

## **Me? A Contact centre manager? You must be joking!**

Michael Anglin, Director of Change Management at Minerva plots the progress from agent to manager in 10 easy to follow steps!

What's the difference between someone who wants to become a call centre manager and probably never does and someone who already is? It's often down to belief and desire. "Some of us were not born to be managers, some of us were not born to be rich, and some of us were not born to be leaders." These are the beliefs that many of us hold, that don't enable us to be successful, but they do keep us safe. E.g., a young man of 20 who joins a contact centre as a customer advisor. He works to live, so comes in does his bit for four days and starts his weekend on Thursday. If he makes it to work on Friday all well and good, if not his reaction is "oh well I'll just throw a sickie. I've got five left to take anyway."

After a while, a few months, a couple of years he starts to feel frustrated, and bored with his job. He's seen his work colleagues promoted around him and inwardly thinks, "Why didn't they choose me? I could have done that job better."

Thankfully the world is not made up of too many people with that kind of attitude, but I bet that you know someone that fits the description. Without a change of mind set for himself and those around him, do you believe that young gentleman will ever be considered for promotion?

If you've set your career objectives in the contact centre industry, and you have a goal in mind but don't know where to start, how do you climb that promotional ladder? There are no easy or foolproof answers to that question, but a good place to start is to practise having different beliefs. You may need to take on a different attitude about yourself; set yourself goals and objectives that will stretch and challenge the way that you work; take you out of your comfort zone; test yourself and have the courage to find out if you're up to it.

### **Increase your chances of success:**

- Demonstrate the right behaviours as an advisor, the best advisors don't necessarily make the best managers. You must show the discipline required for getting results or you won't command respect. Treat quality and quantity with equal importance
- Find a personal coach. Not just someone in authority or politically influential, but someone who gives you sound advice and is honest with you. Someone who has done the job themselves and understands the barriers you need to overcome
- Identify any beliefs you have about yourself that limit your potential; spend time getting to know yourself better; be clear about your personal agendas and what you really want out of life. Visualise how reaching your goals will improve your life.
- Get regular appraisal from your manager and agree personal development objectives. Take responsibility for your development, don't wait for the company to do it. You could be waiting forever!
- Seek out feedback on your performance where ever possible and use it to develop yourself. "Feedback is the breakfast of champions"
- Look for ways to continuously improve not only your performance, but also that of your co-workers. Be innovative and use open forums to be seen and heard. Communicate concerns as well as fears. Learn how to manage your impact on others. Be inspirational!

- Study the business you work for. Take an interest in the bigger picture and seek out information that will help you to understand it.
- Show flexibility but not subservience, be willing to organise. Show that you care.
- Tell the truth to your colleagues, it doesn't always win you friends but will gain respect. If winning friends is more important to you then forget about being a manager.
- Be prepared to fail sometimes. You will never be successful if you are scared of failure, because you will tend to make 'safe' or 'approval-seeking' decisions. Remember, be innovative.

An important factor to consider is how becoming a manager can affect your existing relationships with friends, colleagues and even family. Becoming an effective manager can mean some fairly fundamental changes to your overall personality. Some individuals really believe that you can't change yourself that much. If you think that way then I would suggest that management and leadership is not for you. If such things as personality cannot change then how do we develop as human beings? If I'm stuck in a rut with what I've got, how do I get better? One thing for sure is if you want something badly enough, you'll do anything to get it.

But back to relationships, if you change your normal way of thinking or behaving this might seem strange to people that you know, it will be difficult for them to know how to relate to you. They may try to stop you from changing by criticising your behaviour; questioning your motives or blame you for their discomfort about the changes you are going through; it can even threaten the relationship. One way of softening the blow is to set a context with those close to you before you embark on your journey of change. Talk to them about your ambitions and invite them to assist in anyway they can. Help them to understand your objectives. Manage their expectations

For some people becoming a manager is about gaining power and control over others or having an easier life as the boss is. If you are driven by any of these objectives then think again. Becoming a manager means you take on bigger responsibilities which often means more time at work. You'll need to become a problem solver; people come to you when they don't want to confront issues themselves; you'll get sucked into disputes that don't concern you and then you'll get blamed for everything that doesn't get done. Apart from that it's a breeze! The main thing about being a manager is you must care for others and be sensitive to human emotions; some may say that this is why women often make good managers.

"A contact centre manager, what me?" Well, if you believe you can then step on the self improvement ladder today!