



# Empowering Success

Navigating the Intricacies  
of Middle Management



# Agenda

## Key concepts:

1. Unpack the unique challenges and opportunities faced by middle managers (leaders of leaders)
2. Identify key leadership skills that middle managers need to succeed
3. Discuss the importance of emotional intelligence and decision-making skills in middle managers



# Teresa

## Case Study

Teresa is a middle manager at a high growth technology company.

Her job is a constant juggling act, as she wears multiple hats and must adapt with lightning speed.

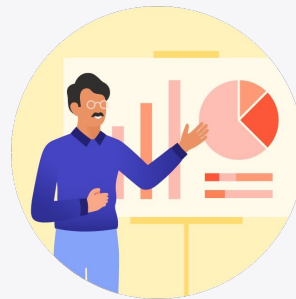
## Teresa's Challenges

- Mediating conflicts among team members
- Influencing decisions both up and down the corporate hierarchy
- Balancing diplomacy and strategy
- Have more breadth than her junior staff and more depth of knowledge than senior leaders



# Challenges for middle managers

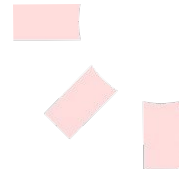
1. Wearing multiple hats and constant role switching
2. Influencing up, down, and across
3. Expected to know everything
4. Ongoing conflict and tension
5. Limited influence on big decisions yet expected to implement the strategies and changes
6. Most physically exhausted and emotionally distressed group



A study of 320,000 employees found that the **bottom 5% in terms of engagement and happiness** levels were mid-level managers with good performance ratings.\*

\*J.Zenger and J.Folkman, "Why Middle Managers Are So Unhappy," *Harvard Business Review*, hbr.org

# Soft Skill Development



80%

of companies say that **soft skills** are increasingly important to company success

# Research and trends

## Middle Management



### The implications

Middle managers are required to work with virtually all levels of an organization, from upper management to frontline workers.

Their effectiveness is dependent on:

- critical leadership skills, including interpersonal and communication skills
- the ability to inspire, motivate and mentor - if they are not equipped to develop these skills there will be a communication breakdown in the organization



### The problem

- **40%** of managers reporting that they received less than two hours of managerial training.



# Teresa

Case Study [Less than ideal approach]

## Solution

**She decides to approach the issue by leveraging internal resources and stretching her team thin.**



- Redistribute tasks among her already overloaded staff
- Cut corners wherever possible
- Sacrifice quality and thoroughness for speed

## Outcome

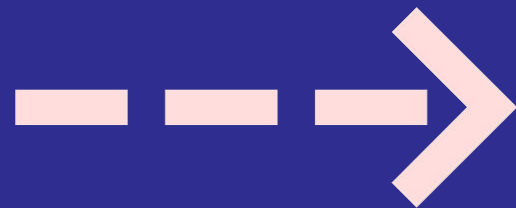
### Overlooked details and subpar work

- Physically and emotionally exhausted team with low morale
- Exposed limitations and need for a more comprehensive strategy
- Ultimately, project failure





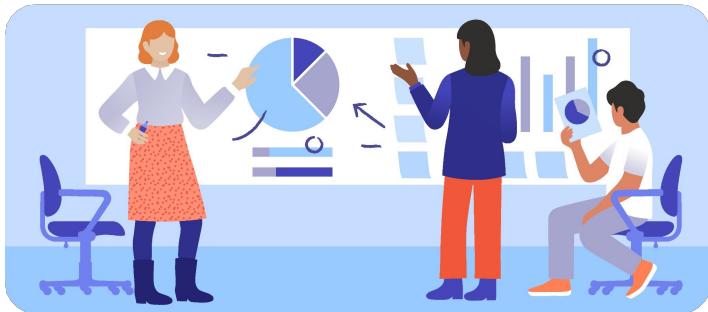
# How could we help Teresa find more success?





# A well-known method to grow talent

## Classroom training



- Gain new knowledge
- Peer learning
- Cost effective in group

## Potential problems...



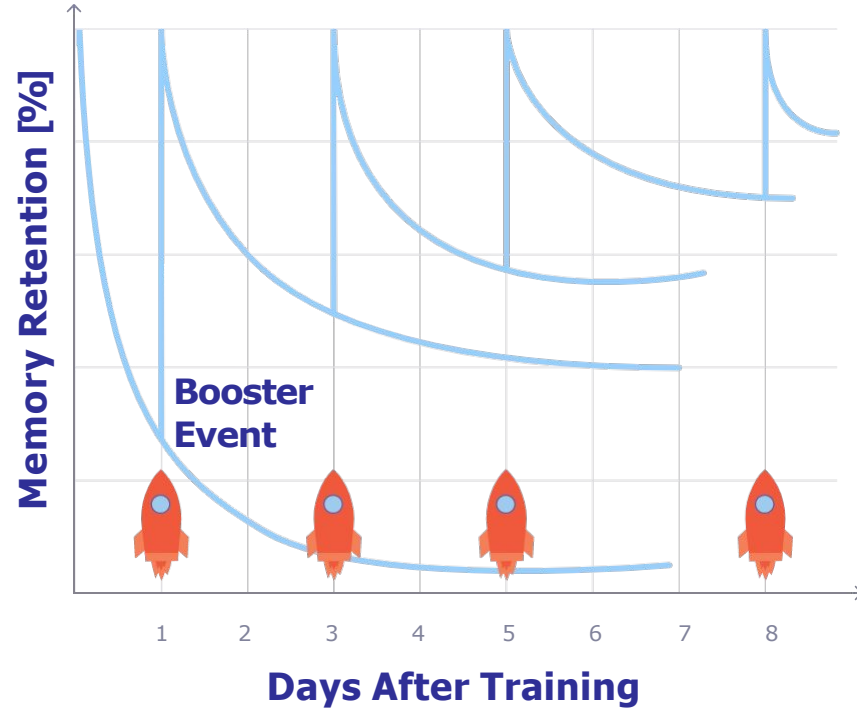
- Hard to find skilled trainers
- Gap between learning and tasks on the job
- There are pitfalls to a one size fits all method
- Low transfer of learning into daily practice

# Challenges to Learning Leadership Development

## The lack of learning transfer

# 75%

of leadership content is forgotten if not implemented within 6 days after the training



# The power of coaching in combination

## Learning modalities leaders want most

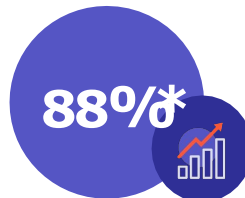


DDI, Global Leadership  
Forecast

## Effect of coaching on training/development



of managers who receive  
coaching AND training  
perform better than their  
peers in soft skills\*



see an increase in productivity  
when training is augmented  
with coaching when compared  
to training alone\*\*

\*Based on 360 Analysis, Ashridge Executive Education  
\*\*Lindbom

# Teresa

Case Study [Ideal approach]

## Solution

**Teresa reevaluated the situation with enhanced problem-solving and strategic thinking skills:**

- Acknowledged challenges with transparent and open conversation
- Emphasized quality over speed
- Fostered collaboration among the team
- Encouraged creativity and innovation
- Identified hidden talents within her team members
- Reshuffled responsibilities based on strengths and created workload balance
- Negotiated with other departments for additional resources and support



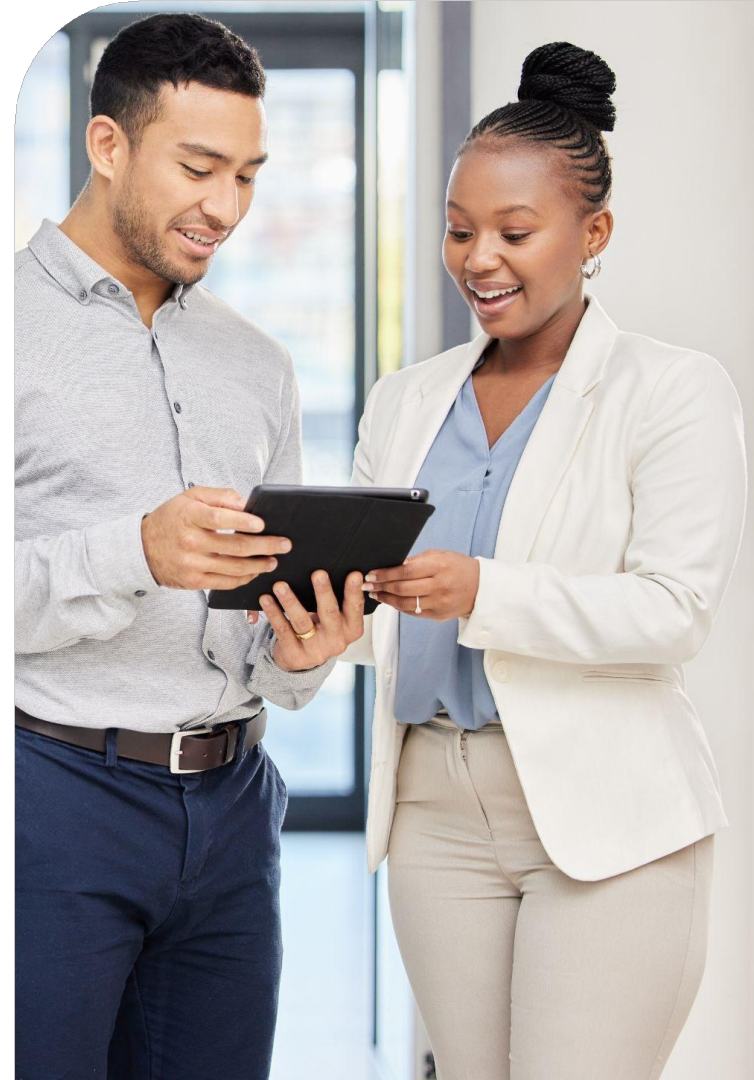
# Teresa

## Case Study

### Outcome

#### Positive team culture and a quality product

- Secured a modest budget extension
- Alleviated stress on team and improved cohesiveness
- Able to address the bugs and glitches in the software
- Commitment to quality over speed paid off, and the final product, though delayed, exceeded expectations.



# Key benefits



Coaching helps with **employee engagement**: Middle managers are usually **a key source of future senior executive talent pipeline** who should be **retained** as they are **valuable assets**.



Research shows that participation in coaching is associated with significantly **enhanced proactivity, core performance, goal-attainment, self-insight, motivation, positive affect, and autonomy**.



**80%** of people who receive coaching report **increased self-confidence**, and **over 70%** benefit from **improved work performance, relationships, and more effective communication skills**.

# Summary

- **Middle managers face unique challenges** that deserve unique solutions to help them succeed with the necessary skills
- **Leaders are hungry for solutions** that are tailored to their personal situations and needs in order to grow
- **Coaching and training together improve soft skill development**, productivity, self-confidence, and performance

**Training  
+  
Coaching  
=  
Powerful  
Results**



# Questions



# Thank you for joining us!

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