

Stretch the Role: How Multipliers Get 2X from their Employees

We consistently find that Multipliers get twice the capability from their people that Diminishers do. And time after time, people tell us how. Multipliers not only got 100 percent from them, they got 120 percent or even more. Multipliers do get more than 100 percent of people's capability because people grow under the watch of a Multiplier. One way that Multipliers incite this growth is by asking people to stretch and do something they've never done before.

Consider these three individuals:

- Eleanor Schaffner Mosh was a champion who needed a bigger cause. As the marketing director for the small IT (information technology) practice inside Booz Allen Hamilton in 1988, she ran basic demand generation programs. But when Booz decided to turn over the reins of the IT practice to a different partner who was intent on transforming the function, she suddenly found herself with a really big job. Within months she was organizing a corporate-wide kickoff event to launch the vision for the IT practice. Next she convened a forum of the top CIOs in the world. When she found herself sitting next to the CEO of Booz Allen Hamilton during one of these meetings, she confidently explained to him why the IT industry and the IT practice inside their firm was going to change the world. She said, "I wasn't afraid of anything or anyone. We knew what we were doing and we felt like we could do anything."
- Mike Hagan was ready to take on the world; but he literally needed a passport. He worked as the director of sales operations for the billion-dollar U.S. sales division of a multinational company. His job was to make sure the sales force complied with company policy. When the president of the sales division wanted to globalize and grow the business, he tapped Mike to figure this out. One day Mike was the policy police, writing tickets for sales administration offenders. The next day he was architecting sales operations and policy for the entire global business. Initially Mike protested, citing his inexperience with global operations. He confessed that he didn't even have a current passport. His protests were ignored. The president told him that he was smart and would surely figure this out. And he did. The experience was grueling but invigorating. Mike reflected, "I was given an opportunity to do something I had never done before. In fact, no one had ever done it." The job was huge, but Mike grew into it as predicted.
- Polly Sumner was a powerhouse waiting to be unleashed. When a new president joined Oracle, he noticed this channel sales manager's strategic savvy and drive and asked her to assume a vice president role

running alliances and strategic partnerships. In time, Polly was right in the middle of a very messy high-stakes conflict. The management team could not agree on how quickly Oracle would release new versions of its database code to its applications partner (and also competitor) SAP. Polly escalated the issue to her new boss who responded with, “This is a complex issue, and probably beyond the scope of your role, but you should be the one to lead the resolution.” She went right to the people who could fix the problem. She found herself brokering a conversation between the billionaire founders and CEOs, Hasso Plattner of SAP and Larry Ellison of Oracle in a meeting held at Larry’s Japanese tea house. The issue was resolved to their mutual satisfaction and Polly was a superstar.

These three individuals all worked for the same boss, just in different settings. Who was the common denominator in this equation? It was Ray Lane, known for challenging his team and for exacting every ounce of their capability. When we asked people why they gave Ray so much, their answers revealed a consistent story:

He asked them to do jobs that were far bigger than they were. He could spot smarts in others and gave people a chance to stretch well beyond their current capabilities. He gave them ownership, not at the level of their current capability, but always one—and occasionally two—levels up. When the Investor stretches the role, they stretch the person in it. This bigger role creates a vacuum that must be filled.

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