

TEN STEPS TO ENCHANTING YOUR EMPLOYEES

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Bakatate: Japanese word meaning “stupid” or “foolish”

Kee*p bakatate* in mind whenever you are tempted to think your disenchanted employees will somehow magically enchant your customers.

Effective leaders know how important it is to have strong relationships with both customers and employees. They also have a strong vision of life’s possibilities, and how they are going to make the world a better place. Their cause, the vehicle for achieving that purpose, can be a product or service, an idea, or the creation or maintenance of an organization.

In today’s fragmented world it takes deep and strong relationships to make that happen. It means changing how people think, what is in their hearts, and what they do. It means learning how to enchant.

Why Enchant?

Why would you want to enchant someone? Not to make money from them, or to merely get them to do what you want. It means you want to create and sustain a sense of delight within them. You’ll need to enchant in lots of different situations. If you want to reach an

idealistic goal, something that might be difficult to measure, people will ultimately need to share your dream. Your vision of how the world can be changed for the better may not be instantly apparent to others. If you have to make a difficult, significant decision that may cause considerable friction, there is a built-in need for enchantment.

You’ve got to enchant people if you want them to overcome deep and entrenched habits. While many habits are good and help us navigate the world more easily, others get in the way of positive change, especially of the change-the-world variety. People really need to be delighted by you and what you are doing to stick with you and your organization when results seem a long way off, or you are getting delayed feedback—or no feedback at all.

Aiming your enchantment efforts at your employees is a great way to navigate your journey toward your goals, especially the lofty, seemingly out-of-reach ones. These are the people you work with every day, who hold the power in their hearts and hands to implement what you want to do. They are the first line to your customers and clients. They represent you and your organization to the world as much as you do, or even more.

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Enchantment defines a relationship with employees that is deep, delightful, and long-lasting. If you can enchant your employees, they will work harder, longer, and smarter for you—and, ideally, you for them too.

It's important to also enchant your customers or clients. But it is foolish to think that a disenchanting, unengaged employee is going to have the desire to do the enchanting. The proper application of enchantment turns a boss into a leader who motivates on a high level.

Here are the ten best ways to enchant your employees:

1. *Provide a MAP.* You may find it counterintuitive that money is not the primary reason someone loves their job. Nonetheless, it turns out that several other factors, when taken together, are even more important. In his best-selling book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel H. Pink explains what employees really want from their employers, which can be simply stated as being given the opportunity to continually master new skills while working autonomously toward a purpose greater than themselves.

This does not mean that you shouldn't pay people adequately, but a MAP is what really leads to enchantment. And while you've got control over how much money you pay someone, it is also important to remember that you've got control over your relationships in these three areas, and how you provide opportunities within each area. The cost to you for each one can be little or nothing, with a significant payoff.

Here is a brief look at each member of this powerful trio of concepts:

- *Mastery:* People innately want to get more competent at a job they do each day. They have an intrinsic need to excel and improve.

- *Autonomy:* Set goals for people, give them the proper tools, and then stand back. Micromanagement erodes trust and is the enemy of autonomy.
- *Purpose:* (I consider this to be the most important of the three factors, but as acronyms go, MAP works better than PAM.) Purpose is the meaning made by your organization. It's the expression of how you are making the world a better place. Your employees want to play a daily role in how this meaning is made.

2. *Empower them to do the right thing.* If people have the freedom to work autonomously, it demonstrates that you trust them to make the right decision on customers' behalf. This high level of trust and empowerment will lead toward the performance of their best work. Remember that your best employees set an example for others. They want to present a sense of delight to their customers—your customers. An important factor in job satisfaction is the ability to make customers happy.

If you burden people with rules and procedures designed more to prevent losses than to make gains, you're preventing them from working in the customer's best interest. That means disenchanting employees—and disenchanting customers. Not a good way to change the world. If your employees are empowered to do the right thing, they'll feel good about themselves and will consistently enchant their customers.

3. *Judge your results and their intentions.* Maybe it's just human nature, but most managers tend to be harsher judges of their employees' results than they are of their own results. "I really tried to meet my sales quota, but you didn't meet yours." (Sound familiar?) This is the opposite of what an enchanting manager does. Be a tougher judge of your results than your employees. What did you accomplish? What were your employees' intentions?

The usual way sets you up to find few faults with how you have performed, while zeroing in on shortcomings of your employees. If, over a long period of time, their results are sub-par, consider asking yourself a couple of questions: Did we make a hiring mistake? Have

we made mistakes in training? Don't give yourself the benefit of the doubt so often.

4. *Address your shortcomings first.* Judging is one thing; fixing is another. Nobody is perfect, you included. How could you have done a better job yourself? After that soul-searching, you can start talking about employee improvement. Peter Drucker's words have never been truer: "So much of what we call management consists in making it difficult for people to work." Self-criticism is a powerful component of enchantment. Setting a good example is also a good source for employees to experience inspiration by your example. The idea for enchantment is to develop inspired employees, not intimidated ones. Blame yourself first and most, and see what happens.

5. *Suck it up.* This is a phrase that is often used without considering its full meaning and implication. The Urban Dictionary provides this definition: "to endure a period of mental, physical, or emotional hardship with no complaining." If you are driving a big and important enough cause, enduring-without-complaining is probably going to be a frequent occurrence, and something you are going to want to model for your employees.

You have to show that you'll do whatever it takes. Employees need to know that you'll do the dirty, hard, and frustrating jobs too. That's what great people do: employers and employees alike.

6. *Don't ask employees to do the things you won't do.* If you're not willing to fly from New York to New Delhi in coach, then don't ask them to do it, either. Do you answer all your e-mail? Are you willing to make photocopies? How about emptying the trash can or cleaning up the occasional mess? Do you arrive in the office early and stay late? If you don't, it's going to be hard to ask your employees to do these things.

Enchanting your employees is easier if you can develop a sense of empathy for what they do each day, and show that you are pitching in alongside them. This is a great guiding principle for your management style. It leads not only to enchantment but to increased credibility and loyalty, a priceless combination.

7. *Celebrate successes.* When your organization scores a success, celebration is in order. Unrelenting toil in the face of success (or failure) is rarely worth the time or effort. Success as a group is unbeatable, and it is best to celebrate it as a group. You'll want to remember this if you are trying to emphasize team achievements more than individual ones. But don't get carried away with lavish, expensive celebrations that seem more excessive than empowering. Holding a celebration at a fancy, expensive setting, with entertainment by famous names, sends the wrong message, and it wastes money. Employees will be enchanted by celebrations that are fun and cool, not extravagant and awesome.

8. *Get a devil's advocate.* This is a term that lots of people toss around, without knowing its original meaning. For hundreds of years, the Catholic Church appointed advocates (called *advocatus diaboli*) who argued *against* candidates for sainthood. Consider using a similar approach in how your organization canonizes decisions, the kind that may be difficult and costly to undo later. A practice such as this improves the way your organization functions and works toward its goals, especially lofty ones. In turn, it makes life better for your employees and enchants them in the process. If employees do get disenchanted, they can talk to the devil's advocate and know that rocking the boat is really OK.

9. *Show some love.* Michael Lopp, in his book *Managing Humans: Biting and Humorous Tales of a Software Engineering Manager*, contends that the three crucial words during the recruitment process are "We want you." This recognition is relevant not only during the recruiting phase but every day on the job. Make sure

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you enchant your employees by making it plain that they're wanted today, and they'll be wanted tomorrow. Suppose that you think that because we are in an era of high unemployment, you can scale back wooing and enchanting your employees. This is a mistake, not only on principle, but because truly great people are always in short supply. Woo them or lose them.

10. *Use money sparingly.* This doesn't mean that you shouldn't pay people fairly and well. However, money can be the enemy of enchantment. What is their true motivation? Are your employees working hard because of a paycheck or because they really believe in what your organization produces?

The great people will be capable of finding more meaningful work elsewhere, maybe even at higher pay. If money is your sole source of enchantment, you're in trouble. You can even think of your regular employees in the same light as your volunteers: they have non-financial needs that you must meet, and they can walk out the door at any time. Take care to consider how well they are managed on a consistent basis. Give them clear, helpful feedback. Provide proper recognition for their work and efforts. Make them feel appreciated.

The Elements of Enchantment

Embracing these principles and making a sincere, ongoing effort to enchant your employees has many happy side effects: you'll continually improve as a boss, and the virtuous circle completed by you and your employees will make the world a better place. And it is important to remember that there is more to enchantment than how it applies to your employees and your relationship with them. I've explored the idea in greater depth in my book *Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions*. To consistently enchant people and achieve your goals and what you want to accomplish in the world, it also takes:

- *Likability.* You're not going to be enchanted by someone you dislike.
- *Trustworthiness.* If you don't trust someone, you won't be enchanted.

Don't give yourself the benefit of the doubt so often.

- *Preparation.* You'll enchant people with great communication and well-developed attention to detail.
- *Ability to launch.* Get immersed in your cause, and get it out there. Become inspired by the actions of superstar enchanters like Virgin's Richard Branson and Apple's Steve Jobs.
- *Overcoming resistance.* How can you enchant the influencers? People won't automatically gravitate to your cause.
- *Endurance.* Enchantment should lead to a change that lasts, not a brief interaction. People need to internalize and believe in the values of your change efforts.
- *Effective use of push technology.* We are blessed with many technological tools that can further our cause and aid in creating enchantment. Using Twitter, presentations, e-mail, and the like gets your message into the world. They allow you to engage many people, fast and often.
- *Effective use of pull technology.* The flip side of push technology lets you enchant through use of websites, blogs, and social media sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
- *Enchanting your boss.* This takes a bit of a mind-shift. Reorient your efforts to making your boss successful, before yourself. If you've properly enchanted your boss, the rewards can be plentiful.

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enchantment.*

- *Resisting enchantment when necessary.* Lots of people can be enchanting, but their cause is not your cause. Sometimes you've got to avoid tempting situations, think long-term about your decisions, or even create a checklist of critical factors to consider before making a decision.

Finally, to enchant your employees and get an even better sense of what it means to be an enchanter, create your own personal Enchantment Hall of Fame. It's a great way to consider what enchants you, and how that can inspire you to create and further your cause. Here are some of my categories and choices: after reading them, compare and provide your own and you are well on the road to enchantment:

Car: 1965 Ford Mustang. City: Istanbul, Turkey. Airline: Virgin America. Book: *If You Want to Write*, by Brenda Ueland. Engineer: Steve Wozniak. Think about what these people, places, things, and organizations have in common. Think about the same for your own choices. Then go out and create something that can claim its place on these lists.



Guy Kawasaki is the author of "Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions" and the former chief evangelist of Apple.