The Rising Star’s Guide to High Performance
How to Manage Yourself, Your Boss, and Sideways in Today’s High-Pressure Workplace

Summary

Bruce Tulgan has been studying the performance of young rising stars since 1993, when he was himself a young rising star at a Wall Street law firm. Ever since that first series of in-depth interviews that became his classic book Managing Generation X (1995), Bruce has focused on what separates high-performers from mediocre and low performers, especially in the early career stages of younger less experienced workers.

In Work This Way (1998) and Career Skills for the New Economy (2000), Bruce shared the lessons learned from leading hundreds of career seminars for young high-performers in dozens of organizations. RainmakerThinking, Inc. ® has ever since continued that research tracking the challenges and best practices of high-performers.

In It’s Okay to Manage Your Boss (2010) Bruce leverages fifteen years of research and zeroes in on the top three skill-sets that separate high-performers: self-management, managing relationships with authority figures (especially your boss), and managing others in lateral roles.

Now leveraging nearly two decades of RainmakerThinking, Inc. research, Bruce has created a program especially tailored for early career professionals in today’s high-pressure workplace. He helps them understand how they are perceived and how they can wildly exceed expectations. Rising stars—and would-be rising stars alike—will walk away from this program armed with insights, wisdom, and the most powerful tools and techniques of young superstars who are thriving in today’s workplace.

Details

Succeeding in today’s workplace is more challenging than ever before: Employees are working harder and facing increasing pressure to work longer, smarter, faster and better. There’s no more room for down time, waste, or inefficiency. Employees must routinely learn and utilize new technologies, processes, practices, skills and knowledge, all the while adjusting to ongoing organizational changes. At the same time, most employees receive less management guidance and support than they need; work in smaller teams with greater requirements; and have less time to rest, recuperate, and prepare.

In study after study, we find that the number one factor in productivity, quality, morale and retention is the relationship between leaders/
managers/supervisors and their direct reports. Most employees think of their immediate supervisors as the primary representatives of their employer’s missions, policies, systems, and practices. The supervisor is the point of contact, but much more than that, on a daily basis, the supervisor defines the work experience. Every day, the supervisor determines assignments, work conditions, recognition, and rewards. Employees also rely on their immediate supervisors more than any other individuals for meeting their basic needs and expectations and dealing with a whole range of day to day issues that arise at work. These include the assignment of tasks, resource planning, problem solving, training, scheduling, dispute resolution, guidance, coaching, recognition, promotions and other rewards. It is the immediate supervisor an employee turns to, whether he/she is seeking a special assignment, obtaining necessary resources, pursuing a special work location, avoiding a certain coworker, looking for a good performance evaluation, or hoping for a raise.

Of course, every leader/manager/supervisor is different. Every single one has his/her own style, strengths and weaknesses. But most managers provide much less guidance, direction, and support than their direct-reports need in order to succeed in today's high-pressure environment. Most employees spend way too much time on their own trying to figure out what is expected of them; trying to figure out what to do and how to do it; to avoid unnecessary pitfalls; to get their hands on necessary resources; to keep moving in the right direction.

How can employees learn to deal with these challenges every day?

Actionable Takeaways and Best Practices

In this program, Bruce helps non-management employees learn dozens of takeaways and best-practices to better manage themselves, manage their managers, and help their managers give them the guidance, direction and support they need in this step-by-step guide to becoming the employee every manager needs:

- Get in the habit of helping your manager manage you every day.
  - What do you do if your manager actually starts doing this?
  - How can you make the most of it?
  - What do you do if your manager doesn’t take the lead in conducting one-on-ones with you?
  - What do you do if your manager wants to meet more often than you think is necessary?
- Learn how to respond to good and not-so-good performance coaching. Best practices for helping your manager communicate clearly with you about both broad performance standards and concrete next steps.
- Take it one manager at a time. Best practices for identifying and syncing up with different management styles.
- Make accountability a real process. Best practices for anticipating obstacles to meeting or exceeding expectations and for working through or around them. How to keep your manager focused on reasonable expectations for concrete actions that you can control.
- Always know exactly what is expected of you. Best practices for helping your manager spell out expectations clearly every step of the way.
- Track your own performance every step of the way. Best practices to monitor, measure, document, and report to your manager on your own performance using time-logs and checklists.
- Solve small problems before they turn into big problems. Best practices for leading your own continuous improvement process by working with your manager to solve one small problem after another in your own productivity, quality, and behavior.
- Earn more of what you need and want. Best practices for linking your own performance to your own rewards. How to go the extra mile to earn the extra rewards you want/need.