

How Do You Lead?

By Jon Cheplak

As I talk to brokers across the country, I get to enjoy the great experience of a continual learning process. I find that some things never change. I still learn from what is done right and I learn from what is done, hmmm.....different.

The different managers I have met are:

The Helper:

1. This person is a problem solver.
2. Receives validation by fixing every problem that an agent has.
3. Creates a "dependent environment" where agents are afraid to do anything without the manager telling them how to do it.
4. The manager is stuck at the office from the crack of dawn until late in the evening.
5. The office never grows and no one knows why.

Why does this manager have to hold the agent's hand?

1. Lack of empowerment in the training process and in the leadership style of the manager.
2. Strengths of the manager are contracts and the law.
3. The manager has not had any experience with other styles of leadership.

The General:

1. A "top-down" environment.
2. Rules, regulations, and policies are passed down to the agents.
3. Agents don't give feedback.
4. Constant judgment.
5. An environment of unhealthy "independence" because agents don't want to be told what to do.
6. An exhausting style of leadership that creates stress for the manager as they police everything that happens in the office.

Why does a manager use this leadership style?

1. They don't know any other way.

2. Many times they have control issues.
3. Their "direct report" instills this style in them.

The Visionary:

1. A clear communicator of where the office is going.
2. Enrolls agents in the vision.
3. Empowers agents.
4. Does not cast judgment.
5. Takes feedback and acts on it.
6. Has no ego.
7. Creates a spirit of volunteerism for the agents.
8. Has mutually accountable relationships.
9. Offers great attraction value to the office.
10. Does not fix problems.
11. The environment polices itself.
12. The manager has tremendous freedom in his/her professional and personal life.
13. Agents are supporting in the recruiting process.
14. Tremendous growth takes place.
15. This manager could be gone for a month and the office wouldn't skip a beat.
16. Agents are a part of present and future decisions.
17. This is an office of interdependence.

So my question: How are you leading your office? Are you exhausted? Is your office stagnant? Are agents calling you "24/7" with their problems? Are more agents leaving than joining? Are you working too hard?

Read through this article again and determine how you are leading your office. Place a check next to the traits and experiences that are taking place in your office. What do you need to change? What steps are you going to take? By when? What kind of outcome can you expect when you make the appropriate changes?

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O.k. I'll give you the answers:

1. An inspired office of quality human beings that are aligned to your purpose of inspiration and growth.
2. Agents that solve their problems individually or from another agent volunteering their support.
3. Agents that roll out any new policy without a glitch. (I know this one will turn some heads).
4. You will have tremendous freedom and the ability to be more productive in your daily work.
5. Retention issues will go away and recruiting will soar.
6. You will have the highest level of respect from your agents.

Get a clear picture of where you are going. Align your key players to this vision, including communicating the support you want from them. Clearly communicate this vision to your office. And finally, do what you say you are going to do by operating from "principle" and not "personality."

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