

## Personal improvement training

# HR Skills Trainer

A special section on human resources training,  
for improved staff performance

- ✓ teambuilding
- ✓ personal improvement
- ✓ patient/family relations
- ✓ reducing turnover
- ✓ leadership skills
- ✓ workplace issues

## Why isn't your staff telling you what's wrong?

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According to the results of a national survey conducted by Cornell University's researchers, most workers don't tell their managers about routine problems because they think it's pointless, rather than for fear of retaliation.

These workers, who account for 42 percent of the 439 full-time American employees interviewed for the survey, reported "periodically speaking up, but also withholding information when they feel they have nothing to gain," say the researchers.

The second most common reason for not speaking, given by 25 percent of the survey's respondents, is "to avoid wasting their time."

Only 20 percent said they don't share what's in their mind because they fear retaliation.

"Tight-lipped employees bury constructive criticism and prevent good ideas from bubbling up through the organization."



### Silence is not good

The fact is your staff's silence can be detrimental to your job and the organization itself.

How can that be?

Dr. James Detert, an assistant professor of management at Cornell's Johnson School, and one of the researchers who conducted the survey, says: "The combination of tight-lipped employees and oblivious bosses buries constructive criticism, not to mention the unvarnished truth.

"Most important, it prevents good ideas bubbling up through the organization."

### Show you welcome their input

And there's more. If you are not getting feedback on routine issues or suggestions for improvement, almost certainly, you won't be able to prevent bigger problems.

So, whatever it is that holds your staff back, find out and do something about it.

Make sure they know you welcome their input.

Encourage them to speak at meetings, and whenever they wish to do so.

## Program improves registered nurse retention

The program, called Accelerate Best Care (ABC) Baylor, increased first-year nurse retention from 80.2 to 84.6%, and first to third year retention from 85.6 to 88.6%.

The improvements were obtained through the creation of a team of nurse leaders and HR personnel, who were responsible for the implementation of strategies for the reduction of turnover.

These strategies included:

- One-to-one meetings with staff members at high risk of turnover. These meetings were "a frank dialogue about the employee's goals and what management can do to facilitate these goals being achieved."
- Development of unit-specific nursing retention reports, including a list of terminations and their reasons.
- Increasing participation of staff members in the interview process.
- Workshops, for managers, on nurse recruitment and retention.

The program was implemented at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano, Texas

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# How to become a high-potential manager (Develop your X-factors!)

*A study published in the June 2010 issue of the journal Harvard Business Review found that 98 percent of 45 surveyed organizations place particular attention on developing managers who they think have the potential to assume an executive leadership role.*

“Gaining membership in this elite group starts with three essential elements,” says the study’s lead researcher, Dr. Douglas Ready, founder and president of a global talent management research center in Lexington, Massachusetts, and a professor of organizational behavior at London Business School.

## Perform excellently with credibility

The first element is excellent performance. You need to deliver outstanding results, and never at the expenses of someone else. “Competence is the baseline quality for high performance,” Ready says.

### “But you also need to prove your credibility.”

“That means building trust and confidence among your colleagues and, thereby, influencing a wide array of stakeholders.”

## Be prepared to let go

Then, you need to widen your expertise.

**This means that, in addition to the technical skills required for your job, you need to gain team leadership expertise.**

For example, you will need to master your motivational and strategic thinking skills.

And you must be ready to let go at some point.

Don’t try, for example, to be the best wound care nurse *and* the best team leader at the same time.

**According to the study by Ready and colleagues, excellent performance, mastering new expertise, and a role-model behavior are essential for becoming as high-potential manager. But it’s your X factors that will make you stand out from the crowd.** (Photo: iStockphoto-koun.)



Focus on developing yourself for the leadership role.

## Become a role model

Ready says: “Although your performance gets you noticed and promoted early in your career, your behavior is what keeps you in the radar as a high potential.”

You need to behave like a role model for the organization.

And to do this, you need to behave like a teacher, be excellent at motivating people, and be capable of inspiring your peers and help them succeed.

## Develop your X factors

So, performance, expertise and behavior are crucial to get you on the high potentials list. But, is that enough?

**No. You also need something that makes you stand out from the pack. You need what Ready and colleagues call: “The X factors.”**

These are:

- **A drive to succeed.** Good is not enough. High potentials are willing to go the extra mile to achieve more.
- **The ability to translate learning into actions,** that is, new strategies and approaches that can contribute to the organization’s growth and development.

- **An “enterprising spirit.”**

High-potential managers always search for new paths.

“They are explorers,” Ready says. “And as such, they take on the challenges of leaving their career comfort zones periodically in order to advance.”

- **A feel for timing.** “High potentials have a knack for being in the right place at the right time,” Ready says.

They have an instinct that helps them decide when to pursue something or pull back.

## Performance counts, but your behavior matters more and more as you grow.

### Consider the downsides

Lastly, you need to ask yourself whether you are prepared to deal with the downsides of being a high-potential manager.

You may have to work longer hours, for example, or make sacrifices in your personal life.

**Ready says: “Whatever your answer, don’t forget: performance always counts; your behavior matters more and more as you grow; and those X factors are your secret weapon.”**