



## Harvard Business Review... is right! Don't Eliminate Your middle manager.

August 29, 2023

Dear Members,

The Harvard Business Review (HBR) in its July-August 2023 edition clearly states: **“Don't Eliminate Your Middle Managers.”**<sup>1</sup> The authors argue that:

“Organizations have long seen middle managers as ripe for cutting whenever times get tight, and the current moment is no exception. The authors believe that this a costly mistake. Over the past several years of advising clients and researching workforce trends, the authors have seen that this vital organizational layer often gets severely depleted. The heavy cost of cutting them is that middle managers being positioned close to the ground but not too close are essential to helping businesses navigate rapid, complex change.

Middle managers can make work more meaningful, interesting, and productive, and true organizational transformation can occur only with their involvement. They're the glue that holds teams and enterprises together, fostering the inclusion and psychological safety individuals and groups need to thrive.

If middle managers are to fulfill this promise, though, leaders must reimagine their roles and give them the training and support they need.”

The authors have studied HR data on 1,700 global employers and also examined their McKinsey Organizational Health Index scores, and they have found that the employers whose managers excelled on human capital metrics had high returns on invested capital.

“Research shows that people are looking for more than a good salary. They want to understand how a prospective job would fit into the organization's strategy and align with their personal purpose. They want to join a team that's caring, trustworthy, interesting, high performing and fun. They want their employers to participate in their development, and they want more control over what they do and when and where they do it.”

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<sup>1</sup> Harvard Business Review, July-August 2023 Magazine, Field Emily, Hancock Bryan and Schaninger Bill

The authors argue that middle managers can make a huge difference in an employer's ability to attract talent. They, far more than their higher-ups or their colleagues in HR, can craft individualized working arrangements that will enhance recruitment, retention, and diversity while facilitating high-value work. Only middle managers understand their individual departments deeply enough to see gaps between old and new realities and identify which policies need to change.

Employers should do the following for their middle managers:

- Ensure that the organization has a clear statement of purpose that aligns with the manager's purpose.
- Do all you can to keep good managers working as managers. **Promote them** within the managerial track and **reward them with substantial pay increases.**
- **Encourage managers to meet with one another and share best practices.**
- **Create a culture in which managers feel free to speak up.** They're often the first to identify systemic problems and see solutions.
- **Show your managers compassion,** just as you expect them to compassion to their employees.

**“Middle managers have some of the hardest jobs around. Surveys show that they're the most depressed and stressed category of worker. Keep that in mind and support them to the fullest.”**

It could not have been said better...all of it! And at the APER, we knew all of this and we are constantly bringing these arguments to the government.

Our shortage of employees has a name, it's called Barrette because his reform attacked so greatly the middle managers of the health and social services sector.

We've sent this article to the office of Minister Dubé!

APER is on the side of middle managers!

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