High Performance Survey Results

This is a summary of the results of a survey conducted to provide raw data for the book The Manager’s High Performance Handbook: How to Drive Winning Performance with Everyone on Your Team (Walk the Talk, 2015). The survey ended October 1, 2014, had 815 respondents and was conducted electronically over a four month period. In addition to four questions regarding demographic/career information, eleven questions were a mix of single-select and multi-select multiple choice as well as open-ended questions and optional comments.

Questions were asked about the skills looked for when hiring or promoting people, words to describe high performers, ideas and solutions about how and when people work well together as a team to accomplish goals, and what leaders can do to help employees perform at a higher level. Participants were asked how many additional hours per week they would be willing to work if they were paid twice as much, how much more productive they would be if their work environment improved in the challenge areas they identified and what skills need to be developed in their workplace to improve performance.

The following are the results.

1. What are the top three (3) talents and/or skills you look for in hiring or promoting people?

- N/A - I do not influence hiring and promoting at... 51
- Loyalty to past employers/longevity in a role 47
- Potential for growth 120
- Similar work experience 69
- Good references 30
- Education and training 69
- Technical skills 129
- Positive attitude and gets along well with others 559
- Adaptable and innovator 252
- Self-starter and problem solver 519
- Professional appearance 71
- Proven ability to communicate 447

* Other handwritten responses include: ability/likes to learn, responsiveness, attitude, motivation, compatibility, adaptability, appearance, technical skills and self-starter.
2. What is one word or phrase you would use to describe a high performer?*

"A" Player  
100 Percenter  
Ability to prioritize  
Above and beyond  
Accomplishment  
Accountable  
Ace  
Achiever  
Adaptable  
Agile  
Aggressive  
Altiora Quaero  
Ambitious  
Ambitious  
Analytical thinking  
Anticipates and initiates  
Articulate  
Aspiring  
Assertive  
Asset  
Awesome  
Balanced  
Beast  
Believer  
Bias to action  
Big Picture  
Bright  
Can-Do attitude  
Challenger  
Champion  
Change agent!  
Charismatic  
Clarity  
Closer  
Coachable  
Collaborative  
Committed  
Communicator  
Competent  
Competitive and driven  
Confident  
Conscientious  
Consistent  
Cooperative spirit  
Creative  
Critical Thinker  
Curious  
Customer service  
Dark horse  
Decision maker  
**Dedicated**  
Delivers results  
Dependable  
Detail oriented  
Determination  
Disciplined  
Diverse  
Do what they say  
Doer  
**Driven**  
Dynamo  
Eager  
Effective  
Efficient  
Embraces challenges  
Emotional intelligence  
**Energetic**  
**Engaged**  
Enthusiasm  
Ethical  
Exceeds expectations  
Excellence  
Exceptional  
Excited  
Extraordinary  
Faithful tenacity  
Fast learner  
Fearless  
Flexible  
**Focused**  
Forward thinking  
Get it done  
Goal oriented  
Go-getter  
Good  
Good Attitude  
Good work ethic  
Growth-minded  
Happy  
Hard worker  
High caliber  
High IQ  
High RAM  
Honest  
Hyperactive  
Impactful  
In the flow  
Independent  
Indispensable  
Initiative  
Innovative  
Inspiring  
Integrity  
Intelligent  
Intentional  
Internally motivated  
Invaluable  
Invested/engaged  
Key contributor  
Knowledgeable  
Laser focus  
Lead by example  
**Leader**  
Let's do this!  
Life-long learner  
Listener and applier  
Loves what they do  
Low maintenance  
Loyal  
Magnet!  
Manager's dream!  
**Motivated**  
Not afraid to fail  
Optimist  
Outside the box  
Outstanding  
Over achiever  
Organized  
Partner in success  
Passionate  
Pathfinder  
Perfect  
Perseverance  
Persistent  
Point and Shoot  
Positive attitude  
Potential  
Power surge  
Power horse  
Prepared  
Proactive  
Problem solver  
Productive  
Professional  
Prototype  
Proven track record  
Push the boundaries  
Qualified  
Quality  
Quirky  
Relational  
Reliable  
Resilient  
Resourceful  
Responsible  
Responsive  
Results  
Risk taker  
Robust  
Role Model  
Scholar  
Self-assured  
**Self-starter**  
Servant-minded  
Sharp  
Smart  
Solid  
Star performer  
Stellar  
Strategic thinker  
Strives for excellence  
Strong work ethic  
Successful  
Superstar  
Takes ownership  
Talented  
Teachable & trainable  
Team player  
Technically skilled  
Tenacious  
They "make it happen"  
Thinks outside the box  
Time manager  
Top Gun  
Trusting  
Valuable  
Versatile  
Visionary  
Well-rounded
• In the listing of words and phrases from Question #2 to describe a high performer the most commonly repeated words/phrases were: **Motivated** (#1 response), **Dedicated** (#2 response), **Adaptable, Committed, Driven, Focused, Leader, Energetic, Engaged** and **Self-Starter**.

3. In your environment, what are the most effective ways to get people and/or teams to work successfully towards a common goal or direction?

- Clear directions and people are held accountable: 597
- Understanding everyone's role: 326
- High level of trust: 398
- Everyone works in the same office building or...: 34
- Training and development: 268
- Team building activities offsite: 76
- Public postings of results: 42
- Contests and competitions: 64
- Communication of strategy from leadership: 447
- Monetary rewards: 110
4. When creating new ideas or solutions, I am most likely to reach out to others when:

- N/A - I don't reach out to others: 5
- Forced to as a last resort: 16
- Inexperienced in a particular area: 588
- Not operating on a tight deadline: 71
- Operating on a tight deadline: 228
- I know the team members personally: 359
- Overwhelmed or stressed: 132
- I don't know the answer to the problem: 618
- Required to by leadership: 68

* It was noted by several survey participants that they often or always reach out to others when creating ideas or solutions, especially when others will be involved in implementation. “Always” and “often” were not options on the multiple-choice responses.

5. What change(s) in your work situation/environment would help you focus and produce even better results?

- Less stress at home: 40
- Less red tape and/or bureaucracy: 359
- Reduction of meetings and conference calls: 233
- Fewer emails, IMs and texts: 180
- Administrative help or additional support staff: 317
- Additional training or development: 310
- More time off: 69
- More money or compensation: 157
- Flexible work hours: 234
- A more attractive work environment: 42
- My own office/a quiet workspace: 116
- Better equipment and supplies: 115
To summarize Questions 5 and 6: 81% of respondents reported they could accomplish at least 25% more work if there were changes in their situations, with 6% stating they could accomplish twice the amount of work.

The changes that would improve performance receiving the highest responses were: less red tape/bureaucracy, administrative help, and additional training and development.
To summarize Questions 7 and 8: 66% of respondents reported they could accomplish at least 25% more work if their leader made changes. 6% could accomplish twice the amount of work.

Leadership changes that would improve performance with the highest responses were: regular/candid feedback, holding others accountable to commitments, support from more resources and people, and acknowledgment/ giving me credit.
* For twice as much pay:
  - 40% of respondents would be willing to work one extra hour each day
  - 12% of respondents would be willing to work one weekend a month
  - 10% of respondents would be willing to work every weekend if needed

Even if they were paid twice as much, 79% of respondents would not be willing to work more than one extra hour per day with 39% saying they would not be willing to work ANY extra hours per day.

The common open-ended responses among the respondents who selected “None” include:
  - I’m already maxed out
  - I do what it takes to get the job done regardless of pay
  - Working longer hours only depletes my energy
  - Work/life balance is a priority
  - Higher pay won’t change my work ethic
10. In order to bring the most significant change in high performance, my organization needs to help people learn or develop skills in the following:

- Conflict resolution
- Goal setting and strategy
- Negotiation and influence
- Teamwork
- Technical training
- Creativity
- Decision making
- Time management
- Presentation skills
- Coaching and counseling
- Communication
- Leadership

*Other skills identified are: root cause analysis, building trust, collaboration, enforcing guidelines and accountability.*

11. What is your gender?

- Female: 515
- Male: 294
93% of survey respondents have worked in a management position. 31% of survey respondents have 20+ years in a management position.
14. Please check the professional field that best applies to your occupation.

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<tr>
<th>Professional Field</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerical / Administrative</td>
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