BLOG

Building Lean Leadership

At Sensei Labs and our parent company Klick, we recognized that our first time people managers didn't have enough support. They were struggling to effectively have difficult conversations, wanted a blueprint for leading great one-on-ones, and at the end of the day, didn't feel like great people leaders.

Sensei Labs August 17, 2017

There's a lot to focus on when growing a small business. Typically, supporting people managers and helping them to develop leadership skills doesn't crack the top 20. Small teams, limited resources, and never having enough time can make traditional training and development a no-go for most startups. That doesn't mean our people managers don't need the support. In fact, it usually means that they need it MORE. Giving timely, direct feedback, delegating stretch goals to the right people at the right time, and coaching junior team members in their craft can be just what the startup doctor ordered.

At Sensei Labs and our parent company Klick, we recognized that our first time people managers didn't have enough support. They were struggling to effectively have difficult conversations, wanted a blueprint for leading great one-on-ones, and at the end of the day, didn't feel like great people leaders. We knew our job was to give them the foundation they needed but we didn't have the capacity to do it in a traditional way. How did we create a culture of learning? By making use of our best asset of course

— our people. Here are our tips and tricks that we learned along the way to provide lean and effective support to our new people leaders!

Use What You Already Have

Tapping into the champions you already have is a natural first step. We found the people leaders with great reputations for resolving conflicts, or the ones who do a fantastic job at onboarding their new hires. We asked them to lead AMA (ask me anything) sessions so other team members could learn about their approach (all while enjoying a free lunch!). These informal sessions created a space for us to start conversations about our leadership values as a team and helped us understand what we're all striving for.

A Team Who Reads Together

Book clubs can be an insightful and cost effective way to reinforce great leadership principles — and to learn about what's sticking with your team. Radical Candor is an idea that really spoke to me this year. The book dives into an amazingly simple approach to giving feedback. Buying a few office copies and hosting a 'fancy book club' complete with fancy cheese is a simple way to create opportunities for team building and learning. This gives people an informal setting to share their thoughts on the book, take notes on what resonated and what needs more clarification. This will help you learn what type of programming you should be focusing on first. If you have limited time and resources, you want to ensure your programs are what your people need the most. Being a fly on the wall during these discussions is your secret weapon.

The Way to a People Leaders' Heart

Lunch & Learns have also been a great way for our people to share information — no matter the topic. Some of our most popular events have been when our team members have created a session on a topic they are passionate about — 3D Printing, automated tests, any thing they want to share! In addition to opening up audiences to new ideas and approaches, it's a great excuse for our people to get out of their comfort zones and present to their colleagues. We hold a prep session to help the presenter structure and polish their content and then book a dry run where L&L hosts get real-time coaching on their presentation skills. The confidence our people build by hosting even one session has had a significant impact on conversations with clients and senior leaders.

It may seem cliche, but creating a 'culture of learning' shouldn't be taken lightly, even if you don't feel like you have the resources to dedicate to it. You want your team to build their skills and adopt a growth mindset and there's a lot that can be done with limited budgets and limited time. Coaching your people to speak to their own experiences and talents is a great start.

READ ONLINE

Read this article on our website

getconductor.com/resources/building-lean-leadership

GET STARTED

Talk to sales

Walk through an example with our team and see Conductor on your own programs.

Talk to Sales →

Scan to book