Responsibilities and pitfalls

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Responsibility and pitfalls

- **Direct Value**
- **Indirect value**
- **Practices**
- **Mentoring**
- **Identify training needs**
- **Team building**
- **Pitfalls**

Direct Value

- Saving money: by optimizing the delivered products to be efficient, fast, easy to sell, of high quality, require less resources and are easier (implicitly cheaper) to change or maintain

- Make money: by providing good quality products on time or faster than estimated, by building easily changeable or extensible systems, by providing input and feedback for requirements and UX, by proposing business ideas and improvements

- Improve efficiency of a process or procedure: by following and encouraging standards, practices, procedures and governance

- Improve quality of a product or service: by adhering to best practices and standards; by getting involved; by learning newer better ways of doing things

- Fix an existing problem or having a problem solver attitude: by getting involved, by having initiative and being someone that listens to people

- Prevent a future problem or do valid risk management: proper risk management training and proper estimations; participation in planning to understand what needs to be done

Indirect Value

- Be consistent with work related schedule: by adhering to schedules, meetings times and working hour people begin to synchronize and participate in all sorts of activities that grow their connection to the company (team lunch, presentations, constructive discussions, pair programming etc.)

- Grow and gain new skills every year: people that gain new and better skills work better and produce better software.

- Ask for feedback so that you can improve: nobody is perfect, but at least issues that appear in teams or during task implementation can be solved with patience by providing feedback and helping people improve based on feedback.

- Bring your own ideas to the table: innovation, proposals, ideas and brainstorming.

- Take responsibility for your actions and decisions: an accountability culture can help people take responsibility for the work/project, treat it as their own and work on it as if it was their own.

- Have a positive view of things: moral and stress levels are best handled with a positive, solution oriented attitude.

- The leader of a team needs to safe-guard best practices like code quality and unit testing.

- In this context he needs to make sure that estimations always take into account quality metrics and coverage so that the team always has time to implement and improve the code.

- While safe-guarding the practices, the leader also needs to associate and promote corporate culture elements related to the practices in order to make the team more likely to adhere to the corporate culture, which in turn encourage the best practices.

- In this context the leader is required to know both the best practices and the corporate culture so that he can guide the team in the same direction other teams are also going.

Accountability

- The 4 W's:
  - What: What action needs to be taken?
  - Why: Link this action to the bigger picture so the person understand why they are important.
  - Who: No two-headed monsters here. Only one person can be accountable per action.
  - When: Be specific about when you want results-- "next month" or "by second quarter" is not specific enough.

- **Talk about it, share ideas, come to a common consensus about what accountability means in the workplace, and then use that as a foundation everyone works from as they make accountability an organizational goal.**

- Focus on clarifying expected results (what do we need to achieve)

- Be clear about the results you expect from your individual team members

- Involve your team actively in this discussion and stimulate team members to express their expectations towards each other's contribution, as well as the support they will give to each other

- **Ask your team members to openly confirm their accountability**

Mentoring

- Leadership is meant to grow people.

- This means that the leader should provide support to team members, to explain processes, their outcome and their benefits.

- As such the leader's responsibility to code is reduced in favor of helping the team.

- If the team grows in knowledge and understanding they will become more efficient and productive, making it easier for the leader to delegate.

- This also increases morale and job satisfaction.

Training Needs

- The hardest part of developing your team can be knowing where to begin. Start by understanding your team members' developmental needs. Review and update their job descriptions, talk to them, and watch them work

- Often, just asking the right questions can reveal knowledge and skill gaps in your team. For example, what is the key part of a person's role? And what is your team's most urgent performance issue?

- This is particularly helpful if your workplace doesn't have a culture of performance management, that is a system of regularly appraising and improving people's performance

- If your team members are not used to having their performance appraised and developed in this way, they may view it as a negative judgment of their competency

- Gathering specific information about what they need to be successful in their roles will help them to feel positive about developing themselves

Team Building

- Team-building exercises can be fun and effective ways to improve teamwork and identify people's strengths and weaknesses.

- If you decide to run one, you should select the exercise very carefully, so that it meets your training objective.

- It's important to identify your team's biggest challenges before you choose an exercise. By doing this, you can ensure that the event is more than just a nice day out of the office.

- For example, if you have noticed that poor communication has led to your team making mistakes or missing deadlines, you may want to select exercises that improve essential communication skills like listening, empathy and verbalization.

- Some team-building activities encourage creativity and develop leadership, while others strengthen problem-solving abilities and build your team's planning and strategy skills.

Control the spotlight

- Provide immediate positive feedback

- Show your team actively that the team's success matters to you, to them and the management

- Give priority to becoming a stronger team, not to punishing people

- Reduce pressure by making clear that it's ok to make mistakes, as long as we learn from it

- Take action to make things better with each occasion

- Ensure clarity over smaller group discussions

- **Defensive leadership**
  - Keeping secrets, sharing only part of the knowledge or being the single point of decision will always alienate the team.
  - Not having all information will make people stressed and ensures that people will not have the same objectives as the leader.
  - Being very defensive means that you do not trust the team and the people in the team will not trust you.

- **Physical separation**
  - This suggest that the leader is somehow not comfortable in staying with the team.
  - Physical separation leads to mental separation.
  - Usually, teams separated by their leader will unconsciously chose a local leader which may or may not have the same agenda as the official leader.
  - Separation from the team means less involvement and the inability to support the team when they need it.

- **Fragmentation of time**
  - Constantly fragmenting the teams work time leads to increase stress and low productivity.
  - Leaders should protect the team especially from fragmentation.
  - As such the leader delays tasks and requests.
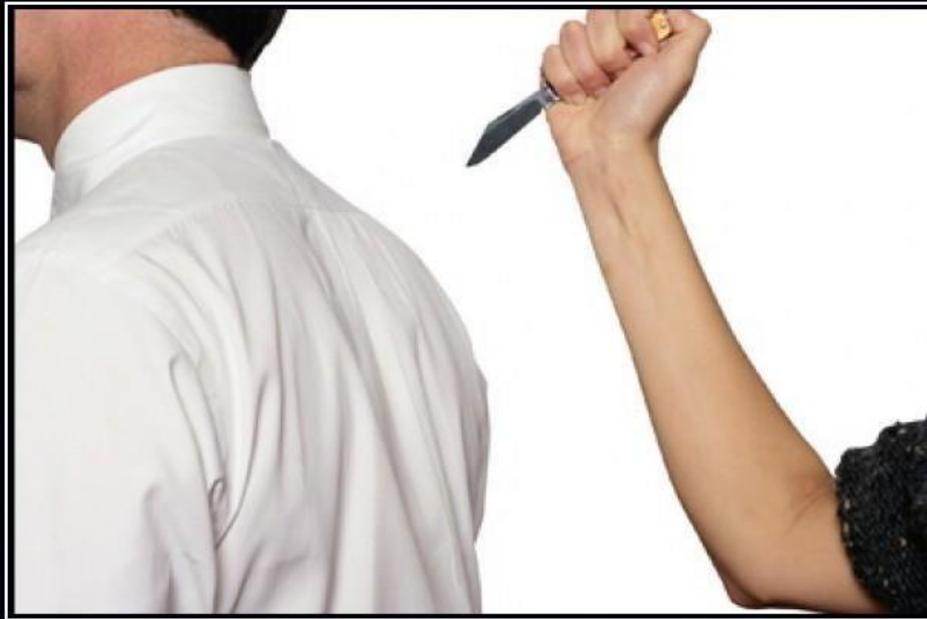
- **Quality compromise**
  - In order to achieve targeted timelines some leaders will compromise on quality and practices.
  - As such people will learn that they can provide low quality solutions as long as they are delivered in time.

- **Artificial deadlines**
  - In order to achieve greater success or recognition, some leaders can create artificial deadlines and impose them on the team.
  - Aside from the generated stress and pressure if the deadline is discovered as being imposed by the leader people will no longer respect the leader's authority.

- **Extra hours**
  - Requesting extra hours is a sign of bad leadership as it does not protect the team.
  - It is very rare to see people who actually want to do over time.
  - Overtime leads to the accumulation of stress and tiredness which makes productivity and quality decrease.

- **The glass is always half empty**
  - A negative leader is rapidly rejected by the team.
  - Usually negativistic leaders lead bad teams that produce bad quality products.
  - Leaders should be optimistic and problem solvers.

- **Conflict propagation**
  - Leaders should do conflict mediation as soon as possible within the team. If the conflict come from outside the team, the conflict should never reach the team.
  - A leader that propagates stress and conflict destroys teams.

THANK YOU!

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