

Is Average Ok?

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If I asked you to name an average employee at your company, I'm betting a name or face would quickly come to mind. They come in to work their regular shift but rarely put in more than 40 hours per week. They do what is told of them, but don't ask for more challenging projects. They don't volunteer for committees, or take the initiative to go above and beyond.

Yes, it would be wonderful if you had all dynamic "A" players on your team, but in the real world, that's not likely to happen. At some point, you will manage an average employee.

So how do you help this employee reach their full potential? It's important to have conversations (yes plural) on a regular basis, and not just at their annual review. Find out what motivates them and what they enjoy in their role, as well as their frustrations. Ask them ideas of how to improve processes or procedures in their job or department. Sometimes as managers, if we just ask the question, that in itself is motivating to the employee — they know you care.

Be honest with them. This can be difficult, for example, when they've had another manager for years that lead them to believe they were a top employee in the company. They were given the impression they were doing a fantastic job, when in reality, they are just average. And now you come along and have different expectations. This can be a little dicey, but if you set the expectations from the beginning, and continue to have open conversations on a regular basis, it makes it easier for everyone to be on the same page.

Remember the flip side too. Your team is made up of people with different talents, strengths, speeds and priorities. That average employee might also be your most dependable, may never complain, and/or keeps the balance amongst all the personalities within the department. They may not be the leader of the group, the go-getter or the fastest employee in the group, but they may possess strengths that may be overlooked as well.

Tags: Untagged

