



Camille Macchio is the owner of Realistic Alternatives (www.realisticalternatives.com). She can be reached at executivecoach@PM360online.com.

ALL IT TAKES IS 15 MINUTES A DAY

BY CAMILLE MACCHIO

ALL THE EXECUTIVES, DIRECTORS, AND MANAGERS I KNOW WANT to be great managers and mentors. The refrain most often heard, though, is that they don't have the time—or so they believe. So here's a question for you: If you could land a new client or take one of your direct reports out for lunch to discuss career development, which one would you pick to do? The answer is simple—it's neither.

You can be a terrific manager and developer of people without sacrificing a single sale. The amount of time you spend coaching, mentoring, and giving feedback to people is not the metric of success. Success is measured in the method and the quality of your leadership. Great leaders motivate people and produce great results at the same time.

Optimizing Your Interactions

Want to have the maximum impact in the minimum time? Limit your people development activities to no more than 15 incremental minutes a day (that's 75 minutes per work-week). Here are four ways to leverage that time into results.

Spot dead time. Look for every two-minute stretch in your day during which you could be talking to someone—and convert each of those intervals into a coaching opportunity. Walking to the cafeteria? Driving to the airport? Walking to your car at the end of the day? Ask one of your people to come along—and talk to him about his goals and priorities.

Give direct feedback. Use the two minutes when returning to your office from a meeting to give feedback to your direct report about the contribution she made during the meeting. Or simply ask her how she thought the meeting went and if she would have done things differently. Then offer feedback on her response. Direct, in-the-moment feedback is your single best tool for developing people

because it's in real time and doesn't require revisiting past events.

Motivate your team members. Once a day, get up and walk over to the desk of someone you haven't spoken to recently. Take two minutes to ask him what he's working on. Once he's answered, respond, "What do you need from me to make that project successful?" The message you're conveying here is, "I know who you are. I'm acknowledging your contribution, and I'm totally supportive." Just think how you would feel if your boss showed up at your office to acknowledge you. Pretty cool stuff.

Make two calls per day. On your way home from work, call, email, or, yes, even text-message two people whom you met with that day. Provide feedback by mentioning something you thought was particularly good and perhaps an area for improvement. Remember to include a thank-you as part of your message. Employees who feel appreciated and who know that you're working to develop their skills stay engaged over the long run.

The payoff comes with consistent use of these strategies. Your employees will feel like you're not just their boss but a leader who is committed to their development. The payoff for you, the boss, is a motivated team despite the condition of the economy. All it takes is 15 minutes a day—15 minutes well spent. Try one or two techniques, and let me know how they work for you. I welcome all your feedback. ○

Great
leaders
motivate
people and
produce
great
results at
the same
time.