



ITS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

## SO LONG, SUCKERS

I can get quite irritated with managers who are constantly moaning about their companies and their work. It doesn't matter what the company does – this isn't right, that could be better or the other just isn't enough. They complain about everything from morning to night, often punctuated by long sighs in between because it's not 'easy' as a manager. It never seems to occur to them that that's why they get the big bucks – they certainly don't complain when they get their management salaries and benefits. There is a certain amount of privilege associated with being a manager or leader and it's more than just the financial rewards and kudos. It's a wonderful and empowering position to have influence over many situations and people, so it makes me want to say to those who diss their organisations and dismiss the privilege 'move over and let someone take your place who wants to manage and lead and will do it better.'

During lunch last a week a businesses colleague confided in me that he was low in the enthusiasm stakes, at least on the business front. He drifts into work, mulls through the newspaper, sighs heavily before having to make a single call, stares aimlessly out of window, surfs the net endlessly and spends a great deal of his time making coffee appointments with others suffering from the same lack of enthusiasm, a clear case of passionless syndrome.

Now it's not likely that you have heard of the passionless syndrome, in fact, if you were to Google it you would find no reference to it at all - that's because I have just coined the phrase. The passionless syndrome refers to the several recognisable features, phenomena or characteristics that often combine together in managers to spell one thing - lethargy. To me the passionless syndrome can be identified in managers possessing feelings of weariness, diminished energy, and listlessness – what the French call ennui or if you'll pardon the French, you might call lazy sods. More so I use this to refer to those managers who have lost interest themselves and as a result allow their disinterest and negativity to affect those around them. You see with the privilege of management comes also the responsibility.

Executive Recruitment | Strategic Planning | Organisational Transformation | HR Outsourcing  
Management Assessment and Development | Training and Executive Coaching | Psychometric Testing

**HRMC**  
Management Consultants

[www.hrmc.co.bw](http://www.hrmc.co.bw)

Granted there are too many managers who have never had passion ever but my feeling is that it should be a prerequisite competency for any leadership role. How can you get the best out of staff if you don't believe fervently in what you or they are doing? When I use the word passion I don't mean some elusive quality that is as rare as an elephant with amnesia. I am referring to the enthusiasm, energy, commitment and delight without which a leader can't lead, though sadly, sometimes, the eager leader starts his leadership role with passion but then circumstances and the environment eventually beat it out of him or her.

There are a dozen situations that sap the passions out of managers like a tick sucks out blood. When the need for innovation has subsided in an organisation and been replaced with the need for consistency and dependability, managers may find themselves out of step with the organisation's agenda, bored or worthless. Similarly, when 'credentials have outstripped work demands' i.e. the company continues to bring in highly educated and/or experienced personnel, but there is not enough high-level work to go around the passion can be killed. 'Too much bench strength' is another passion killer - in "feast or famine", companies stockpile talent for the boom times but have no plans for how to utilise and motivate it in the interim. And then, the biggest contributor to passionless syndrome, - 'meeting-itis' - constant rounds of meeting for the sake of meetings, nothing more than get-togethers with fixed minimum times and unclear agendas where what is shared are nitpicking, displays of 'intelligence' (apparently), self praise, ignorance but never passion.

It's no secret that as managers our mood, behaviours and actions play an enormous role in determining the mood of the organisation and impact on the motivation of those reporting to them. Managers who have passionless syndrome suck the positive out of you - another syndrome so common that it cried out for a name so I've called its sufferers mood-hoovers. As my friend at lunch confided "I know when I get to work the staff should be watching out the window and titter with excitement at the sight of me coming in" (ok he is a bit of a dreamer) - but in fact it appears they hardly notice his arrival so uneventful is his presence. "It doesn't all slump when I leave" he confided "it does that when I arrive." Someone or something has hovered up his mood and in turn he vacuums up every last sign of life from his staff.

What we need are blowers, not suckers - managers who give rather than take, who inspire you to give your best everyday, day in, day out, during good times and bad. Call it leading by passion call it what you will but it's a style that breathes life into you as opposed to sucking you dry. It leaves you inspired,, like having mouth-to-mouth resuscitation daily just by having someone above you talking, listening, encouraging, enthusing, articulating the vision, bringing good humour and fun into the work place along with stimulation and purpose. Surely if you are a manager you must realise that's part of your responsibility? That even if you can't do it yourself at least you can create the sort of environment where others can infect others with passion - enthusiasm is catching and it's the surefire antidote to an outbreak of passionless syndrome and a good chance of picking something up nasty from those mood-hoover carriers.

Managing Director  
HRMC  
Phone: 395 1640  
[www.hrmc.co.bw](http://www.hrmc.co.bw)

