



22 Ways *of* Highly Successful Retail Managers





22 Ways of Highly Successful Retail Managers

Table of Contents

Retail Manager's Success Model	4
Introduction	5
Way # 1 – Knows the Customer and Practices Exemplary Customer Service	11
Way # 2 – Interviews, Hires and Trains for the Cause	16
Way # 3 – Leads by Example	21
Way # 4 – Motivates	25
Way # 5 – Coaches Continuously	29
Way # 6 – Manages Time Well	34
Way # 7 – Communicates Well	39
Way # 8 – Is Honest and Has Integrity	47
Way # 9 – Is Accessible	51
Way #10 – Manages Performance	55
Way #11 – Mentors and Develops People	61
Way #12 – Praises and Rewards	66

Way #13 – Manages Up	69
Way #14 – Demands Operational Excellence	73
Way #15 – Promotes Growth	76
Way #16 – Networks	80
Way #17 – Is Energetic, Ambitious and Enthusiastic	84
Way #18 – Develops a Flair for Visual Merchandising	87
Way #19 – Ensures all Interactions are Productive	91
Way #20 – Works Hard for Results	94
Way #21 – Strives for Both Quality <i>and</i> Quantity	97
Way #22 – Takes Action	100
Appendix A Typical Profit/Loss or Operating Statement	103
Appendix B Store Management Process	104

Retail Manager's Success Model

Management Style is created through a combination of

Inherent Personal Strengths

Way # 1 – Intuitive, Intelligent
Way # 3 – Principled, Natural Leadership Abilities
Way # 6 – Organized Mind
Way # 7 – Excellent Communication Skills
Way # 8 – Belief System, Upbringing
Way #11 – Instinct, Ability and Judgment
Way #14 – High Expectations and Standards
Way #15 – Progressive Thinker
Way #17 – Positive Attitude
Way #20 – Driven, Strong Work Ethic
Way #22 – Sense of Urgency

Which Propel the Manager to certain

Actions & Behaviors

Way # 2 - Interviews, Hires & Trains for the cause
Way # 4 - Motivates
Way # 5 - Coaches
Way # 9 - Is Accessible
Way #10 - Manages Performance
Way #12 - Praises & Rewards
Way #13 - Manages Up
Way #16 - Networks
Way #18 - Develops a Flair for Visual Merchandising
Way #19 - Ensures all Interactions are Productive
Way #21 - Strives for Both Quality & Quantity

Which strategically work to create Alignment with Purpose and, ultimately – **Success!**

Introduction

For the most part, throughout this guide, we will refer to Highly Successful Retail Managers as HSRM's.

Before we start explaining the actual 'ways', we want to provide an understanding of the general management style of the Highly Successful Retail Manager.

All of the 'ways' operate under the umbrella of a particular management style. When taking any action or handling any issue, the HSRM always works within his personal management style. It is not usually a conscious choice; it just comes naturally. The exception here is when a manager modifies his management style to deal with a particular situation more effectively. Managing in the style which comes naturally, or in the style which he has decided to adopt, ensures consistency and, in order to manage people effectively, consistency is imperative.

It will be helpful for the reader to imagine how each of the '22 Ways of Highly Successful Retail Managers' works with their own personal management style. It is possible for a person to modify their management style and we expect that, to become a HSRM, some modification may have to take place.

The HSRM knows that managing people effectively is the key to their success in all areas of the business. They never forget the fact that the people who work for them are the ones who are interacting with the customer every day and that it would be very difficult for them to treat their customers well if they are not treated well by the company – through their manager.

The first Golden Rule in the HSRM's handbook, is to ask two crucial questions whenever there is a proposed change to be made, a new policy or procedure to be implemented, etc. They are:

1) How will this affect the customer?

2) How will this affect the employees?

The answers to both questions must be positive. It is a mistake to believe that a procedure or policy will be good for the customer if it affects employees negatively. And you cannot believe that, just because something is good for the employees, that it will be good for the customer.

These two questions must both be answered positively or you need to re-visit the action/change; whatever it is you were planning to do. This is not to say that the action/change should not or cannot happen, only that it must meet the 'dual positive response' challenge, or at least receive enough consideration regarding the consequences of not meeting it, before going forward. Often, slight modifications are enough to meet the challenge.

Getting back to the effective management of people, this is where the HSRM really excels. Any person hoping to manage people in such a way that they get the very best performance from those people and, thus, become successful themselves, must develop certain ways of doing things; they must have a sense of how to treat people fairly, but not necessarily equally, and not necessarily gently. You may have heard of a management style referred to as 'Firm but Fair' – in a nutshell, that is what the HSRM practices.

Every individual responds differently to their work environment and to their superiors and the HSRM figures out, very early in the relationship, what each of their employees responds to most positively.

The HSRM does not undertake a massive study of their subordinates – that is not necessary. The way they manage makes it easy for them to figure these things out relatively quickly. And they have learned to trust their intuition to a large extent.

Some managers feel the need to establish their position by doing and/or saying things in an attempt to ensure everyone knows that they are the person in charge. This type of behavior shows a distinct lack of confidence and employees see through it very easily.

Subordinates do not want to be made to feel subordinate. They know how the company and management hierarchy works and are aware of their position within that hierarchy. HSRM's do not do anything, in particular, to establish their position. The way the HSRM presents himself and handles situations in the workplace make it clear— quite naturally — where everyone stands. Of course, this assumes that the manager is, in fact, confident in the position — obviously HSRM's are.

Here are some of the components of the Highly Successful Retail Manager's personal management style:

Respect – All human beings deserve respect. While it is true that one has to earn respect, it is also true that if one has not done anything to make themselves unworthy of respect, then respect should be shown. Being respectful is the default.

Working *with* people and not *above* them – The old notion that a boss is the big, bad person who orders everyone around and doesn't necessarily do a lot themselves is a thing of the past. Today, the word 'boss' may still conjure up that image but, to be sure, HSRM's are not bosses. They are leaders, colleagues, workplace family members, part of the team, etc.

Not better than subordinates – While the HSRM may have many distinct qualities, characteristics, educational qualifications and relevant experience that have put them in the position they are in, none of these things makes them a better person than any of their subordinates. Employees are people who come from many different backgrounds, with different qualifications, different work and life experiences; each person has their own unique character that they bring to your organization.

Kindness – HSRM's generally behave kindly. Generally, but not always. Sometimes a situation calls for something different but they always keep in mind that employees are human beings and deserving of kindness. Remember, if employees are treated kindly, they will likely treat customers and colleagues in the same manner.

Empathy – Everyone makes mistakes, no one is perfect, you know those sayings. The HSRM shows understanding when required. Having said that, however, there is a limit to the HSRM's understanding because it is often too easy to cross the line from being understanding to being taken advantage of. If you are too understanding you may be doing harm to your business and if you are not understanding enough the same is true. The HSRM knows where that line is and is careful not to cross over it.

Show interest in employees' lives – An HSRM shows interest in the lives of their employees but only to an extent. They do not become best buddies, or psychologists or councilors. In fact, it is dangerous to do so because any advice you give them can be used against you and your company if something goes wrong.

No micro managing – HSRM's know that supervisors and managers must be allowed to get on with the job. An anonymous quote that illustrates this point is...

"A great leader chooses the right person for the job and has the good sense to stay out of his way while he gets it done."

It is very frustrating for people to be micro-managed. The HSRM chooses the right people to do the job and then gets out of the way.

Naturally, there are checks and balances and follow-ups to ensure the job is being done – that is just common sense. But too much meddling and direction will hinder the process of a capable individual.

Principled - The HSRM stands for something and is very principled. It will be very clear, to those who work with him,

what is important to the HSRM and subordinates will learn very quickly what to steer clear of. The HSRM has integrity and will not accept or engage in any activity, behavior or discussion that compromises the company, the customer, or the other employees.

This would be a good time to examine your own personal management style. Following is a list of statements for you to answer either True or False, to help you do that.

The objective of the exercise is not to be right or wrong but, simply, to make you think about your management style.

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT STYLE

● I am completely confident in my role as a Manager.	T	F
● I believe my employees can teach me some things.	T	F
● I am a great coach and teacher.	T	F
● My employees fear me.	T	F
● My employees enjoy working with me.	T	F
● I know everything I need to know about managing people.	T	F
● I am always courteous, pleasant and easy to get along with.	T	F
● There are times when I am negative about my company.	T	F
● In some areas my employees have better skills than I do.	T	F

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ● My employees know where I stand on the issues. | T | F |
| ● I cannot tolerate imperfection. | T | F |
| ● My employees respect me. | T | F |
| ● My employees always give me the benefit of the doubt. | T | F |
| ● I respect my employees. | T | F |
| ● I always give my employees the benefit of the doubt. | T | F |

Notes: _____

Now that you have an idea of the general management style of a HSRM, and you have been able to give some thought to your own management style, it is time to move on to the actual '22 Ways of Highly Successful Retail Managers.'

WAY #1

KNOWS the CUSTOMER and PRACTICES EXEMPLARY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Highly successful retail managers are passionate about delivering exemplary customer service; they treat customers with the respect they deserve – role modeling on the sales floor so associates can see and hear exactly what exemplary customer service looks and sounds like.

The HSRM knows that every customer, in every situation, must be treated with the utmost courtesy and respect and, if he does not role model that behavior at all times, there is very little hope of associates delivering consistently.



Role modeling correct and proper behavior ensures that you are seen as the authority on how the customer is to be

treated. It also earns you respect as employees see how easily you deal with customers in every situation. They see how you change your greeting and overall approach to different customers. For example, you would likely treat teenagers looking at headphones differently than you would treat a mature married couple who are upgrading their entertainment system – not in any way better or worse, just differently. Approaches are not generic and need to be tailored, just like the rest of the sales process. Role modeling is an excellent way to teach and HSRM's take every opportunity to do so.

HSRM's know their customer and they insist that their team members learn as much as they can about them also. By talking to customers, and through various types of analysis, the HSRM becomes an expert on his customers likes and dislikes; their shopping habits; what they will, and will not, accept in terms of merchandise and various other things. For example, an HSRM would be able to speak intelligently about how the customer will react to a proposed visual display or a promotion. They know their customer and their subordinates understand that maximum performance depends on knowing the customer also.

The HSRM teaches by showing – by role modeling as mentioned above. This aspect of the job cannot be underestimated because it speaks volumes about you and your expectations.

Associates must sincerely believe in the importance of the customer. There is no better way to instill this belief, than by having the manager demonstrate how important the customers are to him/her.

The HSRM knows what the organizations' service strategy is, knows how to deliver it, never fails to deliver it and expects the same from everyone in the company.

Before any associate steps on to the sales floor, s/he must have been made aware of the customer service offering of the company and how the company expects it to be delivered.

For example, if the business model of a particular company is one of self service then associates may not be expected to actively engage customers in sales conversations. However, to ensure that the business is still focused on revenue generation through excellence in customer service, they would still want to see customers treated in a particular way; perhaps they would expect an approach and an offer of assistance. Whatever the company decides to deliver as far as customer service is concerned, that is what the associate must be trained for once the customer service basics are in place.

Many companies incorrectly assume that their new associates possess the basics of customer service. This is a mistake because when it comes time to layer on training specific to the company's customer service offering the new associate may become confused and will not perform well. It would be like learning to run before learning to walk, resulting in a lot of falls or, at least, missteps.

The key, here, is making sure that basics are understood first. Basics consist of things like:

- ▶ Presentation - dress and grooming
- ▶ Physical posture
- ▶ Good manners
- ▶ Telephone etiquette
- ▶ Knowing what is, and is not, appropriate behavior on the sales floor
- ▶ Showing respect for the customers' time
- ▶ Showing respect for the merchandise
- ▶ Understanding the company expectations and general workplace rules

The highly successful retail manager knows how to assess associates to ascertain their level of competence when it

comes to delivering customer service. This is usually done at the time of the interview and with well worded questions to past employers during the reference check. Of course, observation is an excellent assessment method also.

Once the basics are clearly understood and the associate understands what the company customer service offering is, and how to deliver it, they are ready for the sales floor. The HSRM knows that this training is critical and that it positively must be done before the associate interacts with customers.

After that, the manager must keep a very close eye on the associate to ensure that all interaction with customers is exactly as it should be. Watch for eye contact, body language, facial expressions, what is actually said and tone of voice.

We said earlier that HSRM's role model exemplary customer service at all times and that doing so was the best way to ensure associates realized the importance of customer service. There is, of course, more to be done to ensure the on-going improvement of our associates and one of the major things is to have coaching conversations as often as possible. After observing an associate the HSRM spends a few minutes talking to them to either praise or correct, or both.

Praise comes fairly easily. The HSRM praises the associate for specific behaviors that were correct.

Having a coaching conversation where you must correct behaviors can also be easy if you direct your attention to the specific behavior and make sure not to criticize the individual. The HSRM knows that these conversations are an absolute must and that they owe it to the associate, the company and the customer to make the conversation as productive as possible.

The HSRM knows, intuitively, how customers should be treated and, in addition to modeling the behavior, HSRM's teach all associates these golden rules:

► Treat every customer like a valued guest – using only the best manners.

- ▶ Never say the word “no” to a customer – even when you cannot say ‘yes’, find a way to handle any situation without actually using the word “no”.
- ▶ Respect the customer’s time – always – if the customer has to wait, be sure to let the customer know why he is waiting and approximately how long he will have to wait.
- ▶ Put yourself in the customers’ shoes and try to see things from their perspective – ask yourself “How would I feel if I were the customer in this case?”
- ▶ Never assume anything – ask questions to gain information.
- ▶ Recognize the customer’s lifetime value to the organization.
- ▶ Smile and show your enthusiasm for your work.



Way #2

INTERVIEWS, HIRES and TRAINS for the CAUSE

The HSRM knows the 'cause'** is maximizing revenue and profit and that he must hire people who will further that cause.

The HSRM interviews with the purpose of hiring competent - potentially great - individuals who show indications of being able to move up in the organization. In retail, a competent associate must have the ability to sell, whether completely developed or not. The HSRM can spot potential and goes out of his way to hire candidates who have it.

Throughout the recruiting, hiring, on-boarding and training process, the HSRM keeps the *Store Management Process* in mind. (See Appendix B)

Before the HSRM even considers starting the interviewing process a *Successful Associate Profile* is developed based on successful people who are already in the role. A Successful Associate Profile is not difficult to create.

Developing your own Successful Associate Profile

► Make a list of all of the important functions required in the position.

► Make a list of the competencies that a candidate would have to have in order to perform those functions.

- ▶ Make a list of associates who possess these competencies and are very successful in the same position who are already in your organization.
- ▶ Observe those associates performing each of the functions.
- ▶ Make a list of the traits and characteristics exhibited by those associates while performing the functions.

Your Successful Associate Profile should not be lengthy; you cannot include so many requirements that you eliminate every candidate. Choose the most important ones; the ones that contribute to the 'cause' and, as mentioned above, the 'cause' is to maximize revenue and profit.

***An important note here – revenue and profit obviously cannot be maximized simply by putting a high powered sales associate on the sales floor. The associate must possess many more skills and qualities than just being able to sell merchandise. If he does not, return rates will sky rocket and customer retention will suffer leading to the eventual demise of the business. So, when we say the 'cause' is to maximize revenue and profit, it must be understood that a well rounded approach is required.*



Contrary to what many believe, HSRM's say that the very best time to lay out expectations of the position, is during the interview. It's true that interviews are for the purpose of determining if a candidate is the right fit for the employer and vice versa. However, there is a lot to be gained by discussing expectations in the interview, particularly in retail.

There are many preconceived notions out there about what a position in retail involves. Many retailers do not have high quality individuals working for them and that has to make you

question their hiring practices. But back to the point, the candidate sitting in front of you during the interview may have some incorrect information strictly based on what s/he has experienced in retail stores and may have the idea that a retail job is no big deal. The HSRM cannot take that chance and that is why it is so important to let the candidate know what the real story is.

The interviewer, or HSRM, does not leave room for misunderstandings when it comes to expectations.

The interview is also a good time to discuss rewards, consequences of poor performance and possible growth opportunities. That is not to say any promises are made or wage rates are discussed. This should be a general discussion which is useful in letting the candidate know what you are looking for and what you expect to give in return.

In retail stores, we often encounter employees who, clearly, would rather not be doing the job they were hired for. It is obvious from their attitude towards customers and in their overall performance.



A major benefit of making expectations – high expectations - clear during the interview is that it allows candidates to think seriously about whether they really do want the position you have available. If they are just looking for any

old job to make a few bucks until something better comes along, then they would quickly realize they are talking to the wrong person.

While HSRM's make expectations clear during the interview, they cannot dominate the conversation as this would defeat the main purpose of the interview. The HSRM is skilled at having these conversations in order to get all of the

information they want and need from the candidate while making their expectations known at the same time.

For example, an HSRM may ask the candidate 'what do you believe would be your number one responsibility as a sales associate for x company?'

The candidate will respond and the interviewer will find out if the candidate knows that the number one responsibility will be selling. If the candidate responds with something other than that, then the interviewer phrases the next question to probe a little deeper into the response. During this exercise, at some point, the interviewer can make it clear that selling while delivering exemplary customer service is the number one responsibility of the position. Plenty of time should be spent with this type of question in order to ensure understanding.

The HSRM has developed a level of intuition, or gut feel, to know whether a candidate has potential to do well in the role and to work well with the HSRM. While intuition cannot be relied upon 100%, it certainly should be taken into consideration. In fact, HSRM's say they rely on intuition more often than most Human Resources personnel would recommend. But, they find they are so often right that they just cannot ignore it.

HSRM's know that one of the best ways to be successful is to surround themselves with competent people. They have that in mind when they are interviewing and hiring and they have that in mind when they are training or setting out the training plan for the new hire. They take training very seriously. During the training process the HSRM can take advantage of many opportunities to clarify expectations until they are crystal clear to the new hire.

A solid training plan that is workable within time and budget constraints is what the HSRM relies on to ensure new hires are brought on board properly. Having high expectations of an individual and then failing to provide them with the tools and knowledge they require to do a good job is counter productive. It will lead to confusion and high employee turnover.

HSRM's often rely on their more seasoned employees to handle most of the training of new hires. This accomplishes a couple of very positive things.

First, the more seasoned employee is hand picked specifically by the HSRM and there would be a good reason for that. The HSRM can have confidence that the training will be up to the standard expected.

Second, the seasoned employee would feel rewarded and, therefore, motivated for having attained the status of 'trainer' even if unofficially. It is a pat on the back for the seasoned employee and it also recognizes him within the workplace as the person, chosen by the superior, to perform this important function.

The HSRM does not delegate training without following proper delegation techniques. There will be check points and follow up conversations to ensure everything is progressing as planned. The HSRM will take time to discuss the progress of the training with the new hire as well as with the trainer.

Way #3

LEADS by EXAMPLE

Leading by example basically means role modeling expected behaviors, in everything you do. It means being in an 'on stage' frame of mind at all times.

The HSRM is always aware of the fact that his or her appearance, demeanor, behavior and actions are seen and carefully scrutinized by subordinates. The HSRM is the most important example for subordinates when it comes to their own conduct. That is not to say that every employee will follow the role model, but only that if the role model is deficient in any way, it is very likely to have negative consequences.

Show what you can do:

HSRM's are masters of their universe! Whatever it is they are asking subordinates to do, they can do too. And, usually, very well.

HSRM's don't hesitate to demonstrate those skills from time to time to stay sharp and to remind employees that they possess the skills.

Make your priorities clear:

As maximizing revenue and profits are what the HSRM strives for, it makes sense that the one of the Golden Rules for leading by example is to hold these things in the top priority position – during every conversation, in every meeting – the HSRM talks sales first, probably expenses second. And then

whatever else is next in priority at that particular time. What is not subject to change is the priority position of sales (or revenue).



It should not be necessary to point out the need for maximizing revenue and minimizing expenses in order to be profitable. But you would be surprised at the number of people who see things differently. They are wrong. Without profitability, a company cannot continue to serve customers, cannot continue to employee people; simply cannot continue to exist. So, whenever you hear people talking about other things that are really important to the business, you can certainly agree that there are, indeed, many other things important to the business, as long as that business exists. And we all know what is necessary to ensure the business exists – maximizing revenue and profits.

To lead by example you must demonstrate your understanding of this at every turn. That is how your employees are going to learn what is most important.

Never complain:

You will not find an HSRM complaining to his team about something or other that head office decided on. There are a couple of reasons for this.

First, the HSRM has a duty to protect the reputation of head office employees.

Second, to complain about anything would be showing a negative attitude and would defeat the very purpose of leading by example, regardless of what the subject is.

Dress for success:

HSRM's always dress for success. They never allow themselves to be at a disadvantage as far as dress and grooming is concerned. They overdress rather than risk being under dressed. They are impeccably clean; clothes pressed; shoes shined, etc. Personal hygiene and grooming are of utmost importance.

Demonstrate a strong work ethic:

HSRM's take pride in their strong work ethic. They will work harder than most and they will do many things that others will not. The HSRMs are the ones that do the innovative things and the tough things and take it all in stride as part of their work day.

HSRM's believe in working very hard, as well as working smart. They show their dedication and commitment to the company they work for. They do not take advantage of their position to obtain any perks or benefits that are outside of the acceptable range that the company has stipulated. They are punctual and reliable. They can be counted on to look out for the best interests of the company in everything they do. HSRM's expect their employees to demonstrate a strong work ethic also.

Behave appropriately and show respect for others:

In all of their dealings with customers and employees – both superiors and subordinates – HSRM's behave appropriately; with honesty, integrity, respect and consideration.

Set high standards:

HSRM's know that, if they demand a certain standard from those who work with them, then they must meet, and exceed, that standard themselves. And they do.

Keep socializing with staff to a minimum:

It is appropriate, in this section, to address one issue that many leaders wrestle with – socializing with subordinates. It's a touchy issue and not all companies make rules to govern oneself by in this area.

HSRM's keep socializing with staff to an absolute minimum – just enough so that they are considered part of the team but never enough to be seen as one of the guys or girls.

When you do socialize with your team you must be on guard. If you think that would be uncomfortable you are right – and that's how it has to be. The damage that can be done by managers who socialize with their teams, too much, is incalculable.

Leading by example is critical to the HSRM's success. They want people to behave in a particular way, and they behave that way themselves. In fact, leading by example comes naturally to HSRM's in most cases. If, in rare instances, they see that there are areas where their example may be lacking – they are quick to make adjustments.

There is no room for '***do as I say and not as I do***' when you are dealing with your subordinates.

Way #4

MOTIVATES

The HSRM knows that motivated employees direct increased energy into behaviors that move them toward their professional and personal goals. They will initiate more positive revenue generating activities and they will be more persistent in working towards, and achieving, success.

Motivation will increase performance overall. In fact, HSRM's firmly believe that having excellent, motivated people is the single, biggest factor in the success of any store or sales organization.

There are two basic types of motivation:

1. External Motivation – or motivation that comes from external sources
2. Internal Motivation – or motivation which comes from within

HSRM's try, through their recruiting and hiring practices, to ensure that every associate brought into the organization is intrinsically motivated. It is sometimes a difficult thing to ascertain but it is definitely worth the effort.

Although HSRM's are willing and able to provide external motivation, it is much easier to get the desired results from their efforts if the person already has internal motivation going for them.

In fact, it is often said that it is close to impossible to motivate someone or, at least, it is close to impossible to keep that person motivated strictly by introducing external motivational techniques. It may work for a very brief time but it does not have the on going effect.

One manager offered an interesting example which illustrates this point:

He had heard, from his subordinates, that they would be very happy if the company provided free fresh fruit in the lunchroom. They reasoned that it would provide them with a healthy snack to keep up their energy so they could work harder. They said it would be such a wonderful thing for the company to do that they would find it very motivational.

So, thinking this was a relatively low cost way of providing external motivation, he decided to have a daily supply of fresh fruit delivered at the expense of the company.

For the first few days all of the employees were very excited. They were thrilled that the company would do something like this just for them.



But, within a few days, certain employees were complaining that they were not getting the particular fruit that they wanted because someone else got to it first. Those same employees started spending time, prior to their break, waiting at the door so that they could grab their favorite piece of fruit from the delivery person.

Other employees – those who were normally happy, productive employees – stopped eating the fruit because it had become such an issue amongst those who were complaining and they just didn't want to be involved.

The result was completely opposite of what had been intended. The fruit deliveries were halted.

HSRM's provide external motivation to employees through:

- ▶ Recognition of their efforts and achievements
- ▶ Genuine praise
- ▶ Rewards – mainly non-monetary
- ▶ Making them feel like a valued, contributing member of a winning team

Sales Meetings play a significant role in motivating employees provided the meetings:

- ▶ Promote the 'team' concept
- ▶ Provide training that is helpful in the associates pursuit of their goals
- ▶ Are interesting and positive
- ▶ Are *not* used as disciplinary sessions

HSRM's attempt to motivate during one on one meetings and coaching sessions as well. Even when an associate needs to be reprimanded or corrected in some way, the HSRM turns the meeting into a positive motivational experience by using words and phrases like:

- ▶ I have confidence in you
- ▶ You do other things so well

- ▶ I know you can do it
- ▶ I'm always available to help you
- ▶ We need you

In 'Way #3' we discussed leading by example. This deserves mention again in this section because it is so important as a motivator for the team. The HSRM is an intrinsically motivated individual and it shows. He displays his positive mental attitude at all times and this has a motivating effect on his subordinates.

The HSRM knows that if everyone in the organization is motivated there are no limits to what can be achieved.



Way #5

COACHES CONTINUOUSLY

HSRM's excel at, and believe strongly in, information sharing. It is part of the management style we discussed earlier.

HSRM's stress that sharing information, continuously, is the best way to coach people. Of course, sometimes the coaching has to be more formal with time set aside for conversations on particular subjects. But, for the most part, HSRM's find that their general style of sharing information doubles as coaching.

Using every conversation to coach your people has a remarkable effect. Employees are picking up information as you speak and they can determine, for themselves, if this is something that they can use for their own betterment. Remember, HSRM's have high quality people working for them and those individuals have been given a lot of autonomy by the HSRM so they often know what they need to pick up from a conversation. If the HSRM doubts that the information is being understood properly then they can be more specific.

It is not always necessary to point out a deficiency when an information sharing conversation will have a more positive effect. It works.

The key word is share. Information is a great thing to share. People the world over need information in order to perform well. The more information we get, within reason, the better we are able to perform.

If you do not share non-confidential information it may be because you are concerned that:

1. The employees cannot handle the information. You could be correct about this, depending on the situation. Perhaps the employee is new or there is some other reason but you need to take it upon yourself to make sure that, at some point, the employees can handle the information you have to share.
2. The employees may end up knowing too much. Take the approach that they can never know too much if it helps them do their job and look after the best interests of the company. A HSRM is confident that sharing non-confidential information is not going to jeopardize their position. Surrounding themselves with employees who have extensive knowledge and information is what HSRM's strive for. If the employees happen to know more than the manager, so much the better! Maybe you can learn something from them, too.
3. You don't want to take the time - the great deal of time you must invest - to share. If this is the case, you cannot be successful. Keeping information to yourself simply increases your workload and stress level and does nothing to further the cause or develop employees.

We have established that information sharing is a great way of providing coaching. But more structured coaching sessions are also very useful.

Sometimes we need to talk with an associate to tell them what we have observed and how they might be able to do better next time. Remember...taking a positive approach yields more positive results.

For example:

Employee 'A' was observed talking to a customer, following most of the steps of the selling process and ended up selling an item to the customer.

The observer, or coach, noticed that she did not ask open ended questions to determine the customers' needs. The interaction between the customer and the associate was pleasant and resulted in a sale, but it might have been a bigger sale, including more items – impacting a host of KPI's including Sales Per Hour, Average Sale Per Customer and Average Units Per Transaction, etc.

The coaching conversation must serve to:

- ▶ Congratulate the employee for the sale
- ▶ Acknowledge what steps were done well
- ▶ Have the employee identify what she could have done to make the sale even better

The actual conversation might go something like this...

"A, can I speak with you for a moment?

I noticed that you just made a sale to that customer. I saw you greet him when he came in and you were spending time showing him some jackets. What was he buying the jacket for? Did he need pants/shirt/tie/shoes for the occasion/activity?"

This is when A will realize that she did not know the answers and she will realize that she did not know because she did not ask. The customer would very likely have disclosed the information when asked. This is the perfect time to coach A on what she might have asked to get the answers she needed to make add-on sales.

You should be able to expect 'A' to do better next time. If she doesn't, you'll have to deal with it again. Eventually, she gets better or she faces consequences.

More formal coaching sessions are often used when the HSRM wants to coach with a particular outcome in mind. This type of coaching is reserved for times when an employee really does

need some help, or some additional information or skill development, and coaching on the fly is not expected to produce the desired results.

In these cases, you should let the employee know that you have scheduled some time to sit down and discuss their performance. Tell the employee enough to ensure they are not frightened about meeting with you – possibly thinking they are going to be reprimanded or even fired!

Coaching is not supposed to frighten people. If your coaching sessions make people afraid to talk to you...you may be doing something wrong. Coaching is a good, positive thing. Disciplinary discussions are not called coaching sessions or performance evaluations.



When you do sit down and talk to the employee:

- ▶ Offer praise for anything that they are doing well
- ▶ Ask questions to determine if there is some reason for their difficulties – you may learn that there is some obstacle which you can remove

- ▶ Let them know, in as much detail as possible, what you have observed

- ▶ Offer suggestions

- ▶ Ask the employee to summarize the discussion and what they will do differently going forward

Coaching is something that never stops, no matter how good your team gets.

World Champion athletes who are at their peak performance levels didn't get there without a coach. And they can't hope to stay in the game for long without their coach's help.



Way #6

MANAGES TIME WELL

The HSRM makes a point of taking complete control over the time allotted to complete his work. He sees time as the precious resource or commodity that it is. He has firm goals that are well defined and he has determined his priorities; never operates without a 'to do' list; he is well organized and schedules everything, leaving nothing to chance; he knows how to delegate and how to say no so he does not get distracted and start operating on someone else's agenda instead of his own.

HSRM's ask themselves "What does success look like?" and then plans time to deal with success factors.



For example, meeting sales targets is a top success factor so the HSRM plans the day/week/month with sales targets in mind. It may be that he reviews results and then talks with every one of his employees about their sales performance, every day or week, etc. If

succession planning is a top success factor, then the HSRM makes sure that it is in the plan. And so on. For the HSRM, the key to success in time management is planning and taking required actions.

HSRM's find that their approach to time management is such that other people, both subordinates and peers, catch the sense of urgency that he demonstrates.

Everything the HSRM does leaves no doubt that he wants to take action on issues, handle them in the timeframe he has allotted and move on. It is clear that he will not waste time with trivial issues and his subordinates know not to bother him with them. Instead they learn how to take care of those issues themselves. That does not happen immediately, but, over time his subordinates become great time managers just by following his example.

Procrastination

No discussion of time management would be complete without mentioning procrastination. The HSRM has mastered the skills needed to avoid procrastination because he is a person of action and there is just no room for procrastination in his busy work life.

HSRM's make a decision not to put off any important project or task that will advance their cause. They just get at it and, in time, they train themselves not to procrastinate.



Time Management Process for Success

The HSRM follows an eight step process for time management:

1. Define Goals

The HSRM has clear and well defined goals. In order to plan the best use of their time they figure out where they stand and where they need to be to reach their goals.

2. Prioritize

Any activity or task that will not move the HSRM closer to his goals is not worthy of investment of time. It helps to keep a log of what you are spending your time on for a period of a week or two and then review it to make sure that all of your time has, in fact, been spent working toward your goals.

3. Make a 'to do' list

Daily or weekly, a 'to do' list must be created. It must include only those things that are priorities for you and not necessarily for others. It is your 'to do' list and only you have the right to decide what should be on it.

4. Schedule everything as an appointment

This is how HSRM's manage to get to everything on their list. Nothing is left to chance. For example, if they plan to do something at 9:30 a.m. and have scheduled that activity as an appointment of, say 45 minutes, they do it in 45 minutes or less and then move on to their next appointment.

5. Organize

HSRM's are very organized. They have a system for reducing clutter and easy retrieval of documents and information. It does not have to be a sophisticated system as long as it helps you to find what you need when you need it and keeps clutter out of sight.

6. Delegate

The HSRM has competent people working for him and makes sure he delegates according to their particular strengths. A subordinate may not be able to handle an entire project but, broken into manageable pieces, the HSRM can count on someone else to assist.

7. Know when to say no

Although it is not always possible, the HSRM knows how to determine what he should say no to. If someone asks him to take on a project or task that will not necessarily advance his cause, then he needs to say no. When he has no choice but to accept the task, or project, then he looks for other items on the 'to do' list that can be moved to another time slot or delegated.

8. Remain flexible and reschedule often

HSRM's allow for the unexpected. There must be some time left available so that you can be flexible when the need arises.

Finally, the HSRM knows that any activity, task, project or meeting can fill the time allotted to it, whether needed or not, so he tends to allot less time rather than more. Some will view this as being unrealistic but the HSRM sees it as making the best use of time. When a shorter time period is allotted, things are generally handled more efficiently and effectively.



Way #7

COMMUNICATES WELL

It is widely recognized that good communication skills are important, in any business. But it is particularly important for a Retail Manager to be an effective communicator because they have to communicate with people at all different levels of the organization on a regular basis and, also, many of those people have a direct influence on the store employees and the customer.

Often there won't be an opportunity for a second chance at getting it right, just due to the nature of retail being that company employees are usually in many different locations.



Communication breakdowns, in retail, can have immediate and negative implications for the business.

In a lot of other industries there are more opportunities for colleagues to have meetings and to take more time to clarify misunderstandings before any impact at the customer level. In retail things are not so neat – very often instructions, directions, planned actions take place on the fly, making it difficult to correct or clarify after the fact.

For example, if a store employee comes away from a conversation with the Store Manager, or someone higher up in the organization, with the wrong idea - or if he is demotivated by the conversation – the Manager may never know it because they have moved on to another location and may not see that person again for some time ...but customers and other associates probably will know it because it will be apparent in the employees' behavior and attitude.

For another example: Let's say there's been a decision that the company is going to run a last minute promotion to move some particular merchandise and they want to capitalize on some additional traffic that's expected over the next few days. For expediency, the details of the promotion may need to be cascaded via the telephone to let store personnel know the details and exactly what has to be done to set up for the promotion. If, during this transfer of information from H.O. to stores, some of the details are either communicated incorrectly or misinterpreted then there's going to be confusion and the promotion won't likely get the desired results.

Just a few of the things that can go wrong in this scenario are:

- ▶ The price may be too low, or the discount too high which will cause excessive markdowns
- ▶ The wrong product(s) may end up on promotion
- ▶ Incorrect signage may be used
- ▶ Presentation or the promotional set up may be done incorrectly

So, the customer may end up confused depending on what went wrong and the employees can become disgruntled and resentful when the problem is discovered and they have to do the same work all over again to put it right.

Retail Managers need to hone their skills if their goal is excellence in execution at store level and, of course, it is. There must be an exchange of information, not just a

download. People need to be given the opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

Yet another reason Retail Managers need to be highly effective communicators is to be able to get the very best out of their people. Subordinates who actively participate in the exchange of information – meaning they are not just told to do this or do that – are far more likely to achieve objectives.

That means the Retail Manager has to know how to ensure an exchange of information occurs and that involves knowing the communication style of those involved. This is particularly important when discussing your standards and expectations. One of the biggest reasons why employees often do not meet performance standards and expectations is simply because they were not made clear enough to them.

Here's an example where a Managers' communication skills may be called into question: an employee takes a directive – let's say a directive to perform a certain task – and then proceeds with the task with nothing else in mind. As far as they're concerned the task they have been given by their superior is the most important thing they have to do.

Now, if the Managers expectations were clear all along, that employee would understand that the task must be done **ONLY** if there were no customers to look after.



But let's say customers come into the store while the employee is totally engrossed in his task and the customers are ignored - which, in reality, happens all the time. In this example, the Manager did not make expectations clear – the task to be performed was clear but this employee did not understand that the task was to be done only after customers were taken care of. The employee did not have the 'customers first' understanding which should have been instilled early on in his or her employment.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Retail Manager is regularly called upon to provide floor or field level information and feedback to his superiors. It is crucial that this information or feedback be communicated very clearly to avoid misinterpretation. And, if a Retail Manager is communicating upward, his or her credibility is at stake. Anything and everything said needs to have weight – it can't be frivolous or 'off the cuff' if he or she is to be taken seriously and have influence within the organization.

In all circumstances a Retail Manager must have self control and be responsive as opposed to reactive.

There are numerous barriers to effective communication:

No Win/Win:

A barrier instantly arises if it is clear to the listener that there is no win/win; if the conversation is one sided the other party may tune out. If the end result of a conversation is apparent at the outset, and if that outcome is not a desirable one for the listener, then it is a win/lose conversation and it will not be effective.

A person knows, when someone starts talking, if the conversation is going to be one where a two way discussion will take place or if it is simply a download of information. Downloads, where the listener is being 'talked to' will create a barrier unless, of course, it is clear at the outset that you are strictly relaying information – which is occasionally just a normal course of business.

Distractions:

Noise and visual distractions obviously make it difficult to have a productive exchange of information.

Perceptions:

Perceptions can create a barrier. If the listener perceives that you don't know what you're talking about; or perceives that you are not in a position to be having the conversation in the first place, then a barrier exists.

A good example of this, which most retail managers have seen, is when an associate is promoted to a supervisory or management role and the other associates perceive the new manager to be lacking knowledge or experience. In cases like this it can be very difficult for the new manager to have impact. S/he needs to find a way to communicate that removes any perception that s/he may not have the knowledge and experience required.

Biases:

A barrier can be anything else that may make the message come across differently than what is actually being said. For example, if one person has any biases they may be picked up by the other party and that becomes a barrier.

Cultural differences:

If there are cultural differences between the parties having a conversation, this too can become a barrier.

The Highly Successful Retail Manager senses these barriers and works to remove them before moving forward. The barriers must be removed if effective communication is to take place.

The HSRM actually does certain things to ensure that s/he is communicating effectively.

During an actual conversation a Highly Successful Retail Manager:

- ▶ Makes sure the setting, or environment, is appropriate for the particular discussion; never starts a conversation on the selling floor it can't be finished on the selling floor.
- ▶ Speaks clearly with good eye contact
- ▶ Knows the topic – don't embark on conversations which you know nothing about
- ▶ Knows who they are talking with – two people holding the same position in an organization have that position in common but, beyond that, they are unique individuals possibly with different levels of knowledge and intelligence, and different levels of interest and focus; the Manager needs to know "who am I talking with" and "how does this person communicate?"
- ▶ Ensures that an exchange is occurring by asking good quality questions to encourage feedback from the listener; a

simple “what do you think?” will not guarantee you good quality feedback

- ▶ Does not interrupt – even when the other individual is saying something that she really does not want to hear or if they are on the wrong track – hears them out
- ▶ Is genuine – an effective communicator is a very good listener
- ▶ Uses an assertive, but not aggressive style
- ▶ Uses ‘yes, and’ instead of ‘yes, but’ – this is a great method to use when trying to sell an idea or defend a decision – anytime someone is trying to put up even mild resistance. If you try it you’ll find that starting a sentence with ‘yes and’ makes you go in a positive direction with your next comment and helps to keep you on track. Starting with ‘yes, but’ puts, and keeps, you in a defensive position, getting nowhere with the conversation.

In general: A Highly Successful Retail Manager...

- ▶ Is always looking for feedback and ensures that people have been invited to provide feedback at any time
- ▶ Encourages openness and honesty at all times
- ▶ Ensures s/he is accessible
- ▶ Follows up again and again

The HSRM knows what not to do also.

- ▶ Never make negative comments, particularly around subordinates – remember employees are always listening when someone higher up is nearby, even if they are selective in actually hearing, so the opportunity for misinterpretation is huge.

- ▶ Never allow 'Complaint Sessions' – always steer the conversation back to the positive
- ▶ Never speak in terms of 'Us against them'. Although it is sometimes just a natural reaction and may be tempting, it is every Retail Managers duty to protect the reputation of their Head Office. Just as children do better when they see their parents presenting a united front, employees fare much better and perform better when they know their manager is supportive of other management personnel. So, even if a directive seems a little off, you need to work with your management partners to set things right and cannot put them in a negative light. It's bad for the business to do so.
- ▶ Never praise artificially – sometimes, in retail there is a tendency to 'high five' and celebrate too many things and it can become meaningless. By all means be very positive, praise and celebrate at every opportunity, but only when it is genuine.
- ▶ Be careful not to let your body language or tone of voice work against you. You should avoid crossed arms, or an offensive or defensive stance. And, there should be no need to raise your voice or use sarcasm.
- ▶ Never leave people in the dark. If something needs to be discussed – discuss it. There is nothing worse than speculation by people who do not know the facts. Your entire staff, particularly at store level, can quickly get on the wrong track if you do not share information. Your people are capable of handling almost any type of information as long as they believe they have the truth, and not hearsay.
- ▶ Never assume anything.

Communication can be considered the life blood of the organization. Without it nothing happens, or at least nothing happens in an organized and cohesive way that stays on message.

Effective communication, in a retail organization, keeps associates and management on the same page and ensures the customer receives the same message wherever he encounters your organization; whichever store he shops in, whichever advertisement he sees, whichever interaction he has with anyone in the organization, he will receive the same message.

The HSRM makes sure that message is a good one and a clear one.

Way #8

IS HONEST and HAS INTEGRITY

If there is one thing that will cause a manager to lose the respect of subordinates faster than anything else, it is dishonesty.

HSRM's tell the truth.

They may have to keep certain things confidential, in which case they say openly that they are not at liberty to discuss certain things and they may, sometimes, have to put a different spin on something in the best interest of the company and the employees overall, but they do not lie.

Occasionally, as human beings, managers find themselves in situations where saying nothing is easier, and more comfortable, than saying something. After all, that is not really lying, is it? But these are the times when the HSRM sets himself apart. He does not ignore a situation which can be misleading by him saying nothing. He is not afraid to comment for fear of becoming unpopular. The HSRM finds a diplomatic way to comment in order to ensure he has not mislead someone and to ensure the record is set straight.

For example, an employee might say something like "Michael mentioned that there is a new rule from Head Office and it's going to cause us so much more work". The HSRM may have fully agreed with the new rule, and, if he did then he responds to the employee making it known that he agrees and the reasons why. He is not afraid to make his support for the new rule known.

Because this new rule is clearly unpopular, it would be much easier for the manager to shrug and say nothing. But the HSRM does not look for the easy way out. By saying nothing he implies that it has nothing to do with him. In fact, the HSRM may have been the champion for the new rule. He must state this. HSRM's do not hide behind any cover. They have the integrity to make it clear, in this case, that they stand in favor of the new rule.

Another example might have something to do with a promotion of an employee. If one employee did not get a promotion and feels that it was unjust, he will try to find out why. A manager, in this situation, may try to use the company hierarchy to get him out of the uncomfortable conversation. He may imply that it was not up to him and that someone at Head Office made the decision. Certainly, that might be the easiest way out but, as we have mentioned, the HSRM is not looking for the easy way out. In addition, the HSRM would not want to give the impression that he is not involved in these important decisions.



The HSRM will take the time to explain, again, the reason that this employee did not get the promotion. In fact, the HSRM would be surprised that this question would even come up because, during evaluations, he would have ensured that the employee was very clear about his status long before any promotion took place.

Employees who work for HSRM's usually know where they stand as far as promotability goes. And they also know who

the next promotion will go to; that's just part of the HSRM's strategy of internal promotion – everyone knows where they stand.

When it comes to employee performance, it makes absolutely no sense whatsoever to lie. HSRM's know, above everything else, honesty is the best policy. Being truthful, and tactful at the same time, is the only sure way to encourage improvement. Telling an unproductive employee that they are doing well is just inviting problems down the line. Some managers may do this because they fear confrontation or because they simply lack the skills to deliver negative information. That is something that the manager must work on and correct if they are to become a HSRM.

An HSRM must be, and be perceived to be, above reproach. They must abide by every loss prevention policy, just as all employees are expected to do.

Some retailers have a policy that requires employees coming off shift and leaving the store to open their bags for inspection at the lease line. Refusing to follow this policy can be grounds for termination of employment.

Unfortunately, though, when more senior management members visit the stores they are not necessarily expected to submit to the same inspection. This sends a very clear message that this particular Loss Prevention policy is only intended for store employees and not for senior management. What does this imply?

It implies that store employees are more likely to steal and less likely to be trustworthy than senior management members are.

This is definitely a wrong message and the HSRM will see to it that, in his store(s), any and all company employees are following the company Loss Prevention policies. Period.

HSRM's make sure that they, themselves, conduct all business in accordance with company policies. They do not offer company employee discounts to friends and family members;

they do not use the company telephone to make personal long distance calls; anything that store employees are not allowed to do – the HSRM does not do even if there is a tolerance for this type of thing elsewhere in the company. Again, HSRM's are above reproach.

HSRM's do not make promises they cannot deliver on. If they need to check on something before answering a question then they check. It does not diminish their authority. It ensures that once they answer, or make a promise, that they can follow through with it. This is what enables the HSRM to keep their word and that is something that will help them in the management of people as it becomes a very important part of their reputation.

Remember...When you break your word, you break something that can't be mended. Anonymous



Way #9

IS ACCESSIBLE

HSRM's do not manage from afar with little or no contact. Of course they can't always physically be with all of their people but they stay connected and accessible to all.

HSRM's ensure that all direct subordinates feel free to contact them at any time. The stores' hours of operation are the minimum hours the pager/mobile is turned on and answered.

One important note here – the HSRM has trained his people to cope with most things on their own, so while we say that the HSRM is accessible at any time, it is understood that he will not be called or paged every time a question comes up. The HSRM has competent people working in his store(s) and knows that, when they are trying to contact him, there must be a good reason for it. And if there is a good reason, then he absolutely should be accessible.

If, for some particular reason, the HSRM is not in a position to handle calls or pages from subordinates then he has designated someone else capable of handling situations at that level.

Empowerment

A short discussion on empowerment has to take place here because it goes hand in hand with the HSRM's rules of accessibility. In many companies, or work groups, it is clear that empowerment is just a word and means nothing. But in

the HSRM's store(s), empowerment is taken seriously and works well.

If employees understand, and truly believe, that they are empowered to make decisions that will enhance the relationship between the retail organization and the customer and that they will not be harshly criticized or reprimanded in the event of a mistake or error in judgment, then empowerment works.

If, on the other hand, employees are told that they are empowered to make decisions and then are reprimanded or ridiculed because a decision or action they took was incorrect, then empowerment is simply a word and no employee will feel comfortable making decisions.

If the employees in your organization feel they **must** ask someone higher up for a decision that the employee themselves were capable of making, you do not have empowerment working properly for you in the organization.



Store associates are dealing with the public and one never knows when something extraordinary will happen possibly requiring the attention of management. There is no rule book or guide or policy manual that could possibly cover all of the events or circumstances that retail people come up against on a daily basis. That is why empowerment is so important to the HSRM. His business cannot operate properly unless it is in firmly in place.

Because the HSRM has built a culture of information sharing and ongoing training, there would be at least one person – usually the person in charge - who could easily handle most situations in the store at all times.

The HSRM has these rules in place:

Rule #1 – never ask the customer to go away and come back when the next level of management is available – the fact that you do not have someone, in the store, who is capable of dealing with the problem is not the customers fault and they should not be inconvenienced. Whoever is in charge is running the business – that person should know what to do.

Rule #2 – all employees have the authority to solve the customers problem as he sees fit. Clearly, they require good training in order to do this. They must understand how to handle unusual situations and to keep the best interest of the company in mind as well as the best interest of the customer.

Rule #3 – in the most extraordinary of circumstances, the next level of management must be contacted quickly so that some resolution can take place while the customer is in the store in order to minimize inconvenience.

Rule #4 – it is always clear to store personnel who to contact in the case of extraordinary circumstances and where to find the contact information. No employee should be in a position to be looking all over and calling other stores just to find the contact information of the individual they need to speak with to resolve the customers issue.

Rule #5 – the next level of management who is supposed to be available for these emergency calls must, in fact, be available.

In the end, really, what does the company stand to lose by empowering people as long as the customer was taken care of? What is the exposure versus the benefits?

It is important to remember that employees have access to the company's cash, inventory and perhaps your most important asset, your customer. You trust them with those

things. If they are good, honest employees, it is highly unlikely that anything they do to satisfy the customer will present a risk to your business. Naturally this assumes that an employee is not engaging in willful misconduct or sabotage against the company.

Of course, if an error in judgment is made and things go wrong, then the HSRM coaches or retrain the individual to make him better for next time. The HSRM determines the risks, takes precautionary measures and then empowers the people.



Way #10

MANAGES PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVELY

In order for a store, or district or region, to operate profitably all employees need to be performing well in their positions.

Cashiers must be leaving a wonderful last impression on customers as they are checking out and leaving; Aisle Associates (or floor clerks) must be available for assistance with a smile and Sales Associates must be selling and meeting their targets. Every employee must be doing what is expected of them, and beyond.



If every employee is doing what is expected of them and the business is thriving, managing performance is very easy – just follow the plans and all is well. However, it is a rare business

that is fortunate enough to have everyone performing at the expected level. It could even be argued that if a company were in that position, then perhaps expectations were not set high enough. In any case, usually people are not meeting expectations because there is a lack of performance management taking place.

The HSRM takes performance management very seriously and schedules it into his day/week/month. There is always something to do when it comes to managing performance in the store(s). It might be something as small as a coaching conversation with a cashier who made an error the day before, or it may be putting 30 minutes aside to have a quarterly performance review. To be sure, HSRM's do not think about Performance Management only once a year – that simply would not work for the associates, the manager or the company. It is unfortunate (not to mention unproductive) that so many companies only engage in performance management activities annually.

Performance management, particularly at the associate level, is not effective at all when it is done only once or, even twice, a year. Associates need feedback on their performance much more often, and with regularity. The annual and semi annual performance evaluations are important and must be part of the overall employee evaluation process but, alone, they just won't do the job.

HSRM's make a point of talking to their subordinates regarding performance weekly. That is, however, a heavy schedule for a lot of managers particularly if they are not using an evaluation system specifically designed for that purpose.

Consensus among HSRM's is that short, very focused weekly evaluations are best but monthly evaluations are the absolute minimum and even that is leaving someone to wonder about their performance, and how they are measuring up to the standards, for a little too long.

HSRM's do weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual performance evaluations.

Predictably, the weekly evaluation is very short requiring very little time for preparation; the monthly evaluation is a little more in depth but still not a big time investment. The quarterly and annual evaluations take more time but HSRM's maintain that if you are evaluating people weekly and monthly, then the quarterly and annual evaluations just flow from those and there is really not a lot of time required for preparation on the part of the manager. During the quarterly and annual evaluations the employee should be given the lions share of the time allotted, to talk about their careers and to get advice. This assumes, of course, that the employee is doing well. If they have made it to the annual evaluation they should be employees whose performance is sound.

HSRM's also find it very helpful to do quick coaching. As they observe someone doing something – whether a task or steps in the selling process - they take a moment or two to coach; to offer some advice in a non-critical and non-threatening way.

The HSRM knows that you never stop learning so, even when an employee is doing something well, he looks for that little extra thing that will help them do even better and he offers that as advice.

There is, however, one caution with this. The HSRM does not over do it. An employee who is doing things well can become de-motivated if their superior continually offers advice on how to get better. They may start to think they can never do anything right or that their manager will never be happy with their



performance. So, be careful with quick coaching of individuals who are performing well and use it only when appropriate.

When the time comes to let an employee know that they simply are not performing up to the expectations of the position they hold, HSRM's do not hold back. They speak very clearly and do not get distracted by any excuses the employee may make in their defense. While it is always a good thing to do some listening during these conversations, the HSRM stays on point and is focused on the behaviors that are negatively affecting the associates' performance.

In a perfect world, the HSRM has trained associates well and has discussed their performance with them often and every associate has been coached and is performing up to expectations. But we do not live in a perfect world and sometimes an employee turns out to be a poor performer. In those cases, it is up to the HSRM to make sure the employee has had the opportunity to correct the behaviors that are causing him to fail. That means it must have been discussed and the employee has been given a certain period of time to improve. This type of action is always put in writing and is signed by both the manager and the employee.

If the employee's performance does not improve, then it is time to take disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment. As always, proper procedures must be followed to avoid any misunderstandings and expensive legal action brought against the company.

HSRM's consult the Human Resources professionals in their organization before taking any action to terminate an employee. In fact, as soon as it is apparent that serious performance discussions are going to take place they brief their Human Resources professionals and keep them apprised of the situation as it progresses.

One thing that HSRM's always do in these cases is act quickly. They understand that a non-performing employee is a drain on the other employees and on the company. The quicker these issues are dealt with, the better for everyone.

A word about terminations is in order here because not everyone finds terminating someone's employment an easy thing to do. HSRM's occasionally find it difficult but, most of the time, they are comfortable with it because they have done everything possible to give the employee every opportunity to improve.

It is important to remember that some people are simply not worthy of holding a position representing your business. That does not mean that they are not good and decent people – of course, many poor performers are. However, it is not your responsibility to look after them by continuing to pay for their work if that work is not benefiting your organization.



The poor performer's life circumstances must not play a role. It is not cruel, it is just good business practice. That is not to say that no compassion or empathy is ever required, of course it is, but it should never be used to make excuses for ongoing poor performance. The HSRM lives by these rules with regard to terminating employees:

► Be respectful in all dealings with employees

- ▶ Offer every possible opportunity for the employee to improve but keep the time frame as short as possible to avoid other employees from being affected negatively
- ▶ Be fair and reasonable
- ▶ Be critical only of unproductive or negative behaviors and not of the person
- ▶ Ensure someone in the Human Resources department of your company is aware of the situation and heed their advice
- ▶ Make a written record of all conversations with the non-performing employee
- ▶ When you have tried your best to no avail, terminate.
- ▶ During the termination conversation, do not get into arguments or discussions. At this point, all conversations should already have taken place, so just terminate privately and escort the employee out.

Every employee must be aware that there are rewards for good performance and negative consequences for poor performance. HSRM's make sure that is the case. Termination is made much easier when this is all well understood.

What about good, great, even outstanding performance? HSRM's ensure that people performing well are given opportunities to learn and to grow.

Top performers get assigned to special projects, like training new employees. They are asked for their opinions on many issues; presumably they are making more money (commissions and bonuses); they are on the HSRM's succession plan; they are usually well known to the HSRM's superiors and many others within the company.

Managing performance means managing the good and the bad. It is important to do a good job of managing both if you are to be a HSRM.

Way #11

MENTORS and DEVELOPS PEOPLE

This is always top of mind and a major priority for the HSRM. Earlier we mentioned that the HSRM always makes plans and makes time to attend to all of his success factors.

Developing and mentoring people is a critical success factor for the HSRM and he dedicates a lot of time and energy to it.

To address this topic properly, it needs to be broken down into three important parts:

- ▶ Succession Planning
- ▶ People Development
- ▶ Mentoring

Succession Planning

Succession planning is where it all starts. Without a proper succession planning process in place, the HSRM cannot meet his goals of developing and mentoring people. As these are key components in the HSRM's plans for continued success, he must start at the beginning.

To be certain, if succession planning is not made a priority and followed up on a regular basis, it won't happen. It is one of those things that often receives very little attention until we

are desperate to fill a position and, at that point, we realize we should have been paying more attention to it.

In order for the HSRM to have people coming up in the organization who can fill positions and possibly follow in his footsteps (ie: be mentored by the HSRM) there must be an ongoing quest for the right people to promote/hire.

The work involved with succession planning is not easy to do, but it is critical.

To get a succession plan started, the HSRM analyses the people who are already working within the organization, or store, who have the right:

- ▶ Skills
- ▶ Qualifications
- ▶ Experience
- ▶ Attitude
- ▶ Characteristics
- ▶ Ambition
- ▶ Desire

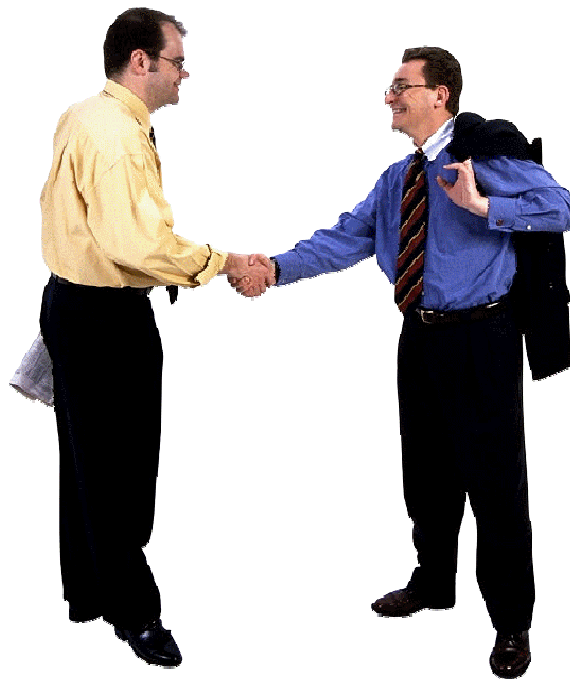
Once he has chosen those who meet all of the criteria, and those who have the potential to meet all of the criteria, then he starts making development plans for each of them.

In the meantime, he plans time for recruiting individuals who could be candidates to be on the succession plan. He is always on the lookout for people who meet his criteria and his networking abilities help with that to a large extent.

Remember...you can never have too many people lined up to be on your succession plan.

People Development

It would be a great accomplishment, according to HSRM's, if all newly created or recently vacated positions could be filled internally. A strict policy of internal promotion is one of the best ways of motivating a work force and, whenever possible, the HSRM sticks to that plan. The target to strive for is 100% internal promotion.



However, on occasion, and in certain circumstances, there may not be a candidate who is ready for promotion and we have to hire from outside the company. If you have done the job properly, all employees will understand that there really was no choice but to look outside.

Even though you cannot fill all positions internally, you can certainly do your best to fill most of them. To that end, you must develop the people, already working for you, that have met the criteria for your succession plan.

Do not let yourself get so caught up with the day to day running of the store or operation, that you lose sight of the importance of people development.

HSRM's are flexible with their development plans. They use a combination of formal training, such as workshops and seminars, with informal project based training and practical work which the HSRM assigns, to stimulate the employee and to make him or her better and better.

People development is one of the major strengths of the HSRM. He has developed his skills in identifying those have the potential to be developed into something more and who are also willing students. It doesn't do anyone much good to try to develop someone – devoting time, energy and resources – only to realize they are not interested.

Often, even employees who are seen in a negative light by others, can be developed into gems for the business. HSRM's have seen many cases like this. The employees in question were 'diamonds in the rough', so to speak, and they became amazing associates and managers due to the skill of the HSRM.

Mentoring

The role of mentor is one the HSRM enjoys and is very good at. Once an employee is being mentored, there is an emotional commitment on the part of both the employee and the mentor.

The employee feels highly valued because his manager, who is someone whom he respects, has chosen to impart vast amounts of knowledge and spend a great deal of time to help him become better and better at what he does. This is motivational to the person being mentored, to say the least. This employee will develop even greater dedication and commitment than he had before because he is now inspired and because there is no question about how much he is appreciated.

The HSRM feels that he is providing a valuable service for the employee, and the company and he feels responsible for the employees' progress. He will see to it that the employee being mentored stays on a path to success. He will go to great lengths to assist this individual in becoming the very best he can be.

Clearly there are benefits to both the employee and the mentor. And what about the benefit to the store/organization? Amazing. Company's who have numerous mentoring relationships going on inside their walls are huge winners.

The employee, the mentor, the organization and customers are going to benefit by a good, solid mentoring relationship.



Way #12

PRAISES and REWARDS

HSRM's believe strongly that all compensation must be based on performance. Of course, there may be a base wage or salary for a certain position but all commissions, bonuses, spiffs, etc. must be available only to those who perform well; those who advance the cause.

But quite apart from the monetary rewards and general compensation practices within the company, the HSRM does a lot of praising and a lot of rewarding on his own.

Praise is free to give yet incredibly valuable.

HSRM's understand that to praise is to show appreciation and acceptance, build confidence, boost self esteem and make the employee stronger and better at what he does.

In a nutshell, praise is a motivator.

There is a big caution regarding the use of praise as a motivator and show of appreciation – and that is that the praise must be genuine and must address the level of the individual receiving it.

For example, if you praise a seasoned sales associate for a relatively minor accomplishment in sales, the praise would be seen as insincere and the sales associate will be more embarrassed than motivated.

Most of the time, however, praise is a wonderful thing and the HSRM believes in 'the more, the better'. His people know that whenever they have done something above and beyond the average, whenever they have achieved something really exceptional, they will be recognized with praise from their manager.

And that praise will not be secret. The HSRM praises in front of others. He praises at Sales Meetings, and on the sales floor when appropriate, and any other time he can.



Praise works for the HSRM and he is always on top of performance and achievements so that he has a never ending list of people to offer praise to.

Keep notes in your planner/organizer to make sure you don't miss an opportunity to offer praise to your employees.

Rewards can be non-monetary and still have a strong impact.

The HSRM has a unique way of rewarding employees in a non-monetary way. Generally, store managers do not have funds to reward performance at store level so they must count on rewards that have a motivating effect, but that are no cost or very low cost.

Here are just a few examples of how a top performer may be rewarded for performance:

- ▶ Get first choice of days off
- ▶ Pick his favorite shifts
- ▶ Not have to perform any undesirable tasks
- ▶ Be chosen to train new associates
- ▶ Be included in meetings that add to his professional development
- ▶ Be asked to speak and share some techniques at a Sales Meeting
- ▶ Be asked to assist the Store/District Manager with a project

Rewards for performance count. If a person is a top performer then he should be receiving wages, bonuses, commissions, etc. that reflect his level of performance. The HSRM takes advantage of every opportunity to get more and more financial rewards for the top performers.

The HSRM uses non-monetary rewards to add even more reasons for associates to perform well.

Way #13

MANAGES UP



Managing Up is what takes place in a certain company culture. In order for it to work properly the CEO, and all executive members, must be on board with a particular style of running the operation.

The foundation of this culture is not that new; many people have said “If you’re not serving the customer, you better be serving someone who is.” But saying it and seeing that it happens are two very different things. It takes a lot of work and sincere commitment to make it happen.

Here is how it works. Basically, a Store Manager – either on their own or on behalf of an employee – is welcomed and encouraged to bring ideas and suggestions to upper management.

In this culture, it is believed that the people on the front lines truly are the window to the customer and to the effective operation of the stores. So, when they talk, management listens.

There is a lot of responsibility on the part of the Store Manager to have credible information; the facts and figures behind the idea. If the Store Manager believed in the idea strongly enough to have invested some time doing research and to put his reputation on the line in order to have a new process or procedure put in place, the executive team would always make the time to take a good look at the idea.



In the final analysis, there could be only two possible outcomes:

1. The idea was implemented and a date for implementation was set.
2. The idea was rejected and the Store Manager was given all of the reasons why it was rejected. If the Store Manager was not satisfied with the reasons he was invited to ask questions of the executive in charge until he was convinced; of course, sometimes he might be able to convince the executive to change the decision depending on how good the argument was.

In every case the Store Manager was satisfied in the end. Either the idea was implemented or he understood why it could not be.

The point is that every Store Manager was invited to contribute in any area of the business and to make suggestions for improvement. Not surprisingly, continuous improvement was alive and well in that organization.

The other major benefit this company enjoyed was strength in their team. They had very good people who offered support to each other and employee turnover was very low. They prospered.

In an organization like the one mentioned here, it makes sense that some Store Manager's would have some serious influence in how things are done in the company.

The ones who could see the bigger picture and make recommendations for the good of the company and back those recommendations up with good solid research would naturally become known throughout the organization. People could go to those Store Manager's for feedback on any number of things – from how a particular item might be accepted by the

customer to store operating procedures and everything in between.

HSRM's believe strongly, and thrive, in this culture. If the organization the HSRM is working in does not operate like this, then the HSRM simply operates his store(s) like this.



Way #14

DEMANDS OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Here is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak.

Many, many projects, businesses and people have failed at the execution stage. New processes and procedures, new customer service initiatives, new marketing and advertising campaigns, new visual merchandising techniques...and the list goes on...all are subject to failure when they reach the execution stage.

The best plans and ideas, the best programs – no matter how carefully thought through and detailed, can fail miserably simply because of lack of excellence in execution.

Operational excellence depends heavily on the HSRM's ability to see that everything done at store level is executed perfectly. This is no small task as anyone reading this can attest to. It is difficult for a store manager, more difficult for a district or regional manager and next to impossible at Head Office level.

When many individuals are involved in the execution of anything, there are multiple opportunities for things to go wrong. Conversely, there are multiple opportunities for things to go right. And this is where the HSRM focuses. He looks for ways to ensure that things can go right. He makes it possible for things to go right and removes obstacles that can get in the way of getting it right.

He teaches his people the finer points of operational excellence. He provides training, coaching and on the spot guidance and advice. He is present or he has designated an individual who is present to see that the task is executed properly.



He makes checklists and has people sign off when something has been done. And he follows up again and again until every associate knows exactly what is expected and until everything is done.

He leaves no room for doubt about what is acceptable and what is not. He will not accept sub-standard work.

If the standards are not kept very high, operational excellence will not be achieved. Human beings have a tendency to come up with their own idea of how much is enough. The HSRM does not leave that open to interpretation.

To some, this may sound like the HSRM is too picky, or difficult to please. That is not the case and when the associates see how their attention to detail results in operational excellence being achieved, they will understand that the HSRM is right and that his methods are working in the best interests of the company, the store and the employees.

Way #15

PROMOTES GROWTH

The Highly Successful Retail Manager is Growth Minded

A Wise Person Said:
If you are not growing, you are dying.

HSRM's focus relentlessly on growth! They want to know what is next? What can I do that is bigger? Better? New? Different?



They want to anticipate and meet the evolving needs of their associates and customers. They want to accelerate the

implementation of practices and procedures and focus their resources on top and bottom line growth.

HSRM's understand that there are only 3-Ways to Grow their Business

1. Get more customers.
2. Get your existing customers to buy more often.
3. Increase the Average \$/customer (ASPC) and units/transaction (UPT).

In everything they do, they keep these three things in mind.

They are constantly looking for ways to draw more people into their stores. They make suggestions to their Head Office regarding new and unique advertising and marketing possibilities.

They put their full support behind the company's efforts to add customers to the loyalty program and behind every marketing campaign which invites loyal customers in to shop more often.

They focus on increasing their average sale and units per transaction by managing the performance of their associates; by ensuring they have the merchandise, by ensuring visual displays are attractive and by keeping an impeccably clean and well organized store, among other things.

In short, HSRM's do anything and everything they can to grow their business.

Here are some questions Highly Successful Retail Managers ask themselves to ensure they keep on growing...

- ▶ Am I developing my people quickly enough?
- ▶ Am I doing business at the level I want to?
- ▶ How am I being stretched and forced to grow?

- ▶ How can I add more value?
- ▶ What are the most important things to work on that will grow my business the fastest?
- ▶ What am I doing to prepare for future success?
- ▶ Are there new tactics that I should be considering?
- ▶ What's next for me and my business?
- ▶ Have I created new value recently?
- ▶ When was the last time I reinvented myself?
- ▶ Do I need to upgrade my qualifications?
- ▶ When was the last time I did something innovative?
- ▶ Do I embrace change?

Highly Successful Retail Manager's come to a point where they realize that the Success they have achieved so far isn't enough...

At that point they challenge themselves to come up with new and different goals and projects, such as:

- ▶ Developing a new and better process to tackle and fix problems raised by customers and associates.
- ▶ Constantly identifying waste and coming up with processes to stop it.



- ▶ Spending time and resources to generate new customers while retaining existing customers.
- ▶ Defining clear growth goals, and investing time and energy in the staff and processes needed to meet these goals.

Way #16

NETWORKS



The HSRM never misses an opportunity to network. Whether in the workplace, at a meeting, at a sporting event or any type of social gathering, the HSRM is always on the lookout for great people. And he is always promoting his store/organization.

You just never know when you will come across an individual who would be a perfect fit as an employee in your organization or even someone who is looking for a new place

to shop and your store is perfect for them. So, you have to be ready.

Effective succession planning, which we discussed earlier, depends heavily on networking.

▶ The HSRM is always thinking 'find good people'.

▶ He always carries business cards – lots of them.

▶ He is very social; engaging people in conversation at every opportunity.

When you network effectively, you will be surprised at how many people contact you. They might contact you when they are looking for a job, or when they have a product to sell, or if they are looking for someone to hire, or something to buy – the list is endless. The point is that you are in the loop...or the network. Your circle of influence gets bigger all the time.

There are certain industries where networking is a way of life and, in fact, it is the very best way to build business. Selling Real Estate is one of those industries, as is Life Insurance. The people in those industries must, as they so often put it, "talk to people, talk to people, talk to people". That is what they do day in and day out. If they don't, they cannot make a lot of money or reach the level of success they desire.

In those industries they are networking primarily to obtain new clients, but they are also looking for people to bring on board in their firms.

In retail, the need for networking is not quite as obvious. We have stores that people pass by and decide to come in based on the company name, reputation, window displays, visual merchandising, etc. And we get customers who come in based on advertising and promotion. But those people are prospective customers, which is wonderful for business but not necessarily the best way to get job applicants.

Of course, there is a networking opportunity for you in turning customers into job applicants. Sometimes your customer is

also looking for a new position. And if that comes out in the conversation, then by all means follow it up.

But, generally, your customers are not your candidates for employment. So you have to network outside of the store.



If you happen to be a shy type of individual, networking can be a bit more difficult for you than it is for an extrovert. However, you need to consider it part of your responsibility as a manager and do it regardless.

Here are some suggestions for places to network:

One on one opportunities –

- ▶ Grocery stores
- ▶ Restaurants
- ▶ Medical and Dental offices
- ▶ Gas stations
- ▶ Convenience stores
- ▶ Mall food courts

Group opportunities –

- ▶ Clubs/organizations you belong to
- ▶ Training sessions
- ▶ Parties
- ▶ Sporting Events you take part in
- ▶ Open House gatherings

The HSRM knows the importance of networking and makes a point of doing it every day, everywhere. It has to become a habit, or a 'way' of being if you are going to be a HSRM.

Way #17

IS ENERGETIC, AMBITIOUS and ENTHUSIASTIC

Have you ever noticed that some people seem to exude enthusiasm and energy while they're working? That's what HSRM's do. They really like what they do and it shows. They are ambitious about everything they do; working on the sales floor or climbing the ladder of success.



They are competitive; often challenging their subordinates to beat their sales...for fun and excitement of course, not to show off. But this type of challenge is motivating for associates because:

► They want to beat the manager

► They learn from it

► They like to see that the manager actually knows what to do

This is a great way for the HSRM to teach. Employees tend to have a lot of respect for the manager who can 'walk the talk'.

The HSRM is always on the lookout for new and different methods of doing just about everything; constantly asking questions to get feedback on every process and technique used.

The HSRM is always willing to share information. Associates who are ambitious enjoy hearing about how the HSRM's career progressed and the HSRM is always glad to tell the story. This is motivating to most associates because it answers questions they have about their own career paths; it helps them understand what is required to get ahead in the retail industry and in the particular organization and what traits and behaviors are most valued.

You will never hear a HSRM lamenting over bad luck or unfortunate events that have occurred in his lifetime. The HSRM knows not to pass along negative comments which really just sound like excuses.



The HSRM takes responsibility for all of his actions whether the outcome was good or bad. He knows that the game of blaming others is a sure way to end up a loser.

The HSRM demonstrates a high energy level and enthusiastically handles all of his affairs. His ambition is clear; he's moving up in the organization because he is so good at what he's doing. If he does have any areas to improve upon he seeks out advice and direction and enthusiastically embarks upon a well thought out plan to get better - whatever it takes. That's another very important thing – the HSRM operates on the WIT (whatever it takes) principle.

Way #18

DEVELOPS a FLAIR for VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Fortunate is the HSRM who has a solid background in visual merchandising! The HSRM who does not have that background or who does not consider himself a creative individual must, nevertheless, develop a flair for visual merchandising or visual presentation.

Most retail companies have individuals, at the Head Office, whose main responsibility is to plan how the merchandise will be presented in the stores. Those individuals are usually well qualified in the art of visual presentation.



The HSRM, however, must be able to interpret the plans and make appropriate adjustments where necessary and must ensure that his team members are capable of doing so to some degree.

Once the plans arrive at the store it is anyone's guess as to how the plans will be executed. This is where the HSRM's knowledge of visual merchandising and the discipline he has instilled in his team come into play. The HSRM, has a degree of comfort knowing that his team will execute the plan well because he has coached them every time something unusual came up. Now they are much more able to interpret the plans and to make any necessary adaptations.

Visual merchandising is something that comes easier to some HSRM's than to others but, all of them, found that it was beneficial for them to have that ability as they find it critically important to their business.



If visual merchandising is not one of your natural talents, then practice is the best way to learn the skills. Some managers avoid getting involved with things that they are not really good at but visual merchandising is something that cannot be avoided. The HSRM's said they built confidence by doing it themselves and, over time, developed the skills needed.

Because HSRM's surround themselves with competent people, most of them find that there are individuals on

their teams that have outstanding talent in visual merchandising and they call upon those team members to help and bring their expertise to others.



In addition to practice, the HSRM seeks out training opportunities when it comes to Visual Merchandising, and many other areas for that matter. Here are some things to do if you want to get better at visual merchandising:

- ▶ Contact the Visual Merchandising expert at your Head Office and ask if s/he can spare a few hours to come out to your store during the next layout or big visual presentation change
- ▶ Ask for training materials that may be available through your Head Office
- ▶ Contact local colleges/schools that offer courses in Visual Merchandising and sign up
- ▶ Subscribe to a publication that addresses the subject
- ▶ Walk the malls and pay attention to different Visual Presentations and try to figure out the 'why' and 'how' of what they did
- ▶ Search the internet for pointers and suggestions

Because Visual Merchandising is something of an art, as opposed to a science, you absolutely must practice, practice, and practice some more.

Most Visual Merchandising professionals will advise you not to be afraid to try new and different things. Of course, there are basic principles to be followed but what is visually pleasing to people is so subjective that trying new things is the only way to keep up.



Way #19

ENSURES all INTERACTIONS are PRODUCTIVE

HSRM's are not auditors or police and they do not try to act that way when they are in the stores. A managers' presence in a store can be the best and most productive way to increase performance of all of the individuals working in that store provided the manager handles it properly.

For the most part, this assumes that the manager is not in the same store every day. It applies to Area/District/Regional and Head Office Managers in particular. However, everything included here can be modified to fit any retail management position.

When an HSRM plans a store visit, or a department visit, it is important that he has expectations for the time allotted. The time is wasted if it is not productive. To that end, he makes a list of all of the topics he wants to cover during the visit. At the top of the list are the things that he deems most important to the business.

One of those is the Profit & Loss Statement for the business unit (store, group of stores, department, etc.).

The HSRM is adept at reading/analyzing the P&L, or Operating Statement (Appendix A). He makes sure that he shares information based on that Operating Statement, while protecting the confidentiality of the information, of course. Often store operations are improved based on the results learned from the Operating Statement.

Also, he makes sure the employees are aware, in advance, of what the visit will look like – what will be expected. It is always recommended that the employees prepare for the visit

in some way. This is not to say that they need to rush around cleaning, etc. Obviously this should not be necessary.

What it means is that, for the employees' own professional development, he should be expected to do some pre-work even if it is kept to a minimum. The point here is to ensure that the interaction is productive; that all parties get something out of the interaction.

About prioritizing, if a manager goes into a store and starts discussing the organization of the cash desk and leaves a sales discussion for later in the day, it could be perceived that the manager places more importance on organization and tidiness than on sales. That would be a very wrong message and the HSRM leaves no room for doubt.

Here are the 'must do's' for a HSRM while in a store/department:

- ▶ Interact with customers
- ▶ Role Model excellence in customer service
- ▶ Role Model selling skills – without taking the credit away from the associates in the store
- ▶ Inspect everything – displays, paperwork, back room organization, cleanliness, lighting, stock levels, employee files, cash desk organization, supplies, schedule, security, - inspect with genuine interest and questions; not for the purpose of catching them doing something wrong. When something is found to be incorrect or not up to standard, this is the opportunity to coach for improvement. Or, if it is not the first time you have found this particular deficiency, then it is time for a more formal disciplinary conversation.
- ▶ Take time for a short chat with every associate in the store – this should include asking them about their sales and how they are performing against their targets – they should know how they are doing.

- ▶ Support the efforts being made and comment on anything that is being done well.

- ▶ Be very clear that your presence does not trump a customer's presence – make sure they understand that, when talking with you, they should excuse themselves when a customer is present. This is one more way the HSRM ensures that employees understand who top priority is.

Here are things the HSRM would 'not do':

- ▶ Act like a policeman or auditor

- ▶ Try to catch someone doing something wrong

- ▶ Spend all of your time on the telephone

- ▶ Expect attention when a customer is in the store

- ▶ Expect them to do as you say and not as you do

When present in a store, members of management are being watched very closely. Employees will pick up a lot of information from a management visit. The HSRM designs the visit to get the most out of it. All interactions with store employees must be productive. At the end of a visit the HSRM wants to know that the time was well spent and that the business has moved forward in some way due to the visit.

Way #20

WORKS HARD for RESULTS

Great results do not just happen. HSRM's know that there is a direct correlation between hard work and great results.

They understand that there is a need to work smart as well, but nothing replaces hard work.

And they know it is of the utmost importance that their employees realize the connection.



Employees see the HSRM in action, working hard to make things happen and to get superior results in everything they do. The HSRM takes every opportunity to lead by example in this regard and to teach subordinates that working hard is one of the keys to the success of the operation.

Of course, the HSRM expects that all company employees - both superiors and subordinates – will work hard to get results.

It does little good to tell people that they should work hard to get ahead. People have to see it happening. They have to actually see that the person working hard is, in fact, getting results that are superior to those of the person who believes coasting on the job is acceptable.

Obviously there are times when an individual may produce great results with seemingly little or no effort. Yes, it does happen but it doesn't happen often and it cannot be sustained. Hard work can never be replaced. What that hard work entails will differ in every store, every organization, every employee but you can be sure that it is a rare occurrence for anyone, or any business, to get and maintain great results without putting in a great effort.

There are times when the HSRM cannot get the point across because he is dealing with an individual that should not be there.

Take, for example, a cashier – the one person who is providing the final impression before the customer leaves the store - who is leaning on the counter, yawning and complaining that she stayed up too late the evening before. Do you think she is producing good results? Could you possibly think this individual is capable of working hard? Do you think an HSRM would tolerate that kind of behavior? This is clearly a case where the HSRM would realize that his example has not had any effect on the employee and she would be given two choices: Get better or leave.

Back to making sure that all employees see it in action, there are different ways of creating awareness in this area. First of all, the HSRM makes a point of posting, or otherwise communicating, sales and other important KPI results. The top performers are generally recognized as hard working individuals.

Next, the HSRM ensures it is well known that there are rewards for great results. Because hard work almost always equals great results, other employees will be able to make the connection.

HSRM's can often be found working long past their normal work hours. Sometimes they don't even realize it. They put in extra time to add value, not to prove something. To be clear, HSRM's do not purposely add hours to their work day just for the sake of working longer hours and possibly accomplishing something; they work longer and harder when they feel that what they are doing is adding value to the employees, the customer, the organization, or himself.

Way #21

STRIVES for both QUALITY and QUANTITY

This is not a discussion of product quality. In '22 Ways of Highly Successful Retail Managers', an assumption is made that the product being sold by the retailer is a good value for customers.

Here, we are addressing the quality and quantity of sales transactions and *associate performance*.

The HSRM has incredibly high standards for the quality and the quantity of sales made. No excuses are acceptable. Once you start accepting excuses for lack of performance, you will lose business and you will lose respect of people working with you – both subordinates and superiors.

As discussed previously, the HSRM role models, and excels in, all areas particularly selling and delivering great customer service on the sales floor.

An associate must be able to sell an above average number of units to an above average number of people. The average will depend on



the particular business but let's use an example just to illustrate.

The retailer, in this example, sells tools to people who want to fix or build things around their home.

Associate A is skilled at building rapport with customers and knows the product well. Unfortunately A tends to talk too much. A does manage to sell an above average number of items to the customer but it takes far too long, which means A ignores many other customers and he does not end up with very many transactions. The quality of his sales is good but quantity suffers.



Employee B is the type of associate who moves around the store greeting every customer and offering assistance. B helps many customers find the one item they came into the store to buy.

So, B has an above average number of transactions but each one is not very high. The quantity of his sales is good but quality suffers.

What has to happen here is training and coaching; performance

management.

Clearly, A and B need to work on different things.

A needs to speed up just enough that he is able to help and sell to more customers without rushing the customer, of course.

B needs to spend a bit more time with each customer and try to find out what else he might add on to the sale.

This is obviously over simplified but the point is the HSRM knows exactly which associate needs which type of training and coaching based solely on results and he is continuously working to ensure that they get what they need and that they improve.

The HSRM insists on quantity and quality and cannot accept just one of the two. Accepting either one means his sales associates' productivity is not maximized.

There are other factors which will impact productivity of associates and the HSRM is on top of all of them. Regardless of which KPI (Key Performance Indicator) is being looked at, the HSRM expects quality and quantity, however they relate to the KPI.

Way #22

TAKES ACTION

The HSRM is a person of action. There is nothing to be gained by making plans without taking action. Plans are necessary and they are meant to be the blueprint for action. Plan your work and work your plan – that saying has been around for many, many years for good reason.

Only taking action can further the cause. And HSRM's go further by saying they take fast action – they have a sense of urgency in everything they do.

Knowing is not enough; we must apply.

Willing is not enough; we must do... - Johann Wolfgang van Goethe

The HSRM volunteers his services to get right into any job where help is called for. Put out the garbage, receive a shipment, stock the shelves, fix the printer, sweep the floor – nothing is out of the question for the HSRM.

It needs to be said, however, that the HSRM has many important things to do and we are not suggesting that managers wander around looking to help out with what could be considered menial tasks. Of course, the HSRM should *not* be routinely performing tasks that are the responsibility of someone else, at a lower level on the wage scale and the hierarchy, but a willingness to help in extenuating circumstances– whatever is required – must be demonstrated. That is what the employees see and learn from.

It's a great way to lead by example.

When employees see that the Manager is willing to pitch in and help, it helps to grow the 'whatever – it- takes' culture among the store level associates. It also makes employees realize that no job is too menial for the Manager to help with when it is required to help the business. That, in turn, says that no job is menial because everything they do supports the cause.



All the best plans and intentions; all the most amazing ideas don't amount to anything at all unless action is taken. Even if the whole plan or idea can't materialize – HSRM's don't let what they cannot do stop them from doing what they can do.

The HSRM always takes action – not just when reacting, but in leading; in spearheading an initiative. They believe in the 'nothing ventured, nothing gained' philosophy. And if mistakes are made, they take action to fix them fast.

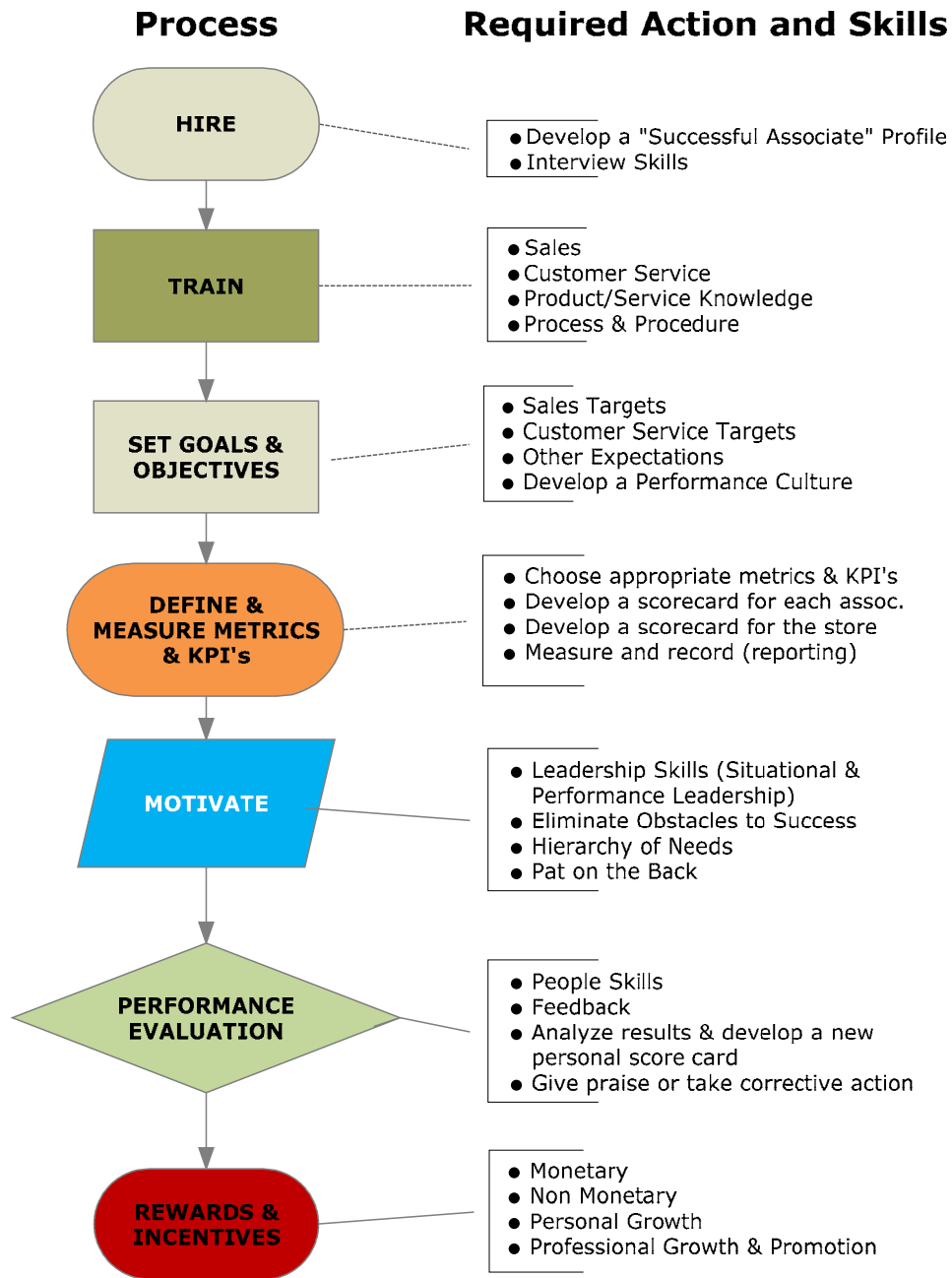
Appendix

Appendix A

Typical Profit/Loss or Operating Statement

	This Year		Last Year		% Variance B/(W)	
	\$	% of Sales	\$	% of Sales	\$	%
Sales	1,000,000	100.0	950,000	100.0	50,000	5
Cost of Goods Sold	600,000	60.0	588,050	61.9	17,000	1.9
Gross Margin	400,000	40.0	361,950	38.1	33,000	1.9
Operating Expenses						
Store Wages						
Salaries	70,000	7.0	71,250	7.5	1,250	.5
Payroll Taxes and Benefits	10,000	1.0	10,450	1.1	450	.1
Total Store Wages	80,000	8.0	81,700	8.6	1,700	.6
Occupancy						
Rent	150,000	15.0	150,000	15.8	0	.8
Utilities	4,000	.4	4,175	.4	175	0.0
Repairs & Maint.	2,000	.2	3,600	.4	1,600	.2
Depreciation						
Total Occupancy Expenses	156,000	15.6	157,775	16.6	1,775	1.0
Overhead & Other Expenses						
Bank Charges	15,000	1.5	15,000	1.6	0	.1
POS	8,000	.8	8,000	.8	0	0.0
Maintenance	5,000	.5	4,800	.5	(200)	0.0
Supplies	7,000	.7	6,650	.7	(350)	0.0
Telephone	5,000	.5	4,750	.5	(250)	0.0
Travel	1,000	.1	1,900	.2	900	.1
Visual & Marketing	25,000	2.5	22,000	2.3	(3,000)	(.2)
Other	17,000	1.7	15,200	1.6	(1,800)	(.1)
Total Other Expenses	83,000	8.3	78,300	8.2	(4,700)	(.1)
Total Store Expenses	319,000	31.9	317,775	33.4	(1,225)	1.5
Store Profit	81,000	8.1	44,175	4.7	36,825	3.4

Appendix B: Store Management Process



Store Management Process

Other Success Guides and Tools available from **DMSRETAIL**:

Managing for Higher Retail Success:

<http://www.dmsretail.com/retailsuccess.htm>

Winning at Store Management:

<http://www.dmsretail.com/winning%20at%20retail.htm>

Retail Math Made Simple:

<http://www.dmsretail.com/retailmathbook.htm>

Store Manager's Organizer – Planner:

<http://www.dmsretail.com/dmsretailer.htm>

Retail Employee Performance Evaluation System:

<http://www.dmsretail.com/performanceevaluation.htm>

Mega Retail Success Bundle:

<http://www.dmsretail.com/megabundle.htm>

Super Retail Success Bundle:

<http://www.dmsretail.com/superbundle.htm>

Retail Customer Service Fundamentals

<http://www.dmsretail.com/customerservice1.htm>

Retailer's Guide to Emotional Hot Buttons

<http://www.dmsretail.com/hotbuttons.htm>