

Boss Who Plays Favorites

 thedailyrecruiter.com/boss-plays-favorites/

By The SearchLogix
Group

7/7/2017

“By Joel Garfinkle, of SmartBrief”

We all have some working relationships that just work better than others. It can be tempting to latch on to what has been successful for us in the past, whether that’s a certain style, a certain personality type or even a specific person or group. While it’s good to play to your strengths, there’s a difference between sticking with what works and being stuck in a rut.

Playing favorites leads to missed opportunities for you and your team. You lose out on new perspectives, new ideas and unique problem-solving techniques. The company can hardly benefit from the skills of staff that are never given the chance to shine, and staff that is never given a chance to shine may soon leave. Take a look at your leadership style and see if any of these habits describe you. Read on to learn how to break up your “inner circle” and build a better team.

Habit No. 1: Going with who you know

It’s great to have familiar faces on your team, whether you’re starting a new project or moving up in the company and taking people with you. While they can add continuity and get up to speed quickly with your working style, you’re missing out if you don’t add fresh perspectives and new ideas from new people. Don’t forget to consider people you’ve worked with in the past, too – they may surprise you with how they’ve grown and changed since you last interacted.

Instead: Balance your teams with a mix of old and new to keep both continuity and fresh perspectives flowing.

Habit No. 2: Picking youth over experience, or vice versa

Some of us are drawn to the brightness and vitality of young members on the team. Whether we see a glimpse of our earlier selves in them, or we are simply energized by the vigor they bring to the table, it can seem natural to give extra focus and attention to foster and refine that youthful drive. Similarly, it can seem logical to reward knowledge and experience, giving extra weight to the opinions of those who have been at the table the longest.

Either way, it’s a missed opportunity to only consider the opinions of one group or the other, especially when neither side will always have the whole answer to a challenge.

Instead: Bring everyone to the table and leverage the power of both perspectives. A great leader can combine both youth and experience to gain the best advantage.

Habit No. 3: Having one “go-to” person for everything

When someone comes through for us, we want to reward that with more and greater responsibility — and so we should. It’s a normal part of business to help others grow into new roles. There’s a difference, however, between rewarding great performance and becoming lax in continuing to foster the skills of the whole team. Ask yourself if there really is only one right person for the task at hand, or whether there others on your team who need the mentorship and opportunities you can offer.

Instead: Reward great work, but make sure you’re providing opportunities for all your team members on the path to greater responsibility.

Habit No. 4: Creating a hierarchy

You may say your door is always open, but is it, really? Do you interact with many of your employees a regular basis, or do you have a more rigid structure where information flows through only a few key advisors? If only certain members feel it's comfortable or appropriate to speak with you, you will be missing out on a lot of great ideas.

Instead: Broaden the number of team members you interact with regularly – in both formal and informal settings. Some hierarchy is helpful, but don't let it prevent you from seeing everyone in action on a regular basis.

Habit No. 5: Being stingy with trust

It's easy to fall into the habit of trusting only a few key people on your team. Whether you've had a few bad experiences in the past, or just don't open up easily, sometimes it seems safer to minimize the number of people with critical tasks or key information. The problem is that those on the outside feel shut out and minimized, even when they've done nothing wrong.

Instead: Bring the team together by keeping everyone "in the know." Your team is more likely to trust you if you trust them, in turn.

Habit No. 6: Preferring one style

Do you always listen to the first voice to speak up, or admire the employee who seeks you out with the latest info? Maybe you prefer to draw a well-considered opinion from the quiet one at the table. Perhaps the fastest troubleshooter or most organized presenter appeals to you. A team usually works best when it is made up of a variety of different individuals, each bringing something different to the table. If tend to attract and maintain a certain group of personalities, consider what you're missing out on.

Instead: Value all the different ways in which people get work done. Make sure you consider and reward the variety of personality and cultural norms that can make up a dynamic working team.

Do you see yourself slipping into any of the above habits? While they all have good reasons to exist, consider how you can break out of your habits and use a more open-minded approach to get ahead.