Engaging the Front Line Improves the Bottom Line

BLUE-COLLAR LEADERSHIP®

Every team member wants a great leader. And, every leader wants great team members. High Impact leaders understand the culture of an organization affects everything else – and culture starts with them.

Many leaders are frustrated because they have disengaged team members. Employee engagement is not only the key to increasing productivity, profitability, and teamwork, but it's also the key to reducing turnover, costs, and frustrations for organizational leaders. According to Gallup, only 34% of U.S. workers are engaged.[1]

The Engagement Dilemma: Employee Engagement Starts with Engaged Leadership
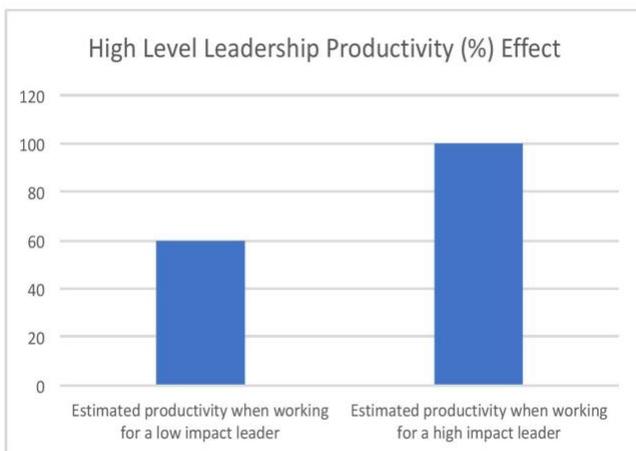
Many leaders don't realize that disengaged employees are a symptom of disengaged leaders at one or more levels in the organization. In fact, research shows *79% of employees are, on average, 40% more productive and engaged when working for a better leader.*[2]

The level of engagement below is determined by the level of engagement above.

Leadership development, or the lack of it, at every level determines morale, engagement, turnover, productivity, communication, teamwork, and how customers are served.

However, many people are over-managed and under-led. People who are managed become disengaged. People who are led become highly engaged.

Leadership development is the key to transforming the culture of an organization and improving the team's results.

High Level Leadership Productivity (%) Effect

*Source: 2011 study by Harris Interactive

The Retention Dilemma: The Competition Wants More than Your Customers

Many leaders don't realize the competition for customers is only one of *two types* of competition. Disengaged leaders lose more than customers to competitors. They also lose their team members to competitors.

A leader's ability to attract and retain high performance employees is a crucial factor for organizational success. Employees who are disengaged are far more likely to change jobs and even change industries because disengagement leads to dissatisfaction.

Minimizing employee turnover by increasing engagement is critical to improving the bottom line for organizations.

> 87% of managers wish they had more training <u>before</u> becoming a manager.[3]

High performance team members and managers are looking for more than a good salary. They are seeking growth and development opportunities that will help them become more successful **personally and professionally**.

High impact leaders understand they must offer more development opportunities in order to become the employer of choice in their area and in their industry.

The Turnover Dilemma: Tired of Hiring, then Firing?

We primarily interview, select, and hire employees based on the **competency** of the candidate. Competency is the skill set, technical knowledge, and ability to perform a task or job. Competency is **what we do** at work.

However, we are usually terminating employees based on **character.** Character is **who we are** and **how we do** what we do. It's the "soft" skills, such as attitude, work ethic, integrity, leadership, and ability to work with others. 90% of our results as individuals and organizations is determined by character.[4]

Character 90%
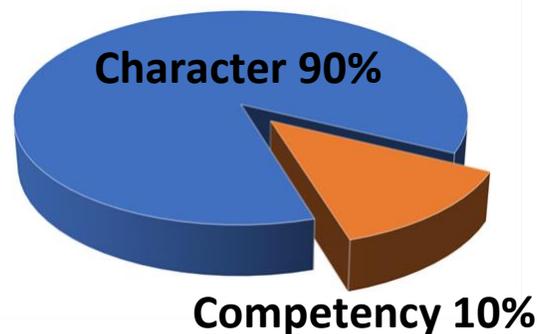
Competency 10%

In other words, **employees are hired for what they know, but fired for who they are**. Performance problems are almost exclusively a character issue. However, most training and development is focused on improving competency.

If you are tired of hiring and firing employees, it's time to look at several factors: 1) Selection process (Are you hiring based on competency *and character*?); 2) Culture in the organization; 3) Engagement of formal authority leaders; and 4) Leadership development of both leaders *and* team members.

Leadership Development is the Key to Transformation

Leadership isn't just about the position or title leaders hold. It's about the leader's ability to influence others – specifically team members.

High Impact Leadership is highly effective leadership that delivers results. It's more than improving culture, initiating change, managing an organization, or leading a team. Far beyond short-term initiatives, high impact leadership is about lasting, long-term, positive impact and transformation in the organization and in the lives of others.
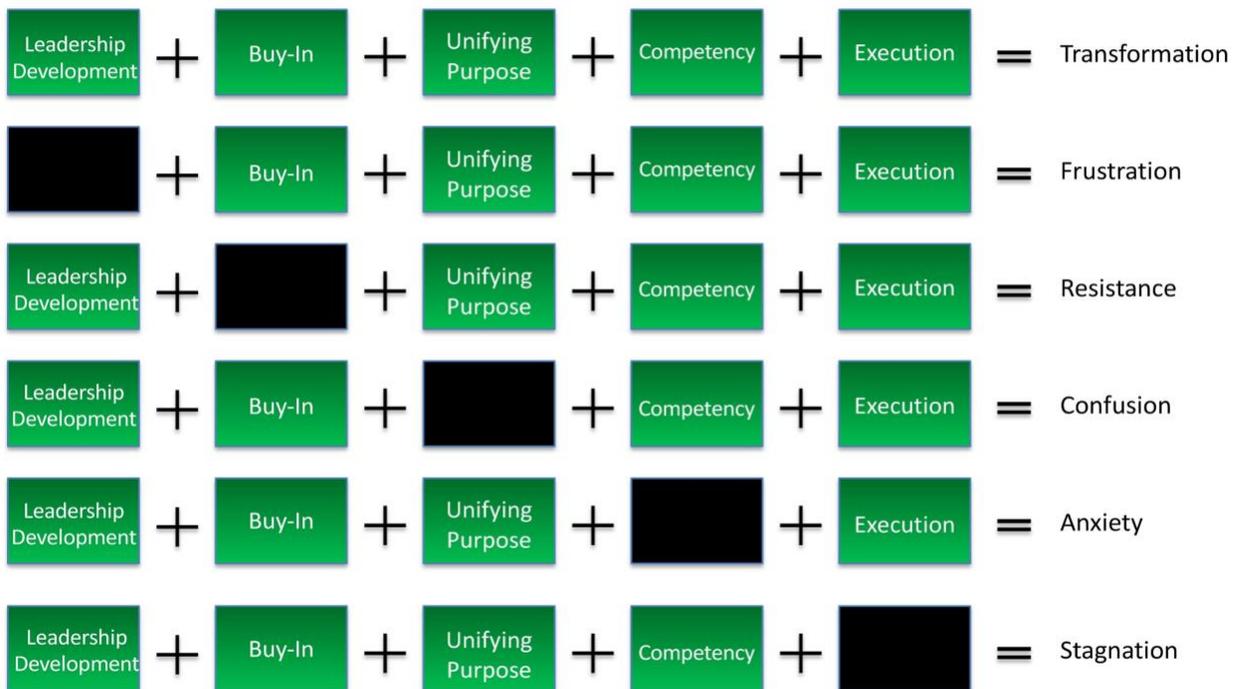
Leadership Development is personal and professional development geared toward helping someone develop their character and increase their influence first with self and then with others.

Character development helps us make better choices as individuals, which helps us be more effective at work and in life. Leadership development is the key to transforming culture and continuous improvement.

Leadership development, at every level in the organization, helps engage employees because they feel recognized, valued, empowered, and respected.

Leadership development helps engage leaders at a high level as they become equipped with the tools and knowledge to lead with 360° of influence, which will improve organizational effectiveness and communication while also increasing their team's performance. It's the key to transforming an organization.

The Transformation Equation

Leadership Development	+	Buy-In	+	Unifying Purpose	+	Competency	+	Execution	=	Transformation
(blank)	+	Buy-In	+	Unifying Purpose	+	Competency	+	Execution	=	Frustration
Leadership Development	+	(blank)	+	Unifying Purpose	+	Competency	+	Execution	=	Resistance
Leadership Development	+	Buy-In	+	(blank)	+	Competency	+	Execution	=	Confusion
Leadership Development	+	Buy-In	+	Unifying Purpose	+	(blank)	+	Execution	=	Anxiety
Leadership Development	+	Buy-In	+	Unifying Purpose	+	Competency	+	(blank)	=	Stagnation

Leadership Development/Training Strategies

Onsite Leadership Development Sessions
Kickstart and sustain your organizational growth initiative with live, engaging sessions to motivate and inspire leaders and team members.

Provide Resources for Leadership Development
Create a company library with leadership development books. Invest in team members by giving them books. Encourage team members to listen to leadership podcasts or audio books. Finally, set the example. Leadership is more caught than taught.

Book Studies/Roundtable Sessions
Select a facilitator(s) to regularly lead a group of 4-10 in the break room, work area, or on the job site. Simply read and review one chapter together from leadership books every session. This takes approximately 15-20 minutes.
(Click here to download a script)

Identify Top Performers as Champions
Engage top performers by giving them opportunities to champion leadership development and organizational growth. Allow them to post motivational quotes or lead book studies to incentivize them.

Train the Trainer Certifications
Certify and equip one or more team members as leadership trainers, so they can teach Leadership Development Programs internally.

Event versus Process:

Transformation takes time. It's never a quick task to improve culture and build trust in an organization, but well worth the effort. As David Katz, President of Coca-Cola Consolidated said, *"Culture doesn't just eat strategy for breakfast, it eats everything."*

Leaders often <u>overestimate</u> the impact of a single event, and many leaders also <u>underestimate</u> the impact of consistent growth over time, the process.

Going to the dentist twice a year isn't very effective without daily brushing and flossing. Leadership development also shouldn't only be a once or twice a year event.

The leader's role is to identify where the organization is going, define the unifying purpose, and determine where individuals will be most effective.

High Impact Leaders want to grow the people and the organization. They realize leadership isn't about them, but it starts with them. *High Impact Leaders Engage the Front Line to Improve the Bottom Line.*

Sources:

1) Employee Engagement on the Rise in the U.S., *Jim Harter*, 08/16/2018 https://news.gallup.com/poll/241649/employee-engagement-rise.aspx (retrieved February 1, 2019)
2) Harris Interactive®, Global Workforce Study (2011)
3) Good Manager Bad Manager: New Research on the Modern Management Deficit, Heather Huhman, 02/19/2018 https://www.grovo.com/resources/guides/good-manager-bad-manager-new-research-on-the-modern-management-deficit (retrieved February 5, 2019)
4) What Makes A Leader, *Daniel Goleman,* 1998 Harvard Business Review

About *Blue-Collar Leadership*®

Blue-Collar Leadership® provides leaders with a platform for training and developing their workforce to unleash their potential by taking powerful leadership concepts and packaging them in easy to understand and apply resources. Founded by Mack Story, *Blue-Collar Leadership*® is uniquely designed content specifically created to engage and develop the front line workforce, those who lead them, and those who support them.

We understand your biggest frustration as a leader is likely disengaged team members. We specialize in helping leaders engage the front line to improve the bottom line.

Mack Story has logged over 11,000 hours leading leaders and their teams through organizational change. He is the author of the extremely popular *Blue-Collar Leadership® Series*. Ria Story is an author, TEDx speaker, and expert in leadership and life skills for women. Ria has nearly 20 years of experience in leadership and management.

Mack and Ria are certified leadership speakers and trainers and have published 22 leadership development and personal growth books.

Highlights for them have been:
- Helping train 20,000 Guatemalan Leaders with John Maxwell
- Speaking at Yale University
- Offering leadership development support for the U.S. Military, Chick-fil-A, Auburn University, Chevron, and many other organizations.