

6-2-20 Addressing Top Performers

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Hi, everyone, welcome to another episode of legendary leaders. So I've just finished that seven episode miniseries about how to successfully take over a new team or essentially how to successfully create a brand new team really quickly. Hopefully you enjoyed that.



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Since completing that,



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I've had some conversations with some friends and some, you know, some peers and my inner circle and I got the question around



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top talent.



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And, you know, I talked about in that series about how to address underperformance I just talked about it, you know, obviously high level, we only have a little bit of time together each day. It's not like I could do a two or three hour episode to walk you through all of the

details. You guys would kill me. But naturally, if you talk about underperformance people then have questions about top performers. And that's awesome. We should absolutely be talking about top performers. Not just in, in, in taking over a team or creating a team, but simply in creating and developing and celebrating top performers. Now, I can tell you that in my career in the companies that I have either worked for or worked with, okay, and there have been a few, to say the least. There is this natural aversion, I think, to allowing top talent to be top talent.



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And that is really frustrating. You know,



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what typically happens, especially in larger organizations, or organizations that are trying to become large, right? They're in a rapid growth phase. Is that people think a couple of things. Number one, most of the time when it comes to performance reviews, okay, and let me talk through performance reviews because this is really where I'm going.



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Most companies tie



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money to performance reviews, right?



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And how do companies establish The money they're going to pay their employees? Well, they typically do that before the fiscal year even starts, right? It's part of budget planning. It's part of headcount planning. And so then what do you do? Well, most companies then would say, the average is going to be solid performer. Okay? Therefore, we can only afford for our average to be solid performer, because that's all we want to pay. And it's like beating my head against the wall when I think about that. I don't want people on my team to be solid performers. I mean, don't misunderstand. There's nothing wrong with a true solid performing individual. But honestly, I mean, let's let's think about it honestly, for a second. I don't want just solid I want spectacular. I want exceeds, I want role model I

want, you know, amazing absolute, just mind blowing performance because of how good they are. And I don't want Amazing to be quantified as solid. That's not fair. That's demeaning, right? If I'm amazing, and you're amazing, but we show up to work every day, and we give our work at the level of amazing. And yet we're only given solid performer ratings, does that really encourage us to continue to be amazing sort of defeating, right? And so you have to realize that as you're moving through, and so that's what I want you to be thinking about as you're talking and developing your team relative to top talent. Okay. And that's what I just wanted to jump in and share that out of the gate and tell you why. It bothers me that a lot of organizations don't want to label people as top talent and therefore reward



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them financially for being top talent.



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Just because we set the budget at the beginning of the year doesn't mean that we shouldn't reward the work for all that people have put in I'm okay to be wrong and have to pay out a little bit more for top talent. Okay, because no doubt if the talent is amazing, we're probably making more money than we projected we were going to make. Right? So it goes hand in hand. So that's the first issue that I have is that we just assume that because we've set a budget, we cannot rate anyone higher than what we can afford to rate them. That's a struggle for me. And then the other part is the assumption that everyone is just gonna be solid. When I don't want everyone to be solid. I want everyone to be through the roof. Amazing. I want to rate them as such and I want to pay them as such. Okay, because that's what my clients deserve.



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And that's what your clients deserve. That's what your customers deserve.



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That's what your team deserves. They deserve amazing peers. Right? You deserve amazing direct reports. You deserve to have people on your team that work extremely hard in order to allow you your freedom allow you to live your legendary life. Right? Okay, so I've never understood why we don't allow our top talent to be top talent. So my

challenge for you today is please don't be one of those leaders that, you know, and I've talked about this before. It's like watching Michael Jordan and critiquing his ability to play basketball when you never play the sport.



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Okay, we cannot



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look down our nose at someone who's doing an amazing job, but search and purposely try to find flaws in their performance. That's not okay. That doesn't support the type of culture I would expect you to want to have in your business. So as you look to other companies, as you look to grow in your business, and you're looking for guidance from an HR perspective, okay. And you're you're thinking to yourself, Well, one of the other companies done I've got to have something to look at as a frame of reference. Because we all do that. Please be cognizant of the fact that a lot of companies build off of that mentality. Everyone should fall on an average, there's needs to be a bell curve. I've heard that many, many times, there should be a bell curve of performance, with the bulk of people sitting in the solid or, you know, right in the middle standard performance is where the bulk of people should sit. And then a small percentage should sit below standard and a small percentage should sit above standard and then an even smaller percentage should sit well below standard and then well above standard. And that's crazy. Like, I want to move that curve and I want the bulk of my people to be sitting at slightly too well above. I don't want to have anybody a slightly below or well below. I just want to eliminate them from the company, right. So that's what I really want you to be thinking about are on top talent. I've got a lot of Feelings around this one in case you can't tell is one of my pet peeves. It really is. Because there are so many amazing people out there you are one of them. And to even think about the fact that someone would hold you back and allow you to be classified as top talent because of a budget, or because there's a rule that there needs to be a bell curve of talent in an organization is just not respectful. And it doesn't set the tone and it doesn't create the culture that I would expect all of us to want to have in our business, which is to drive and push top talent to be that and support the fact that someone is considered top talent. Okay, so that's number one. Please rate your people on their performance reviews relative to their true performance. Don't try to hit a budget Don't try to hit a bell curve. I would tell you if you're worried about hitting a budget, put extra money in the in the performance review bucket so that you have it there. Assume that everyone is going to be you know, well. Standard and create your budget that way. And then if anything, you don't spend as much if they truly didn't perform there, but don't

not give it to someone if they did perform there. That's my challenge to you on that. Okay? And then sit down. And instead of critiquing and analyzing their performance from a perspective, that you've never actually viewed yourself, maybe you've never done that work, or you didn't go to school to learn those things. Right? Then it's hard to really assess all of that and say, are they bought and performer or top former? Are they delivering to the expectations that you've established? Do they go above and beyond? You know, are they bringing things to you that you didn't ask for, but they're problem solving and looking into, you know, they're part of the business and working with you to make it better. I mean, a solid performer to me is someone who just shows up and does the work that we asked them to do. Someone who exceeds goes above and beyond to look for problems, solve the problems, partner make things permanently Better, and move the company in the business forward. That's, that's exceeding to me, right. And that's the type of person I want to have on my team. So if they're doing that, right then like that. Okay. So that's, that's my feedback. I want you to really think through that. I get a little rambley when I talk about this one, so I apologize if I'm rambling on this episode. But I'm gonna leave you with that thought. My challenge for you today is if you have top talent working for you, that you labeled them as such. And then you allow them to continue to grow, you foster their growth, you push them to get better and better. You don't catch them out. You don't hold them back. You don't rate them below where they're actually performing, because of a budget or because you've got to hit some sort of number. Okay. Encourage them and give them honest, actual factual feedback about their performance. We talked about doing that for underperformers. It is only fair that you do that for top performers because When you do that for them, they become even more loyal. And they strive to deliver even more. And that's exactly what you want. That is a workforce that you want to have in your company. Okay, so I want to leave you with that thought. I appreciate you listening. Thank you so much. I hope that these little nuggets just empowered you to take care of your people in the way that no doubt you want to take care of them. Okay? Go and be legendary.