



## Training in the art of managerial seduction

Managers can be taught to inspire commitment and trust in their followers, says Professor Derek Mowbray. Training in the art of managerial seduction can lead to great benefits, he suggests, both to the individual and the organisation they work for.



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In a recent [study](#) the alarming statement that four in 10 staff may be planning to quit their jobs was made. The major reasons cited were lack of career path, motivation and support, unreasonable workloads and feeling underpaid.

Most of these reasons are characteristic of a lack of commitment and trust between employees and their staff, leading to employees 'escaping' - either through sickness, absence or through leaving their jobs.



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The costs involved in this draining of talent are massive. But the invisible costs of lack of concentration, productivity and effective performance are equally significant, and may not emerge for months.

Unless commitment and trust is created and sustained and lack of motivation, work demands and a host of other symptoms of the 'iceberg effect' are prevented from occurring in the first place, they can all lead to poor performance and the haemorrhaging of money and people.

The good news is that the behaviour required by managers to improve manager/staff relations and enhance staff retention can be taught - and this level of talent drain is mostly preventable.

### The power of psychology

The issue of manager/staff relationships is one that is central to a peak performing organisation. The role of psychology and its positive contribution to an organisation's wellbeing and profitability is often underestimated - and invariably understated. But it represents a powerful force which can transform behaviour and relationships in the workplace: increasing performance and profitability and preventing the negativity that makes staff feel like leaving.

The workplace is like any other community setting. People behave according to the situation they find themselves in, and if the community of work exhibits characteristics that make commitment unpleasant and difficult, then individuals will always seek other places where their own skills, talents, and sense of wellbeing are able to be expressed, achieved and reinforced.

This is where psychologists can help, by encouraging behaviour that fosters commitment, trust and a robust psychological contract.

Once an organisation fosters an encouraging environment, there is then the issue of the leader's ability to develop and sustain commitment and trust through their own behaviour towards their staff. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the ability to demonstrate attentiveness to the needs of staff will result in staff reciprocating with commitment to the leader.

*"The interaction between managers and their employees can be enhanced through appropriate training, to provide employees with the confidence to take risks and the encouragement to accept challenges."*

Being attentive, however, requires leaders to be able to listen, reflect, understand, respond in depth and demonstrate a genuine interest in the needs, demands and concerns of staff. The word empathy is often used to convey the kind of behaviour that leaders should express, along with integrity and consistency of behaviour. If leaders say they will do something, they must do it to ensure that commitment and trust is built up and sustained, even if the action is unpleasant.

Psychologists can help people to think about the implications of their own behaviour and attitudes as a first step to improving relationships within their workforce.

### **Inspiring your staff**

Through leadership development, leaders and managers can be taught to inspire trust in their followers. Skills such as attentiveness and managerial seduction result in commitment and these skills can be taught and applied to great benefit both to the individuals and the organisation.

The interaction between managers and their employees can be enhanced through appropriate training, to provide employees with the confidence to take risks and the encouragement to accept challenges, all of which contribute to a clear sense of personal worth and value to the organisation.

Investment in such training will produce a much higher return on investment than pursuing a process of supporting people suffering from bullying, harassment, poor communications or interaction breakdown.

Organisations with a culture that fosters and sustains trust and commitment, employee engagement and strong individual psychological contracts between the individual and their employing organisation will achieve their optimum in terms of financial targets, performance and staff retention.

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