



What To Do When Your Top Producers Seem to Lose Focus and Engagement



As a leader, it is sometimes hard to recognize when top-producing, independent, A-Team members disengage. Why is it so difficult to see these problems with your former superstars?

Your top talent are the people who push back against micromanaging and who generally thrive without much supervision. They are your reliable people, the people you have confided in, and your go-to people. This makes it tough to diagnose when they turn sour because you trust them, and you don't want to believe that they are considering leaving you for your competition.

From their perspective, it is like a dating relationship that has run its course. Once you decide to break up with someone, you suddenly find all kinds of things about them that irritate you that serve to reinforce your decision that breaking up with them is the right thing to do.

Once your former star starts to believe that they are smarter than everyone else, that they operate better alone than with your team, and that the organization is not benefiting them, your best players suddenly become your biggest problem.

How do you know when your A+Team is now barely earning a D-? What are some of the warning signs that your superstars have lost their dedication and energy?

- They stop communicating.
- They are surly.
- They invent reasons to blame the supervisor, the boss, and others.
- They start to criticize the organization unfairly.

Mary's Updates

Fall conference season is in full swing!

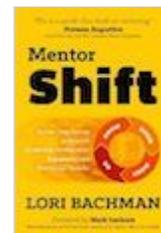


The Leadership and Change Management Programs are really resonating right now. Thank you so much to the kind people who made these humbling comments:

*"Superb – all the way. Excellent material presented in an exciting way."
"Presented thoughtful and usable concepts in a manner that we can implement. Very energetic speaker!"
"Positive message presented with a lot of energy and very honestly. Excellent speaker!"*

Know anyone who needs a little help? I'm at Mary@ProductiveLeaders.com

Mary's Book of the Month



[**Mentor Shift: A Four-Step Process to Improve Leadership Development, Engagement, and Knowledge Transfer**](#)
by Lori Bachman

Great leaders are usually great mentors, but most leaders learn to mentor by trial and error. Lori's book is the one you wish your boss had when you first started working.

- They believe small, external mistakes are an evil plot against them.
- They believe the worst about their co-workers.
- They withdraw.

What can a manager do?

First, **recognize the signs**. If you see a change in behavior, attitude, or production, address it sooner rather than later. Try to get to the root of the problem. Are they thinking about another job? Are they unhappy with a policy change? Are they disgruntled because of a miscommunication?

Second, if your suddenly-surly team member refuses to communicate with you, **bring in a third party** to see if they can help discover the issues that are bothering your employee. Your really smart workers, though, who have already made the decision to leave you will likely not confess what is really going on, but some will.

Third, **go for honesty**. If your employee is up-front with you, you can clarify miscommunications or policy changes that may have caused hurt feelings, anger, or made someone feel unappreciated. An honest conversation reduces uncertainty, builds trust, and paves the way to move forward.

Fourth, **document what you are doing to help them get back on track**. This clarifies what is going on for you and helps in case that person ultimately decides to leave. The military uses a term called MFR – Memorandum For the Record, a short memo that details events, usually on the day those events happened. It is printed out and signed by the people who were in that meeting so everyone is clear.

Fifth, remember that one bad apple really does spoil the bunch. Fix them or fire them, but do something sooner rather than later. If you and your management team cannot fix the attitude and the problem, **letting them go may be the best option for everyone**.

Brian Tracey advises, “Fire quickly and hire slowly.” Maybe you don’t want to lose these talented people. They are smart and clever and you liked them. But it may be time for them to be smart and clever and liked somewhere else.

Yes, it is sad to lose quality people. You, as the leader, likely feel that you failed them. Great leaders do not like to give up on people. Great leaders tend to believe that with enough, well, leadership, anyone can be motivated and molded to be fabulous employees. But that sometimes is just not possible. The team member has to WANT to be part of the team, and that

The chapters are short, easy to read, easy to follow, and powerful. Her MentorShift questions in the chapters make it perfect for a business book club or to launch a company-wide mentoring program.

Highly recommended for supervisors who are working to train and mentor team members.

Twitter and Social Media

Are you using Buffer.com? Buffer lets you check Tweets and then schedule your Tweets throughout the day.

Pet Tip

Be prepared for emergencies

The [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center \(APCC\)](#) in Urbana, Illinois, handled nearly 180,000 pet poisoning cases last year.

Be prepared before an emergency happens. Save your veterinarian’s phone number, the phone number to the closest emergency veterinary hospital, and the number for APCC (888) 426-4435, on your phone.



How Can We Help?

We don’t assume, so here is a brief list of what Productive Leaders do:

1. Motivational business keynote and breakout speaking for conferences, convention, banquets and events
2. Emcee corporate events and fundraisers
3. One-on-one business consulting
4. Strategic business planning

Call Mary at 719-357-7360 for a free initial consultation.

Thank You for Reading this Newsletter

Know anyone planning a conference who needs a motivational leadership speaker, or a business that needs a push

means supporting the organization and its mission and goals.

You are genuinely upset that they lost loyalty to you and the company. But you must act. To NOT take action with someone whose attitude and performance has become unacceptable brings down everyone else and weakens the organization.

Fix it and move on.

Please share your feedback on this article on [my blog](#).



forward? Please [contact me](#). I greatly appreciate your referrals!

Mary C. Kelly

Connect with Mary



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