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**What Management Means To Me**

I have only worked a few jobs in my short lifetime, but I have experienced being under several different managers, all with their own management styles. I have been fortunate enough to have not yet experienced working for a horrible manager. Yet as I look back on my work experience, certain jobs stand out as more positive and life-giving than others. It was the jobs with the genuine, positive managers that stand out the most in my mind. Managers who truly saw me, who related to me as a person rather than just as an employee, and who desired to make work a positive daily experience, made a difference in my life.

Positive reinforcement is addicting for an employee. When a manager expects an employee to succeed rather than fail, the employee develops a desire to work to the best of his or her own ability. At the end of my freshman year of college, I began to work for a particularly intimidating manager who expected excellence from his employees. I felt as though I was walking around on egg shells for the first week, trying my best to do everything perfectly. At the end of this week, my manager sat down with me and told me I had done an excellent job. He explained the reasons behind his management style and why he wanted his business to be run with excellence. He encouraged me, and reassured me that I could achieve those standards that he had set. This manager’s high expectations was paired with his willingness to provide informative positive reinforcement, therefore creating in me a desire to become a hardworking and dedicated employee.

An employee must know what expected of him or her in order to succeed. Organization and clear communication must be given in order for an employee to understand the standards which the employer has set. During my junior year of college, I began working the Information Center at my university under a student manager. This manager was overwhelmed by her own job and did not invest whatsoever in her new employees. Though she seemed like she had good intentions, she rarely communicated her expectations, leaving her employees confused and frustrated. She was rarely ever available to answer questions and as a result, the Student Union Building began to suffer. Customers would get frustrated due to the employees lack of knowledge and confusion. I never was excited to go to work and did not perform as well as I knew that I could have. With a lack of communication with employees, there is often a spirit of frustration which can be felt throughout a place of work, and the company cannot succeed as well as it could.

Managers who truly invest in their employees make an investment in their company. I have been fortunate enough to experience working for a couple of managers who have invested in me as an employee. These managers cared for me as a person and took the time to get to know me. They understood my ambitions, my hopes and dreams for the future, and communicated to me where they believed by strengths lied. They were open to talking about ways in which I could rise up in the company. This way, I could gain professional experience which would help me in the future. These managers not only invested in me as person, but they invested in my work ethic and my loyalty to my job. Through this, the company was benefited with a hard working employee, striving to meet expectations, and dedicated to the company.

The best managers are leaders. Whether they recognize it or not, every manager makes an impact on their employees and work environment. They are looked up to by every employee they manage and are role models for their department. They set the tone for how their department, office, or restaurant is run. They have the opportunity to become leaders who demonstrate through example how to treat others. Though a manager from a traditional management style background leads in a domineering way, I believe servant leadership is much more effective. A manager who leads by serving others, will encourage their employees to act in a similar way. This type of work environment will lead to loyal employees, great customer service, and a strong company.

Though there are many managers who do not invest in their employees, care only about the bottom line, and only about their own jobs, employees often do not thrive under their leadership. As a past employee of several managers, I believe that the best managers are those who make service their number one priority, are humble and willing to learn, and truly listen to their employees. These are the managers who often leave a memorable impression on their employees. With this example and experience, these employees will most likely choose to lead in the same way.