

Think About Your People

Don't wait until one of your best performers hands in their resignation. A little prevention can save a lot of heartache!

4. Wishing you had done some effective planning to prevent their leaving?

Rear View Mirrors

It's always easy, after the fact, to think of what you **should** have done. Six foot wide rear view mirrors, however, are no match for some simple forward planning.

Ask yourself a couple of questions about the people in your group:

1. What does it cost you to lose a really top employee?
2. If you lost good ones in the past, would you have saved more than it cost you (to train up a new employee) if you had prevented the loss in the first place?

There's nothing new in this, of course. It's obvious. But there is something we can learn from our Performance Technology about how to **improve the odds** here.

Categorise your Employees

When thinking about any particular employee, you can look at them according to how disappointed you would be if they were to leave. Would you be:

1. Indifferent (even relieved)?
2. Somewhat disappointed?
3. Kicking yourself for not foreseeing that they might be planning to leave?



Those who fall into the last two categories are worth spending some time on. These are the ones who are producing results for you. These are the employees who would definitely leave a noticeable hole in your operation if they suddenly departed.

Why do Performers Leave?

There are probably 4 main reasons a top performer would want to resign:

1. **They are stymied in their job.**
2. **They want to grow in their job but have reached a ceiling.**
3. **They want a bigger job, but there is nowhere to go with you.**
4. **They have been tempted by the offers of a headhunter.**

The Stymied Performer

A top performer will always focus on the results. If someone, or something, in your organisation is actually stopping them from getting those results, they will eventually look elsewhere for job satisfaction.

This does not happen quickly. A stymied performer does not give up easily. They will try all sorts of things to get the results they know they should achieve, but if something (or someone) is blocking their every move and they find no recourse, they will move on to more productive fields.

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This also applies to policies or procedure which are blocking them.

The point is, a performer lives for their results. This is what keeps them going. It's not the money, or the perks — it's the satisfaction of achieving that which they set out to produce.

If you take away their results, they often feel they have nothing left worth fighting for. And if this situation is not resolved, you can lose them.

Why would someone stop a top performer from producing?

- Jealousy
- Vindictiveness
- Stupidity

...just to name a few. The point is, if someone is stopping one of your top performers, you'd better review the results being produced by the "stopper". Then compare these with the results the top performer has produced in the past.

How do you resolve this? It may mean restructuring the area, or even eliminating the person who is impeding your performer. It could also mean that a review of the blocking policies or procedures may be in order.

The basis of the decision should be on the value of the results being produced by the parties concerned, or on the real value of the procedures in terms of production.

Sometimes, old policies can hang around longer than they should. Many people just accept them, but top performers will buck.

A Performer Hitting a Ceiling

When you get someone who becomes really good at their job, you have someone who can do it all, and do it with ease.

Just watch what happens, for instance, when you have to replace that employee for a short while (perhaps when they are on holidays).

- Does the whole area come to a grinding halt?
- Do you find yourself spending too much time managing the area from above?
- Are there suddenly problems in the area?

What you're looking at is an area which the performer has under their **total control**. They are so good at their job, they **make it look easy**.

You see this in reverse when you replace two poor performers with one top producer. The new person easily does the whole job which the other two complained was an overload.

When a performer gets into this "high gear" mode (and most of them will at some stage in their development), **they will soon get bored**.

They will begin to look for something more challenging. If you don't recognise this, you will wind up with their resignation on your desk.

How do you prevent this? Firstly, watch out for it. Notice those people who are doing their current job so well, they make it look easy. The solution is to find a bigger game for them **before** they get bored.

- Give them more responsibility.
- Expand their job to cover other related areas.



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■ Give them support (administration and/or technological).

Not every performer wants to climb the corporate ladder. In fact, many would prefer to simply become much more professional in what they do: to grow **within** the job.

A Performer with Nowhere to Go

If you find you have someone who is so good they are obviously destined for bigger things, you need to promote them, of course.

If your company is big enough to accommodate such a move, you are fortunate. But if the available promotional opportunities are limited, that's another story.

The sure sign of this is when you realise that a performer in your team could probably do your job with no trouble at all. If you are not ready to give your position up just yet, however, you have to look elsewhere. And if there isn't anywhere else for them to go in your organisation, they will probably conclude that the "elsewhere" is in some other company.

It's not easy to cope with this one. The fact of the matter is, they may well be headed for a higher powered career path than you can provide.

The correct approach is to look at the solutions in the above section, but if none of these work for this performer, you may simply have to thank your lucky stars that you had the benefit of their presence for at least a time.

Sometimes, your only recourse may be to wish them well in their future endeavours.

Stolen by a Headhunter

This is a tough one too, because it can come about at a time when the performer was not even considering leaving you. One day they got a phone call and a sales pitch about a far better position.

If nothing else, such approaches will lead the top performer to assess his or her situation to see which way they want to go. And, if they are even vaguely affected by any of the above three situations, they will not reject the overtures out of hand.

The solution to this one lies in proper observation to recognise the symptoms of a performer reaching their peak. Then, by implementing the proper planning to keep them interested and growing, you can proof them (somewhat) against the dangers of having them stolen away from you.

The Final Solution

Keeping your top performers is, by far, the best approach.

But if you do lose one, of course, we can help you find another to replace them...



We specialise in finding Top Performers.