



Beat the experience paradox.

We have all been up against the unrealistic chicken & egg dilemma of needing experience to get that next level job, but we need that job to get the experience. One example is your first manager job. If you have not been a manager, it is difficult to have management experience. But you need management experience to get the job.

Recognizing that this is a common issue for many of the people that have worked for me, I've created some opportunities to give people experiences outside of their normal job duties. These opportunities give them practical experience that can build skills and give them stories to tell when the interview for those next level jobs.

1) **Managing a junior employee or co-op student:** If you have an entry level or co-op role on your team, it presents a great opportunity to have a high performing non-manager take over as the manager of this role. This provides them a chance to set direction, hold them accountable for completing the work, on time and at an acceptable standard. It allows them to try on added responsibility and see if they like it and if they are good at it. Ideally, they can also play a key role in the performance evaluation of the person so that they get a sense for what its like to be on the other side of these conversations. This can be a real eye opener for people as the increased responsibility is generally accompanied with increased stress and pressure. Another great experience this opportunity provides is that they must juggle their regular job responsibilities along with these new manager responsibilities. This can lead to a newfound respect for managers and what it takes to be one.

2) **Projects & Committees:** When new projects emerge, it creates another opportunity to put a non-manager into a project leader role. They will learn what it's like to be accountable for other people's work, to manage resources and to hold people accountable. Of course, you will have to oversee what they are doing and guide them along the right path and help them avoid pitfalls. This can be a great experience for them as they develop their skills. They can take on bigger and more important projects as they develop and prove themselves. As a bonus, this can make your life much easier once you can trust them and delegate work to them, that you would have done. If your business have cross-functional committees that pull resources from different parts of the business to address specific issues, then this is another opportunity to help develop your people. These situations usually require a certain level of expertise so they will only be suited to high performers who you can trust to be your proxy in these meetings. The individual gets exposure to people in other parts of the business that they may not otherwise interact with. They can build a reputation for themselves, broaden their knowledge and propel themselves into potential future opportunities.

As you create opportunities for your staff to build their capabilities you increase the probability that they will leave to move onto bigger and better things. As a leader that is one of the best possible outcomes. When you can play a role in helping people grow that is a testament to your leadership. When they leave, you will have another opportunity to hire and develop a new person. When you become the type of leader that proves you can develop your people you will find that your upward mobility will also increase. Now that's WIN-WIN.
