First, Break All the Rules

Book Summary
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Dr. Bertoline
Introduction

• The book is based on research conducted by the authors while working for the Gallup Organization.
• They surveyed over one million employees and 80,000 managers in over 400 companies.
• Their conclusions summarized in the book is a result of their research into what the world’s greatest managers do differently.
A Few Examples

• The greatest managers do not believe that a person can achieve anything they set their mind to.
• They do not try to help the person overcome their weaknesses.
• The consistently ignore the Golden Rule.
• They play favorites.
A Few More Examples

• Talented employees need great managers.
• How long employees stay and how productive they are is determined by their relationship with their immediate supervisor.
• Great managers characteristics:
  – Demands discipline, focus, trust, a willingness to individualize.
• If a company is bleeding people it is bleeding value.
The Measuring Stick

• Measuring the strength of a workplace can be simplified into 12 questions.
• These questions capture the most information and the most important information.
• They measure the core elements needed to attract, focus, and keep the most talented employees.
12 Questions

• 1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
• 2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
• 3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
• 4. In the last 7 days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
• 5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
• 6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
12 Questions

• 7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
• 8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
• 9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
• 10. Do I have a best friend at work?
• 11. In the last 6 months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
• 12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?
Small group discussion

• Review all 12 questions and discuss why these questions might be important.
• Share personal experiences of working and how you might answer some of these questions.
• Summarize and present your group’s discussions.
What About Pay?

• Pay will not take a company very far.
• Need to be competitive to attract talent but pay is not a determining factor.
• The manager, not the pay, benefits, perks, or a charismatic corporate leader was the critical person in building a strong workplace.
• The manager was the key.
• These workers also had higher levels of productivity, profit, retention, and customer satisfaction.
Link Between Employee Opinion & Business Unit Performance

• People leave managers and not companies.
• Turnover is mostly a manager issue.
• If you have a turnover problem look first to your managers.
• Employee-focused initiative are important, but the immediate manager is more important.
Accountability

• A business leader driving a company towards greatness should:
  – First hold each manager accountable for her/his employees say to the 12 questions and
  – Second to help each manager know what actions to take to earn Strongly Agree responses from her/his employees.
There is an Order to the 12 Questions

• What do I get?
  – 1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
  – 2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
• What do I give?
  – 3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
  – 4. In the last 7 days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
  – 5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
  – 6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
    • These questions address the issue of your individual self-esteem and worth.
There is an Order to the 12 Questions

• **Do I belong here?**
  – 7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
  – 8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
  – 9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
  – 10. Do I have a best friend at work?

• **How can we all grow?**
  – 11. In the last 6 months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
  – 12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

• **Great managers focus on the first 6 questions.**
The Wisdom of Great Managers

• Most great managers differ in many respects except one. Great managers believe:
  – People do not change that much.
  – Do not waste time trying to put in what was left out of a person.
  – Try to draw out what was left in a person.
  – That is hard enough.

• This is the foundation for their success.
Revolutionary Insight

• This insight explains why great managers do not believe that everyone has unlimited potential.
• Why they do not help people fix their weaknesses.
• Why they insist on breaking the Golden Rule.
• Why they play favorites.
• It explains why great managers break all the rules of conventional wisdom.
• It also explains why the more than 9,000 different systems, languages, principles, and paradigms offered in the last 20 years to explain management and leadership have failed.
What Great Managers Do

• The manager role is to reach inside each employee and release his unique talents into performance.
• This is best done one employee at a time.
• In this sense, the manager role is the “catalyst” role.
• The catalyst role relates to the first 6 questions.
• To have employees answer positively to these 6 questions a manager must be able to do these activities very well
  – Select a person, set expectations, motivate the person, develop the person.
  – These are the 4 core activities of the catalyst role.
The Catalyst Role: Question 1

• At work do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
  – You must know how to select a person for the job.
  – You must know how much of a person you can change.
  – You must know the difference between talent, skills, and knowledge.
  – You must know which of these can be taught and which you must hire.
Question 2

• In the last 7 days, have I received recognition and praise for good work?
  – As a manager, you have only one thing to invest: your time.
  – Whom you spend it with, and how you spend it, determines your success as a manager.
Question 3

• Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me
  – Driven by your ability to develop the employee and have empathy for people.
Question 4

• Does someone at work seem to care about me?
  – Someone that encourages development
  – Someone that helps them get promoted
  – Set up each person for success

• Four core activities of the “Catalyst” role:
  – Select a person
  – Set expectations
  – Motivate the person
  – Develop the person
Managers are not just leaders in waiting

• The most important difference between a great manager and a great leader is focus.
• Great managers look inward.
• Great leaders look outward.
• It is possible for a great leader to be a poor manager and vice versa.
• Few people excel at both.
The Four Keys

- When selecting someone, they select for talent not simply experience, intelligence, or determination.
- When setting expectations, they define the right outcomes not the right steps.
- When motivating someone, they focus on strengths not on weaknesses.
- When developing someone, they help them find the right fit not simply the next rung on the promotion ladder.
The Right Stuff

• You cannot teach talent.
• Talents are the driving force behind an individual’s job performance.
• If it is a talent it will come easily for a person.
• If it is a talent it will be stimulating and not tedious.
Skills, Talents, & Knowledge

• The best managers are adept at seeing talent in a person then putting them in a position to be successful.

• An important distinction to be made is that skills, knowledge, and talents are distinct elements in a person’s performance.

• Skills and knowledge can be taught; talents cannot.
Three Kinds of Talent

- Striving- explains the motivation of a person.
- Thinking- explains how a person thinks and makes decisions.
- Relating- explains who a person trusts, confronts, ignores

- You cannot teach talent you can only select for talent.
Habits

• Most habits are our talents.
• They are enduring.
• They make you.
• If you are habitually assertive, habitually emphatic, or habitually competitive, you are going to have a hard time changing these habits.
• Over time, through reflection, you might change your values and learn a more positive and productive way to apply your talents.
• This approach relies on self awareness, rather than self denial, to help you become more effective.
Attitude and Drive

• It is very difficult to change a person's dominant attitude.
• A person's drive is not changeable.
Define the Right Outcomes

• Focus people toward performance.
• The manager is totally responsible for this.
• This is why great managers are skeptical about handing all authority down to people.
• The key is to define the right outcomes then let each person define their own route toward those outcomes.
• This encourages employees to take responsibility.
• To focus people on performance, you must define the right outcomes and stick religiously to those outcomes.
• This will result in self aware and self reliant employees.
Focus on Strengths

• Great managers do:
  – Focus on each person’s strengths and manage around their weaknesses.
  – They do not try to fix weaknesses.
  – They do not try to perfect each person.
  – They do everything they can to help each person cultivate their talents.
  – They help each person become more of who they are.
Break the Golden Rule

• The best managers break the Golden Rule every day.
• They treat each person differently based on their talents and unique behaviors.
• The best managers spend most of their time with their best people.
• The best managers find ways to make their employees successful and run interference for them when necessary.
Stroke Egos

• Humans crave attention and great managers go out of their way to pay attention to their best people.
• As a manager you are always on stage so no act is neutral and no news is never good news.
• Communicating and paying attention to your best people is the surest way to excellence.
Avoid “Average” Thinking

• Great managers use excellence as their barometers to judge performance.
• Great managers know that only people who are ever going to reach excellence are already above average.
• Focus on your best performers and keep pushing them towards excellence.
• Average thinking actively limits performance.
• Avoid performance evaluations that put a ceiling on performance.
• Define excellence vividly quantitatively then push everyone towards excellence.
Manage Around Weakness

• Poor performance must be quickly confronted.
• Most poor performance can be traced to the company not providing the tools or information necessary for success or personal causes.
• There are only 3 routes to help a person succeed:
  – Devise a support system- manage around weaknesses and focus on strengths. Example page 169.
  – Find a complementary partner
  – Find an alternative role
Assignment

• Look for articles that rank or describe great companies by any measure and summarize your findings.
Create Heroes in Every Role

• It takes between 10 and 18 years before world-class competency is reached.
• You must find ways to keep employees motivated and focused on developing their expertise.
• Defining graded levels of achievement for every role is an extremely effective way of doing so.

– Allied Brewers example, page 187.
Performance Feedback

• Great managers devise a regular performance feedback system.
• Feedback is provided in private and one-on-one.
• You need to build a personal relationship but not necessarily best friends.
• You must get to know your employees and care about them.
Miscasting

• Great managers understand that underperforming employees have talents that do not match their role.

• It is not a matter of weakness, stupidity, disobedience, or disrespect but a matter of miscasting.

• They use language like “This isn’t a fit for you, let’s talk about why.” or “You need to find a role that plays more towards your strength.”
Performance Management

• Four characteristics used by great managers:
  – The routine is simple.
  – The routine forces frequent interactions.
  – The routine is focused on the future.
  – The routine asks the employee to keep track of their own performance and learning.