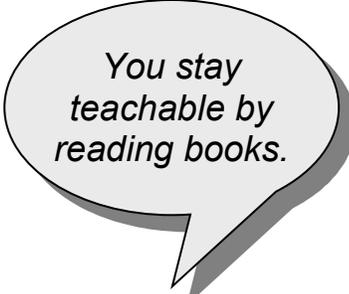
ENGAGED EMPLOYEES— Hundred Percenters

by Mark Murphy

Provides the tools managers need to take 'average' employees and create a culture of accountable, fully engaged people.



Reading is to
the mind what
exercise is to
the body.



You stay
teachable by
reading books.



A reading
person is a
ready person.