

## **Creative Leadership**

### **Ways to Develop Your Staff No Matter What Age**

- **Give them a choice.** Listen to (and make use of) their input on how they would like to be developed. Offer a mix of on-the-job training, action learning assignments and courses. Assess their motivation and find out what kind of perks and benefits they want. Offer them what control you can over their time and space.
- **Reward and Recognize.** Provide short term, performance based rewards. Tell them you appreciate them- Everyone wants a boss who thinks they are good and says so.
- **Let them know where they stand.** Give timely and consistent feedback. Employees generally prefer candid assessments of what is going well, what needs improvement and where problems lie.
- **Encourage entrepreneurs.** Give employees ownership of their work and responsibility for results. Introduce entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Look out for your people.** Good bosses know that the job isn't just to get the work done- it is also to care for the people.
- **Create a fun, relaxed environment.** With so much time spent at work, who wants to be tense all the time?
- **Share the spotlight.** Give credit for the work. If you are the boss, it isn't likely that you did it all yourself, so be sure to give recognition to the people behind the scenes.
- **Help others learn.** Provide opportunities for employees to learn and grow- and support them in taking advantage of those opportunities. Keep in mind that support isn't saying, "Great idea, do it on your own time." Find ways for them to develop during their work time.
- **Recognize value.** Compensate employees for learning new things and making themselves more valuable. If you don't acknowledge the increase in your employees' value through learning, someone else will.
- **Forget about 'face time.'** Don't make the mistake of thinking that the number of hours you can see your employee is a good way to judge their productivity and worth. An emphasis on face time indicates a supervisor's lack of trust in the employee, a need for control or an inability to manage effectively.
- **Don't mistake age for experience.** Age is not a proxy for experience. Make informed decisions and go on how employees perform- not how many years they have been doing it. Also, don't tell younger employees to "wait your turn"- that is just going to make them more likely to look for another job where they can put their skills to use now.