

Workforce Development Starts With YOU!
February 2020 UP Business Today
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This month's focus of UP Business Today includes workforce development. Workforce development can be described as a human resources strategy aimed at equipping individuals through education, training and mentoring/coaching, to meet the needs of businesses. The development of your staff, whether employing two or two thousand individuals, is critical to attracting new hires, retaining key employees and ensuring the sustainability of a business.

If you want to grow a business, attract the very best employees and increase profits, then you need to develop people. Zig Ziglar said it best when he stated "*You don't build a business, you build people and then people build the business.*" However, building people doesn't mean you should rush out to find the latest and greatest training program. Practically speaking, if you want to develop others, start by developing yourself!

You might balk at the above statement about developing yourself. However, I can share with you that after interfacing with thousands of business owners and managers over several decades, the number one reason for mediocre or underperforming business is not the workforce, but the leader. As the author Dr. John Maxwell states "*Everything rises and falls based upon leadership.*"

If you have a mediocre or underperforming business, ask yourself these three questions:

1. How much time have I invested in learning about the importance of establishing a long-term vision for my business and effectively communicating that to my employees consistently?
2. How many books on leadership did I read last year?
3. Who is within my circle of influence that serves as my mentor & coach on all things leadership?

If the answers to the above questions make you a little nervous, consider starting a leadership development program today.

How To Develop You:

Step 1: Think about all of your job duties. Write down your responsibilities.

Step 2: Analyze how many of your responsibilities are people oriented versus task oriented. Chances are if you own or manage a business, a large focus of your role will be on leading and managing people.

Step 3: Identify one area to improve upon and strategically focus on in 2020.

Step 4: Look for resources (books, classes, coaches) that can help with your strategic focus area.

Step 5: Buy that book and read it, sign up for that class and attend or retain a coach today.

In summary, by taking the lead and demonstrating that you are serious about workforce development, a chain reaction will likely occur among your employees who desire to learn and

win at business. These “high potential” employees will see your progress and in turn be inspired to grow themselves and your business.

Jeff Ketchum is a 20-year resident of the Upper Peninsula and the Founder and President of several U.P. based small businesses. One of them, Lordstone Business Advisors, Inc., helps guide small business owners (\$1M - \$50M) who are looking to grow their business through effective planning, hiring, leadership development and execution.