

Why You Might Want to Reconsider How You Select Your Managers



Gallup research reports that as much as 70% of the workforce isn't fully engaged with their jobs. Much of that unhappiness at work is attributed to...poor managers.

We believe an outward mindset can change that. Here's why.

The Problem May Lie Not in the Managers Themselves, but in How They're Selected.

Gallup asked U.S. managers why they believed they were promoted or hired into their managerial role. The most common replies? Either they had succeeded in a non-managerial role, or they had accumulated tenure.

These reasons for promotion are problematic because proficiency in a skill, process, or project is not proficiency with people. These skills are quite different.

When we promote high performers to managerial roles, we are making the assumption that meeting the criteria for one job

(that may not involve people) qualifies that person for a very different sort of job (that does involve people). This is a dangerous assumption to make—because the very opposite could be true.

For example, one surprising [study](#) indicates that while moderately intelligent people make good managers, extremely intelligent people don't. At a certain IQ point, intelligence and effective leadership are inversely related.

If High Performance and High Intelligence Aren't Good Metrics for Selecting Managers, What Is?

Because managers largely oversee the human dynamics of a workplace, those most suited for these positions are people who are good with people.

At Arbinger, we would say that those who make the best managers are those who are most *outward*.

People who possess an outward mindset see others as people who matter like they matter. They recognize that each individual has his or her own concerns, objectives, and desires. In the workplace, these sorts of people aren't focused only on themselves. They focus on their team and the organization's overall results.

People with an outward mindset are curious about others and seek out ways to be helpful. They collaborate. They listen. They are open to feedback. They are transparent. They're also not afraid to set challenging goals, give feedback when they see fit, or demand the best of their team.

When people have an outward mindset, they recognize that stellar performance is intricately intertwined with working well with others. The more we cooperate, the better the

results.

Changing How We Select Our Managers

According to [Gallup research](#), one in 10 people possess the skills necessary to be an effective manager: “When you do the math, it’s likely that someone on each team has the talent to lead—but chances are, it’s not the manager. More than likely, it’s an employee with high managerial potential waiting to be discovered.”

With this in mind, it might be best, when seeking a manager, to identify those who have an outward mindset. To help select those who do, you might ask:

- Who makes others feel *seen* for the people they are?
- Who is helpful to those around them?
- Who listens well to others?
- Who seeks feedback and can, in turn, give feedback when appropriate?
- Who is more concerned about the organization than their own reputation?
- Who is willing to collaborate?
- Who shows gratitude for help from others?

It’s important to note that outward mindset is not a set or inherent characteristic. People can *learn* to develop and implement an outward mindset. They can become aware of others—seeing them as people—and adjust their efforts to be more alive to them.

So the next time you need to fill a managerial position, consider those who possess an outward mindset and who work well with people. You might be surprised at the overall impact this perspective can have.