

Career advice and reality

Mary-Frances Fox

Managers seldom know what motivates

Re: the articles surrounding the Oct. 30 salary survey (pp. 35-43): are you saying emulate dot-com working environments, have managers mentor employees and, if all that fails, get a good resume? There was a gap in your coverage-the conversations employers and employees can't have. "Career advice or choices and help with personal problems" from packaged-goods senior managers? In my experience as a workplace coach, busy, non-specialist management seldom has accurate insight into what motivates individuals or what is going on in their lives, so mentoring doesn't always pull the right levers.

This is where third-party coaching comes in to enable talented employees to retain that fire in the belly, or shift someone's current behavior to where the organization needs it to be. These one-on-one learning programs occur in confidence with individuals, through assessment tools and conversations about personality, interpersonal and/or career factors. Candid management feedback, positioned by a professional, is a valuable part of this. I see careers and working relationships turn around, and costly, rancorous terminations avoided with this process.

Work-life balance means more than family friendly policies. It's making sure the whole person, and their potential, comes to work.

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