

The 3 big management myths

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In the current labour crisis where staff attraction and retention are big issues in business, culture experts are warning Australian companies to avoid common management myths which could seriously jeopardise their organisation.

“For years, business has been able to get away with less than effective management practices”, said Quentin Jones, Australian Director of culture and leadership consultancy, Hudson Synergistics. “But now, with the current labour market volatility, it is vital that these management myths be dispelled if organisations are serious about retaining good staff.”

“Too many organisations in Australia are practicing outdated management strategies which create negative company cultures”, Jones warned. “For example, despite popular belief, competitive incentive programs encourage employees to work against each other, rather than with each other in the workplace.”

The three most problematic management approaches revolve around competition, perfectionism and power.

Myth	Examples	Facts
Competition amongst employees is healthy and increases productivity.	Staff incentive programs and in-company competitions.	Competition is a waste of energy, Employees need to work collaboratively toward a common goal which is of benefit to the whole organization, not just the individual.
Encouraging perfectionism improves quality of work.	Manager focuses on employee mistakes, rather than working to find solutions.	Criticism breeds lower self esteem and a feeling of being undervalued. Managers should focus on the positive and encourage employees to learn from their mistakes.
Exerting a position of power to get the most out of employees.	Managers talk “to”, rather than “with”, employees.	Power plays make employees feel inferior and undervalued. Managers should work in cooperation with employees as part of a team.

In this new employment landscape, managers need to use more constructive approaches such as:

- **Be supportive and encouraging:** Avoid dwelling on mistakes and directing blame. Instead, find solutions and allow people to innovate. Great managerial coaches always focus on positive rewards rather than negative punishment, creating high achievement cultures.
- **Be cooperative and show consideration:** As a manager, you must remain positive for employees and be understanding of their circumstances. Respect diversity and encourage teamwork.
- **Encourage employees to set personal goals:** All employees have different strengths and weaknesses, these should be supported and developed individually, rather than compared to others in the organisation. As comparisons create competition, managers should measure against standards which promote achievement.
- **Ensure that staff enjoy their work:** Managers should always be in tune with their staff, through techniques such as an “open door policy”. When people feel that their effort can and does make a difference, job satisfaction will increase.