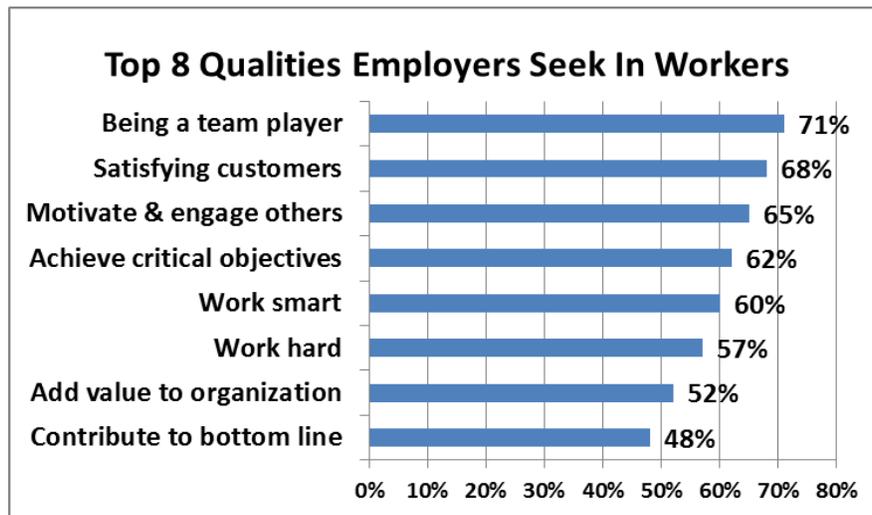




How Employers Can Develop The Top 8 Qualities They Want In Employees

In an earlier survey, OI Partners asked employers to identify the top qualities they want employees to possess. That survey, which received responses from a widely diverse group of organizations ranging from multinational corporations to small businesses, helped to uncover *The Top 8 Qualities Employers Desire In Workers*.



Since OI Partners released those results, we have received requests from clients, readers of articles about the survey and the media to detail specific ways employers can develop preferred competencies in workers.

We polled our 1,600 associates throughout OI Partners to uncover 37 methods employers can utilize. Their recommendations are presented in the following pages.

Also in the report are findings from other recent OI Partners surveys relating to developing and maintaining a motivated and productive workforce, including:

1. Who is receiving coaching from employers
2. Reasons why organizations are utilizing coaching
3. Consequences of having the wrong managers on board
4. Where future organizational leaders are coming from
5. Cost to replace managers & employees who do not work out

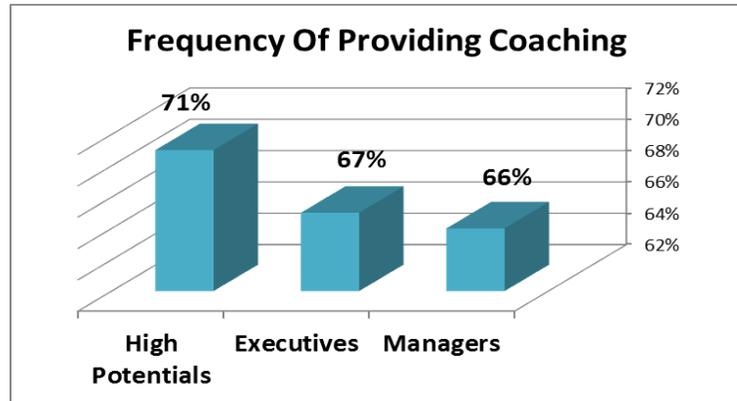
According to Patty Prosser, Chair of OI Partners: “The surest way to build the *Top 8 Qualities Employers Desire In Workers* is to establish a culture that supports them and then provide the resources to grow and develop them. Demonstrate throughout the organization that qualities such as teamwork, satisfying customers, and motivating others are valued. Include them in performance reviews and consideration for raises and promotions – and recognize and reward employees who exemplify them.

“In addition, offer managers behavioral interview training so they will have the skills to select people with the right characteristics that fit the organization's culture and are essential to its success,” Prosser added.

Quality #1: Being A Team Player (71%)

Being a team player was selected as the #1 quality employers most desire in workers today. Since organizations are operating with much leaner workforces, there is a more pressing need to accomplish goals and achieve objectives through others. Recommended strategies include:

- **Partner up workers:** Look for ways to partner employees on projects and concentrate on assembling compatible teams. Include ground rules on how they should work together, check in with them periodically throughout the assignment and facilitate a discussion on what's working and what's not. Coordinate a debriefing at the end of the project for overall feedback and lessons learned.
- **Grade teamwork:** Rate how well each employee works in teams as part of their performance reviews and consideration for raises and bonuses. Place greater importance on achieving team outcomes.
- **Communicate teamwork:** Management must communicate to employees what being part of a team means. Organize an Accountability Seminar to help them understand how to be effective team players.
- **Convey employees' value:** Give employees a sense that they are valued with non-monetary spot recognitions for a job well done. Also show workers how important they are through simple things such as remembering their names, birthdays, significant events in their lives and appreciations for service.
- **Get-togethers and town halls:** Informal get-togethers with employees over box lunches build team spirit. So do town hall meetings where topical events are discussed and there is a question and answer session with management.



Quality #2: Satisfy Customers/Clients (68%)

Satisfying customers/clients was selected as the second quality employers want in workers. Ways to improve employees' client relations skills include:

- **Shadowing:** Another employee can shadow each worker when they meet with customers or handle client relations. The observing employee reports on their experiences to the rest of the team.
- **Share best practices:** Regularly share stories of employees' outstanding customer service and distribute performance awards. Hold monthly or quarterly meetings to review success stories – acknowledge why they were successes and how they happened. Feature stories in company publications and newsletters.
- **Rate satisfaction:** Grade each employee's interaction with customers and how well they satisfied customers as part of performance reviews.
- **Celebrate triumphs:** Send out emails when successes happen – share them “in the moment” – and ask employees to write brief summaries so steps that were taken to be successful can be captured.
- **Workshops and webinars:** Conduct customer service workshops and webinars to help employees become better at listening to their customers and addressing their needs.

Quality #3: Motivate & Engage Others (65%)

Motivating and engaging others is rated as the #3 desired quality in employees. Among the ways employers can encourage workers to keep each other motivated and engaged in their jobs are:

- **Look beyond personal focus:** Discuss with employees what some opportunities are for motivating each other. Help them look beyond their personal focus and then encourage them to take a step or two to engage others in a project or assignment. Set a time frame for accomplishing this.
- **Exhibit examples:** Arrange meetings where employees bring examples of times they were motivated and/or engaged by others. Use these as springboards to get them to think about ways to motivate colleagues.
- **Seek employee input:** Provide opportunities for employees to offer solutions to problems and ask questions. Keep them informed about the state of the business including good and bad developments. Workers will become more engaged when they feel their bosses care about them.
- **Team assignments:** Assign employees to teams and include as an objective how well team members keep each other motivated and engaged in their jobs. Grade how each employee motivates and interacts with others as part of performance reviews.
- **Assessment and coaching:** Assess prospects on their abilities to motivate others before hiring them. Coach managers on strategies for motivating and developing employees.



Quality #4: Achieve Critical Objectives (62%)

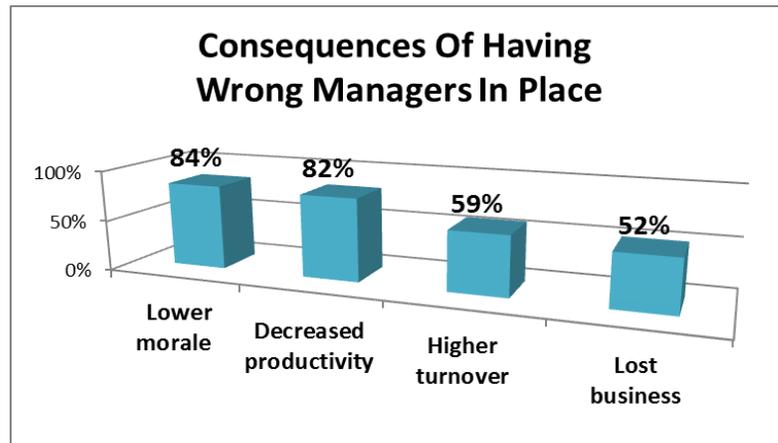
Achieving critical objectives is the #4 quality employers most want in their workers. Strategies for doing this include:

- **Clarify objectives:** Managers must be clear about individual objectives and follow up about them, and employees need to regularly check in to confirm what they are. The most successful organizations do this on a regular basis since organizational needs – and therefore individual objectives – can change quickly.
- **Reinforce expectations:** Conduct weekly roundtables to lay out the top objectives, provide clarity about their purpose, and reinforce them throughout the week via email.
- **Measure progress:** Establish short-term and long-term objectives for each employee, prioritize them and review progress on a quarterly basis.
- **Coaching:** Offer coaching to managers to enhance their ability to know how to be clear about what they expect from their direct reports.

Quality #5: Work Smart (60%)

Working smart is the #5 preferred characteristic. This includes being up to date on the latest technology, keeping skills and professional knowledge current, and continually searching for improvements in productivity, efficiency, and profitability. Suggested strategies include:

- **Differentiate:** Organize workshops to distinguish the difference between working hard and working smart. Discuss the circumstances when working smart is needed and working hard is the desired approach.
- **Prioritize:** Working smart means employees are more likely to reach their goals. They can start working smart by enlisting the help of others, taking care of the most important things first, and stop multi-tasking.
- **Confirm:** Do not automatically assume that managers are knowledgeable about what “smart” comprises. Sometimes they are the blockage and need coaching.
- **Training:** Train workers in problem solving techniques, setting priorities, communication and interpersonal skills. They must also be aware of the goals and objectives their employers are seeking to accomplish.
- **Contest:** Sponsor a contest to identify opportunities employees have to work smarter and award prizes for the best ones.



Quality #6: Work Hard (57%)

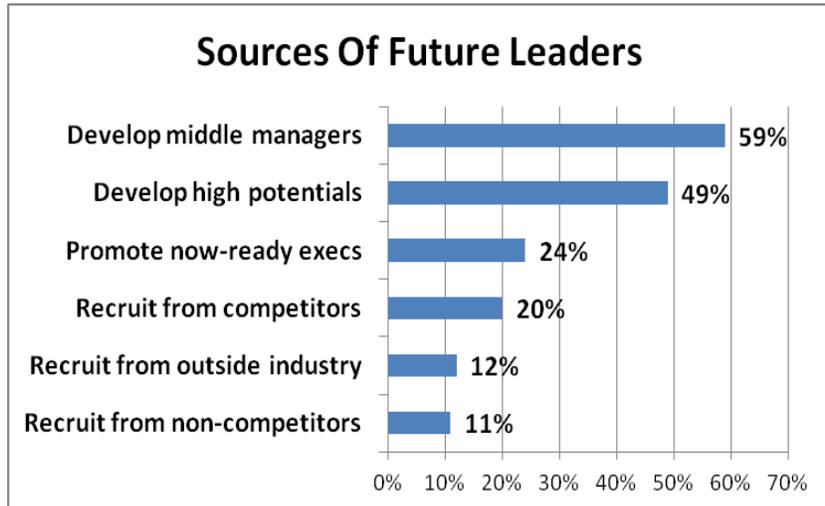
Working hard is the #6 desired attribute. Although companies generally prefer working smart to working hard, they still want to see that employees are dedicated to their jobs, put in an extra effort and volunteer to fill any gaps when necessary. Recommended approaches include:

- **‘Walk The Talk’:** Communicate that the organization will not tolerate poor and marginal performers and emphasize that each employee must “walk the talk.”
- **Take risks:** Working hard means different things to different people. Most people recognize working hard as "going the extra mile," which is often associated with being a team player. Today, working hard is about taking risks and doing things other would rather not do.
- **Certainty:** Be sure that reward systems are clear. Don’t give employees a raise or recognition simply because they put in extra hours on a project unless the outcome is worthy of being rewarded.
- **Big picture:** Present the “big picture” to employees so they can comprehend the state of the business and their expected roles in it. Ensure they understand when working harder is necessary in difficult economic times to avoid layoffs or to remain in business.
- **Rewards:** Reward hard work with non-monetary awards such as social events, tokens of thanks, handwritten notes, and personal emails.

Quality #7: Add Value (52%)

Adding value is the #7 quality employers prefer. Employees can add value in both monetary ways such as increase sales and decrease costs or in non-monetary ways such as make suggestions to improve operations. Recommended strategies for developing this skill are:

- **Multidimensional:** There are many different ways employees can add value and workers should continually be thinking about how. Imbed in the culture the importance of each employee and the value of their ideas and contributions.
- **Discovery:** Uncover each employee's strengths and how they can use their talents to make a difference utilizing their experience, backgrounds, and education. Encourage employees to leave their usual workplace comfort zones and help resolve problems that may be outside of their job descriptions.
- **Brainstorming:** Adopt an "open idea" policy that there are no bad ideas and no one will be criticized for recommending something that may not work out. Criticism is a sure way to shut down creative teamwork and an exchange of ideas. Schedule regular brainstorming sessions.
- **Recognition and reward:** Recognize employees for good suggestions and reward the best that contribute in a meaningful way. Actively seek input from employees at all levels and publicize their contributions and recognitions.



Quality #8: Contribute To Bottom Line (48%)

Contributing to the bottom line is the #8 quality employers want. Recommended strategies for building this skill are:

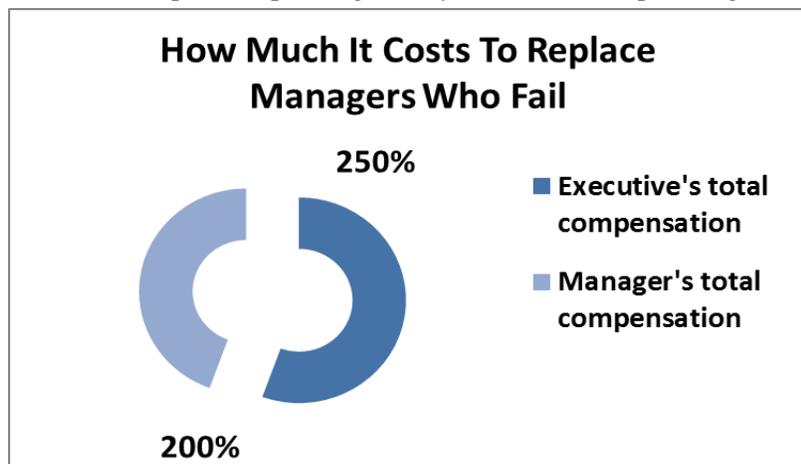
- **Big picture:** Many employers do not share the bottom line with employees and they remain unaware of what it is. Therefore, many employees feel they cannot impact it. By sharing some general financial information, they will give employees a better picture of what is going on.
- **Open communication:** Effective and honest communication strategies build trust and a feeling of belonging to a team. Employees need to be empowered and provided with information on specifically how they can help. Communicate at all levels and hire people who know how to do this.
- **Actionable:** Management must act on significant and relevant matters that are brought to their attention.
- **Small counts:** Employees need to be aware that any individual can improve the bottom line through even such small tasks as picking up a piece of paper in the parking lot so another person doesn't need to, make suggestions on purchasing items that can do the job for less money, and turning off the lights when leaving the work area at the end of the day.

Customer-Centric Solutions For The Employment Life Cycle

OI Partners offers customer-centric solutions that assist organizations in developing and maintaining a first-rate workforce throughout the employment life cycle:

PERFORMANCE COACHING: Our personalized coaching programs help your top people develop their leadership, interpersonal and team building skills not only in senior management, but at many organizational levels. This is critical to effecting change in the workforce and meeting strategic goals. The OI Partners coaching process leverages individual talent and team strengths and equips contributors to realize their long-term business priorities.

LEADERSHIP & TALENT DEVELOPMENT: Key executive development, team building and management development are critical elements in the growth of present and future talent. We partner with you to create customized effective workforce solutions. Leadership development goes beyond succession planning to include the formation of an organizational vision about how talent will be recruited, developed, managed and retained. Team building can improve the effectiveness of departments or work units by providing problem solving, conflict management and group dynamics skills. Management development programs address the needs of middle management, including supervisors, who must be alert and responsive to tactical, day-to-day challenges while also contributing to the strategic issues facing the business.



CAREER TRANSITION/OUTPLACEMENT: When employee separation is the only alternative, OI Partners has the knowledge, flexibility and resources to ensure a smooth transition. We can turn a highly stressful outplacement event into a new opportunity for employees and the organization, and we supply individualized, flexible solutions across the U.S. and around the world. Our career transition and outplacement programs help participants discover or redefine their career goals through our in-depth assessments of personality, skills, interests and abilities. We teach them how to take charge of their careers and future, and we provide the needed support to help them achieve a better work-life balance.

About OI Partners

[OI Partners](#) is a leading global executive coaching and leadership development and consulting firm that helps individuals find new careers and employers to improve the performance of their employees and organizations.

OI Partners specializes in [career transition programs](#), [executive coaching](#), [leadership development](#), and other [workforce solutions](#). The company was established in 1987 and is now located in 200 offices in 27 countries with close to 100 U.S. offices.

Please visit www.oipartners.net or call 800-232-5285.