Management myths vs. realities

When you step into management, you begin operating under certain tenets of human behavior in a societal cluster known as the workplace. The people in that workplace—your employees—are wired differently, but are all there for somewhat common reasons: to make money, get along as best as possible and remain on the payroll. Which should mean there are certain truths or tricks of the trade to keep them all humming. Not so fast. Here are several myths of management and the realities behind them:

**Myth:** All employees can be motivated; you just have to find out what works for each one.

**Reality:** Motivation is indeed tricky. Some employees need to be coddled and constantly reminded that their work matters. Others work best with a pall of fear hanging over their heads. But there are some—probably more than you think—that cannot be motivated. They are irreversibly jaded, dislike you and what they do there. No amount of money or motivational wizardry will fix them. You need to weed them out before they taint others.

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**Myth:** Annual reviews are the essence of employee growth.

**Reality:** It’s the regular feedback—spontaneous and candid—that ignites the growth. Use the annual review for goal setting and performance enhancement.

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**Myth:** Pay raises and hefty bonuses are best for retention.

**Reality:** No employee will stay for the long haul if his or her work isn’t inherently meaningful and recognized. Money talks, but it somehow runs out of the right words.

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**Myth:** Good employees will be naturally productive if you leave them alone.

**Reality:** Autonomy is great. Stellar entrepreneurial types thrive in a keep-your-nose-out environment. But don’t stray too far away. Good employees will be productive with your proper guidance. You need to keep all that talent plugged into the big picture.

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**Myth:** Employees can be productive at home. *More productive* is a stretch. First, consider the potential distractions and temptations that lurk in an employee’s home. Second, think of the communication inefficiencies and the collaboration loss. And on the third thought: What’s wrong with your workplace that employees don’t want to be there?