



BOTILMS

Module 11: Managing High Performers

So, how do you bring out the best in your best-performing employees? How do you challenge someone who's already at the top of their game? What are the risks to all-star retention, and how do you keep high achievers excited and inspired by their work? Uncover the answers to these questions in the following lesson, where you'll learn tips for managing and developing your top-performing employees.

Click on the first lesson below—or the *“Start eLearning”* button above—when you're ready to begin.



High Performers Need Attention, Too



Characteristics of High Performers



8 Tips for Managing High Performers



Manage Group Dynamics



Summary



Knowledge Check

High Performers Need Attention, Too

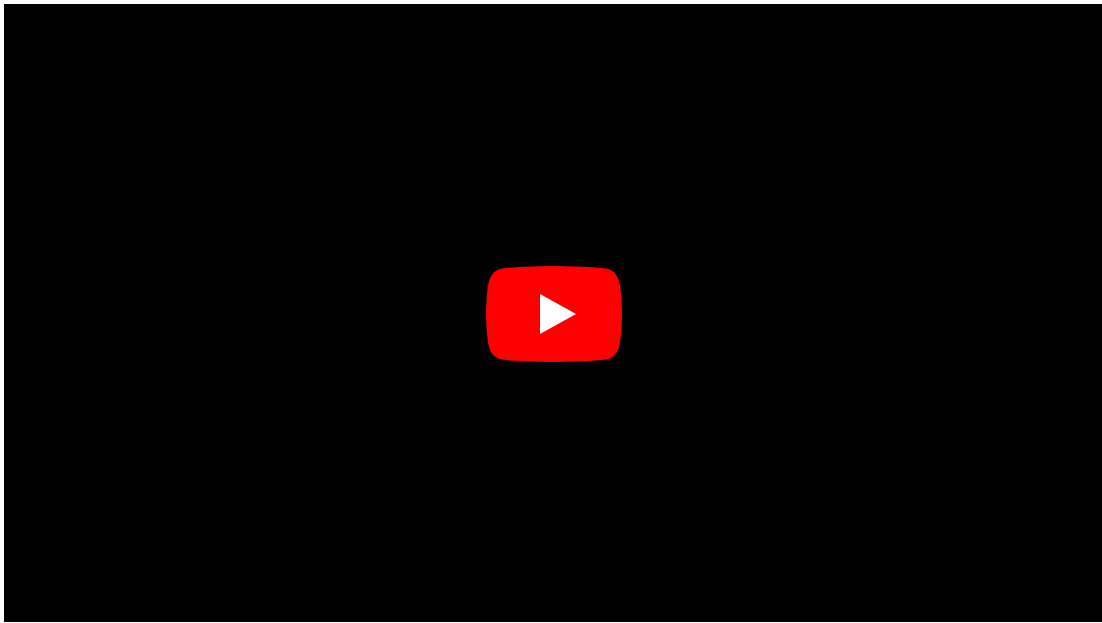


High-performing team members make your job look easy. They always meet their deadlines, knock their goals out of the park, and their key performance indicators are through the roof. They're reliable, self-motivated, and exceptional at what they do. Even better, they require little to no direction from you. Just get out of their way, and let them do their thing—right?

Not exactly. High performers require attention and coaching, too. Neglecting to engage, challenge, and cultivate your most talented employees can lead them to get bored or look for opportunities elsewhere.

So, how do you bring out the best in your best-performing employees? How do you challenge someone who's already at the top of their game? What are the risks to all-star retention, and how do you keep high achievers excited and inspired by their work? Uncover the answers to these questions in the following lesson, where you'll learn tips for managing and developing your top-performing employees.





Managing High Performers

Watch this video to learn eight tips to manage high performers.

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Characteristics of High Performers



How would you characterise a high-performing team member? You might describe a high performer as driven, ambitious, talented, hardworking, motivated, capable, or even overachieving.

It's easy to spot a high performer because they consistently meet or exceed goals and expectations. They're always up for a challenge. And it seems like there is no task they can't complete, problem they can't solve, or objective they can't achieve. Here are a few more telltale signs that distinguish a high achiever:



They consistently produce exceptional results. A top-performing team member will consistently yield higher output and produce better work outcomes than the average employee. This person will almost always complete their work on time and consistently meet or exceed their work objectives.



They're self-motivated and self-directed. High achievers often need little direction, support, or oversight from their supervisors. They don't need to be told to do something. They manage and prioritise tasks effectively, and they're self-motivated to do their work and grow as a professional. They like a challenge, and achieving or learning something new is personally gratifying for them.



They develop their own systems, shortcuts, and processes.

Finally, you'll also find that your top-performing team members develop their own systems, shortcuts, and processes to do their work. They look for better and quicker ways to produce results.

Top Challenges and Risks of High Performance

While these traits contribute to a top performer's aptitude and success, they also create new challenges for management. Click on the flashcards below to learn more:

Collaboration and
Interpersonal Skills

A high performer's fast-paced and independent work behaviours may make it difficult for them to **work in a collaborative or team-dependent environment.**

They may come across as impatient, lack

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Boredom

A high performer can get **bored** if they no longer feel challenged, or believe that there is nothing left for them to learn or no more room for them to grow. A bored employee may look for new challenges and

opportunities at other companies

Burnout

Burnout can happen when a high performer works long hours, holds themselves to impossible standards, and refuses to use vacation time. Burnout can hurt work quality or even lead a high achiever to quit their job.

Knowing the risks of managing a high performer can help you watch for or mitigate them. Also, being aware of the unique challenges that a high performer may face can help you combat them.



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8 Tips for Managing High Performers



So, how can managers best serve high performers? What can you do proactively to protect high performers from boredom or burnout, and help them stay engaged, motivated, and challenged in their work? Expand the rows below to learn some actionable tips for managing high performers:

Keep Work Interesting

High performers are more likely to get bored—quickly—with regular, mundane, or simple tasks. They need interesting or complex tasks to stay engaged and energised. Keep work interesting by trying these tactics:

- **Vary their tasks.** Assign something new or different. Vary tasks—but keep them relevant to the skills and strengths that the high performer values.
- **Assign special projects.** Give a high performer a challenge or special assignment that stretches their skills and pushes them (slightly) out of their comfort zone.
- **Make it high-profile.** On a similar note, you can also motivate high performers by delegating projects that are high-profile for the company—or tasks that are more crucial, visible, and impactful. For example, you might ask a high performer to give a presentation to a top client or weigh in on a key decision for a critical product.

Altogether, you can keep a high performer's work interesting by **diversifying** tasks, **challenging** their abilities, and assigning **high-profile** work.

Set Clear and Ambitious Goals —

You already know that your high performer is capable and talented, but most managers consistently underestimate a high performer's full potential. Don't let them settle or take it too easy. That's true for all employees, but it's especially true for high achievers. Set clear and ambitious goals for them to channel their talents—whether that means raising the bar for project expectations or setting an ambitious career or promotion goal. Define the target and let them figure out how to reach it.

Disclaimer! While goals should be ambitious, they also must be realistic and achievable. Unrealistic or unachievable goals will likely demoralise or burn out an overachiever.

Give Them Autonomy —

One of the quickest ways to stifle a high performer is to micromanage them. Instead, give them autonomy over how they work and complete a task or achieve an objective. Allow them as much control and flexibility over their schedule and working hours as you can. Trust them to make decisions or solve problems independently. Don't tell them how to do something—let them figure it out, and then touch base to offer feedback. Ask questions like, *"How would you approach this?"* Or, *"Can you explain your thinking?"*

Help Them Embrace Failure —

High achievement and perfectionism go hand-in-hand. A high performer may set impossible expectations or standards for themselves. Not only can this lead to stress or burnout, but the fear of failure can also hold them back from taking on new challenges or taking innovative risks. Talk to high performers about failure in one-on-ones. Tell them that it's okay to fail, and position failure as a valuable and inevitable learning opportunity. Encourage your star to embrace failure in safe working environments. Also, make sure to check in on them after a mistake or error in their work to see how they're doing and discuss how the incident can fuel future progress and improvement.

Mandate Breaks and Time Off —

High achievers are also prone to become workaholics. Nip it in the bud. Encourage or mandate your high performer to take regular breaks and time off. Advocate a healthy work-life balance and communicate the importance of rest and relaxation for the long-term success and sustainability of their work.

Place Them in Leadership Roles —

A high achiever's knowledge, capabilities, and self-assuredness often makes them natural leaders. Take advantage of it. Place them in leadership roles whenever you can. Ask them to lead a new project, train a new hire, or spearhead a new initiative. They'll find the challenge exciting, and the project or people they oversee will likely benefit from their leadership, too.

Provide or Identify Development Opportunities —

Most top performers crave continuous learning—they're hungry to develop new skills and grow. Help them identify opportunities to learn both inside and outside your organisation. Introduce them to other high performers or mentors at your company. Coach them to develop career goals and find ways to take steps toward achieving them. Cross-train them to expand their skills and train in other positions. Or look for opportunities for them to get involved in task forces or other committees at work.

Tip! Remember that high performers often struggle with soft skills like teamwork, collaboration, and interpersonal communication. Don't hesitate to give feedback on these areas and identify training opportunities for a high performer to work on them.

Recognise and Reward Them —

Finally, give high achievers praise and recognition for exceptional work or results. Communicate how much you appreciate and value their work. Also, reward them appropriately for a job well done. You'll need to make wages and benefits competitive to keep a high performer around.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Manage Group Dynamics



A high performer may cause tension on a team. For example, the high achiever may demand or expect too much from their coworkers, they may exhibit domineering or overconfident behaviours, or their coworkers may feel jealous, intimidated, or threatened by them. Don't play favourites, and take an active role in helping team members work together effectively. Talk to individuals about team dynamics one-on-one and help them see how they can contribute to a constructive and collaborative team dynamic. Don't let the achievements of a high-performer overshadow the achievements of the team.

Encourage Relationship-Building

You can also help high performers advance in their careers by encouraging them to build relationships in the company. High performers may not often reach out, ask questions, or ask for the support of others. They may not build strong networks within the company if they rely on themselves and their own skills rather than lean on partnerships or connections with others. Help high performers recognise the importance of networking and collaboration with others. Establishing partnerships and leveraging the strengths of others can be a new skill for high achievers to hone and learn.



If your company values collaboration more than competition, then it's okay for a high achiever to compete against themselves. But be wary of high achievers who are trying to compete against their coworkers. Communicate how goals are collective—and help a high achiever recognise and value the contributions of others.

[CONTINUE](#)

Summary



High-performing employees still need effective management, because even stars need the right conditions to shine. They just require a different approach. A high performer will get bored, burnt out, or feel stagnant more quickly than the average employee. They're a valuable team asset, but they can be difficult to hold on to for the long term. So, practice these tips to develop and motivate a high-performing team member:

- **Leverage them.** Leverage a high achiever's advanced skills and strengths. Place them in leadership roles, give them more responsibility, assign high-profile projects, and give them autonomy over when and how they work. Don't micromanage them.
- **Challenge them.** Vary a high achiever's tasks, assign special challenges, and identify learning opportunities both inside and outside the company to expand their skills. Set ambitious goals for their work and give them a clear path for career advancement.
- **Protect them.** Protect a high performer from burnout and adverse effects of perfectionism by mandating regular breaks and time off. Tell them that it's okay to fail.
- **Appreciate them.** Lastly, show a high performer that their work is valued and appreciated by recognising their accomplishments, and

rewarding them for taking on more responsibilities or contributing more to the company.



Ask high performers what they need to stay at the company for the long term. You don't have to guess if a high performer feels satisfied and challenged in their role. Ask them directly in a one-on-one or performance evaluation. You might ask them, *"What would you need to stay at the company for the next X years?"*

CONTINUE

Knowledge Check



Complete the following sorting activity to check your understanding of what to do—and what not to do—when managing a high performer. Drag-and-drop each statement into the correct category.

Do's

Accept failure as an inevitable step toward growth

Mandate breaks and time off

Recognise and reward them

Identify learning opportunities outside the company

Vary tasks and assign special projects or high-profile assignments

Don'ts

Favour them

Give them a larger workload than other employees

Micromanage them

Set overambitious or impossible goals for them

**Let them overshadow the
contributions of the team**



Complete the content above before moving on.