

The importance of leadership

By Allison L. Mollica, NHTI-Concord's Community College



Allison Mollica

Businesses, organizations, government and individuals are all reeling with the current pandemic and the varying degrees of a 'new normal.' Since COVID-19 was introduced in the USA, everyone has been coping in unique and often innovative ways. As a training and continuing education provider, I am taxed with understanding what the pressing training requirements will be as we adjust to this new and unfamiliar normal as businesses continue to work to maintain, rebuild and startup. One thing that we do know is that there is a common necessity for any successful business or organization to ensure strong and effective leadership.

Leadership impact

Leadership effectiveness is a #1 concern for organizations and the global outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) has created significant challenges for leaders at all levels in industries across the world. As we adjust the way we work, the products we make, and the business we conduct, the right leadership skills are more essential than ever before. Our frontline workers have risen to the challenge of the crisis but not without stress and risks.

In a 2017 study from Woohoo inc, experts on happiness at work, the top reasons employees have bad days at work are directly tied to leadership flaws, i.e. lack of support, negative coworkers, poor feedback, lack of recognition and workload. All these factors directly link back to leadership. While adapting to a COVID-19 pandemic, there is little room for the loss of productivity and revenue that result from employees having a bad day. Whether a small business owner, supervisor, manager or leader, the impact you have on your employees and customers can be monumental.

Importance of visibility

This month, I had the opportunity to work with Nick Manolis, who through a series of microburst videos shared insights and encouragement for leaders. One of the critical components of leadership, for example, is being visible and Nick tells the audience, 'You can work at a distance, but you cannot be distant.' This is a great

time to rededicate yourself to being visible by calling, Zooming, emailing, or texting employees to check in with them.

The power of employee recognition

There has been a resurgence in recognizing employees and thanking people for what they do during this crisis. All employees liked to be valued and recognized. Employee recognition is critical to a positive workplace culture — the character, attitude, and personality of an organization. It is also an excellent source of employee motivation. That is why being visible is so important. In a virtual world it is essential to stay connected with your employees. Let them know you are there, that you care, that you recognize work expectations have and will change. Secondly, timely feedback is essential to effective recognition and this does not have a cost associated with it other than your time.

Thoughts for leaders

Moving forward, think about areas you lead in and the people you work with. How can you make connections to be an effective leader? Remember that you do not have to have a 'title' to become a leader. According to Nick, a supervisor or manager is not necessarily a leader unless they are someone that others willingly want to follow. Think about your leadership and the people you are supervising. If they follow you because you are the boss, this does not necessarily mean you are a leader.

In these uncertain times, it is difficult for many to figure out what is their best business strategy, but one thing is for certain. Organizations will have the best chance to overcome and thrive in our new normal with strong, effective, and capable leaders.

NHTI hosted a complimentary Leadership Perspective Seminar on June 25 with Nick Manolis. View the presentation on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCnc1SGC5ks6EMzKckQdlrKw?view_as=subscriber (this is a clickable link on the Chamber's website at ConcordNHChamber.com/resources/newsletter — click July).

Nick Manolis has spent his career in a wide variety of senior management and consulting roles in the private, public and non-profit sectors focusing on human resource management, training, development and facilitation. Most recently, Nick served as Vice President of Human Resource Development for Associated Grocers of New England. Over the past year Nick has been engaged in providing training and development services to health care, government, food service, manufacturing, distribution and educational organizations. The principle that "helping organizations develop and grow by helping employees develop and grow" fuels Nick's passion and guides his work.

Allison is the Business & Training Center Director and Coordinator of Workforce Development of NHTI, Concord's Community College, where she works to bridge education to industry for the purpose of providing relevant and impactful training that directly targets the needs of what our current and future workforce requires. Allison recognizes that our community colleges, in partnership with local industry and business, can be a powerful resource to help our community obtain the skills and connections needed to start or advance their career. Allison holds a M. Ed and APC from Lesley University and is a NH Certified Library Media Specialist, Digital Learning Specialist and Business Educator. She can be reached at amollica@ccsnh.edu.



31 College Drive
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-6484
www.nhti.edu

NHTI-Concord's Community College, is a fully accredited, public community college serving students, businesses and the community by providing academic, technical and professional education.