

Why Your Organization's Success Hinges on Effective Manager Training—and How to Get It Right - Spring Health

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Executive Summary

This article, published by Spring Health, addresses the organizational importance of manager effectiveness and the case for structured manager training programs. The central argument is that managers are disproportionately influential in shaping employee engagement, mental health, and organizational outcomes, and that this influence is underserved by current training investments. Drawing on Gallup's State of the Global Workplace report, the article cites that managers account for 70% of the variance in employee engagement and that managers themselves report more negative daily experiences than non-managers. Spring Health President and Co-founder Adam Chekroud is quoted on the stress experienced by first-time managers, particularly those promoted from individual contributor roles without adequate preparation. The article outlines a multi-component training framework including blended learning, peer coaching, pre- and post-surveys, and continuous reflection. It also draws on commentary from Dr. Martin Paulus regarding the role of personal narrative in resilience. The implications drawn are that investing in manager development is both a mental health and business performance imperative, with Spring Health positioned as a provider of such solutions.

Key Insights

1. Gallup's State of the Global Workplace report is cited as finding that managers account for 70% of the variance in employee engagement, underscoring their outsized organizational influence.
2. Managers are reported to experience more negative daily experiences than non-managers — including higher rates of stress, sadness, anger, and loneliness — suggesting that manager well-being is itself an organizational risk factor.
3. The transition from individual contributor to manager is described as a significant and often undertrained life event, with many first-time managers promoted on the basis of technical performance rather than people management capability.

Practical Takeaways

- A multi-component training model — combining pre-surveys, blended learning, peer coaching cohorts, and post-training assessment — is presented as a structured approach to measuring and developing manager effectiveness.
- The article frames manager training as iterative rather than episodic, emphasizing that skill development in leadership requires repeated cycles of learning, application, reflection, and adjustment.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The article references a credible, widely cited source (Gallup's State of the Global Workplace) for its headline statistics, and the broader argument — that managers are undertrained relative to their influence — is consistent with established organizational psychology literature. The training framework described is coherent and includes measurement components (pre/post surveys, program assessment) that reflect reasonable evaluation practice. **Limitations:** The article is published by Spring Health, a mental health benefits vendor with a commercial interest in manager training adoption, which introduces promotional bias. No independent studies are cited to validate the specific training model proposed. The claim that managers influence employee mental health more than spouses, doctors, or therapists is presented without citation, making it unverifiable. Dr. Martin Paulus is quoted without institutional affiliation or study context. The article blends legitimate research findings with vendor-framed prescriptions without distinguishing between the two. The recommended training framework is presented as a 'gold standard' without evidentiary support for that designation.

Organizational Practice

The article describes organizations using blended manager training programs that combine self-paced learning modules with live interactive sessions, peer coaching cohorts, pre- and post-training surveys, and structured program assessments tied to metrics such as promotion rates, retention, and organizational results. It also describes the practice of promoting high-performing individual contributors into management roles without corresponding people management preparation.

Strategic Implications

The article reflects a broader trend in which employee mental health and manager capability are being framed as interconnected organizational performance variables rather than separate HR concerns. The emphasis on measuring training impact through behavioral surveys and business metrics indicates a movement toward accountability in leadership development investment. The framing of manager loneliness as a structural risk — particularly in hybrid environments — points to an emerging gap in how organizations design peer support and community for mid-level leaders. The convergence of coaching, mental health support, and manager training into integrated programs represents a direction in which the boundaries between HR, L&D, and employee well-being functions are continuing to blur.

Validation Status: passed