

How to be a better manager: 3 focus areas for leaders - Culture Amp

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Executive Summary

This article addresses the challenge of effective management by analyzing data from Culture Amp's State of the Manager 2023 Report, which surveyed over 1 million employees and 250,000 managers across 3,304 companies. The authors argue that managers are the primary drivers of employee experience and identify three critical management behaviors: conducting meaningful 1-on-1 meetings, clarifying development goals, and providing continuous feedback. Key findings include that employees with role model managers show 90% motivation rates versus 63% for others, biweekly 1-on-1s correlate with 9% turnover compared to 26% without meetings, and high-performing managers are 3x more likely to provide continuous feedback. The article concludes that organizations must adequately support managers to enable these behaviors, as unsupported managers with larger teams are less likely to perform essential management functions.

Key Insights

1. Employees with role model managers are nearly half as likely to leave within 12 months compared to those without
2. Regular biweekly 1-on-1 meetings correlate with 9% turnover versus 26% turnover for employees who never have such meetings
3. Managers with nine or more direct reports are 88% less likely to have 1-on-1s with their own leaders, creating a support gap

Practical Takeaways

- Establish biweekly 1-on-1 meetings with shared agendas and documented action items to improve retention and engagement
- Document development goals that align individual ambitions with company objectives and check progress regularly

Critical Analysis

The article presents compelling statistical evidence from a large dataset of over 1 million employees across thousands of companies, lending credibility to its findings. However, the research is conducted and published by Culture Amp, a performance management platform company, which creates potential bias toward solutions that favor their product offerings. The correlation data is strong but causation is not

established - it's unclear whether good 1-on-1s create better outcomes or whether better managers naturally conduct better meetings. The recommendations, while practical, are relatively basic management practices rather than innovative insights. The article's strength lies in quantifying the impact of fundamental management behaviors with substantial data.

Organizational Practice

The article describes organizational practices including biweekly 1-on-1 meetings, development goal setting with documentation, continuous feedback delivery, and performance review sharing, while noting that managers with larger teams receive less support from their own leaders

Strategic Implications

The findings suggest organizations may need to restructure manager support systems, particularly for senior managers with large teams, and invest in systematic approaches to 1-on-1 meetings and feedback processes to achieve the retention and engagement benefits demonstrated in the data

Validation Status: warning