



## Compare Your Management Skills to the World's Greatest Managers

### 1.) Quick Quote To Consider

"An effective leader is a flexible leader — someone who can change his or her style of leadership relative to the needs of subordinates and the situation." Oliver L. Niehouse

### 2.) Let Northwood Consulting Help You Protect Your Most Valuable Corporate Assets

How can you increase profits? Boost productivity? Retain Your Talent? According to The Gallup Organization's Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, your managers are the key to your success. (Be sure to read our February 2002 Leading Edge issue to find out why talented employees need great managers. Just go to our web site at [www.northwoodconsulting.com](http://www.northwoodconsulting.com). Go to Archives page.)

Northwood Consulting has developed a 3-day workshop series to help you and your managers make your organization more successful. By the end of the series, you and your managers will be better able to communicate more effectively with staff, motivate your most talented employees, and lead your stars to increased productivity and profitability.

Call Karen (301) 990-6331 or Marti (301) 650-4160 today to find out how to turn your managers into your biggest asset.

### 3.) Compare Your Management Skills To The World's Greatest Managers

In February, we shared with you some of the findings from the authors of *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* by Marcus Buckingham and Burt Coffman. "Our research yielded many discoveries, but the most powerful was this: Talented employees need great managers...."

(If you missed our article, just go to our web site at [www.northwoodconsulting.com](http://www.northwoodconsulting.com). Go to the Archives page. Look for our February 2002 and January 2001 issues.)

The authors interviewed over 80,000 managers who were considered outstanding managers within their organizations. The purpose of the interviews was to find out how these great managers were able to bring out the most in their employees.

"The one insight we heard echoed by tens of thousand of managers:

People don't change that much.  
Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out.  
Try to draw out what was left in.  
That is hard enough.

Great managers capitalize on each person's strengths and talents rather than fixing people's weaknesses..."

### **Test How You Measure Up To The World's Greatest Managers**

We thought this month we'd ask you compare your management skills with managers who were considered to be the best by their employers. Answer the following questions. Then scroll down to see how great managers answered these three questions during an interview conducted by the authors.

*No looking at the answers first!*

1. As a manager, which would you rather have: an independent, aggressive person who produced \$1.2 million in sales or a congenial team player who produced about half as much?
2. You have an extremely productive employee who consistently fouls up the paperwork. How would you work with this person to help him/her be more productive?
3. You have two managers. One has the best talent for management you have ever seen. The other is mediocre. There are two openings available: the first is a high-performing territory, the second is a territory that is struggling. Neither territory has yet reached its potential. Where would you recommend the excellent manager be placed? Why?

OK, got your answers? Here are the answers the authors received from the great managers. How do they compare to yours?

1. "Great managers said that they would prefer an independent, aggressive person rather than the half-as-productive team player. They reasoned that the independent, aggressive person was probably more talented but harder to manage. The team player was probably less talented for the role but much easier to manage. Great managers are not looking for people who are easy to manage. They are looking for people who have the talent needed to be world class. Therefore they prefer the challenge of taking a talented person and focusing him or her toward productivity to the challenge of trying to make a less productive person talented.
2. Great managers would find out why this employee is fouling up the paperwork. Perhaps he/she is new to the role, perhaps he/she could benefit from some training. But if they find out that the problem is lack of talent for paperwork, they will work to find a solution that enables the employee to manage around his/her weakness for administration and focus on his/her productivity.
3. Great managers would always place the most talented manager in the higher-performing territory, The key phrase in the question is 'neither territory has yet reached its potential.' Great managers use excellence as their measure. They know that only the talented manager working in the higher-performing territory has a chance to help that territory reach its true potential. Taking the territory to excellence is just as much of a challenge for the talented manager as is moving the struggling territory up above average. Furthermore, the former is much more fun and much more productive. With the talented manager positioned in the higher-performing territory, great managers say they would then remove the poor manager and select a talented turnaround expert to fix the lower-performing territory.

To those who would do the opposite, great managers offer this cautionary word: Your less talented manager will never make the most of the higher-performing territory, and the lower-performing territory may well defeat your talented manager. In this case, with the best of intentions, you have set up two people to fail and halved your productivity."

Reflective Exercise:

What did you learn about yourself after completing this exercise?

What three action steps can you take this week to begin to capitalize on each of your staff's strengths and talents?

What three action steps can you take to begin to capitalize on your own strengths and talents rather than your weaknesses?

Let us know your findings — send us an e-mail or call us. We'd love to hear from you as you continue to develop your own effective managerial style.