

How to Maintain Gifted Staff Who Do Not Easily Fit into Organisational Structures

(or How to keep “Mavericks” on your team)

Many bureaucracies exclude “mavericks” who don’t fit into their staff rules and regulations. Yet often these “mavericks” are those who give life and taste to the organisation. It takes deliberate discipline and a certain perspective to manage to keep them on staff and help their colleagues accept them.

Ramez Atallah was born in Cairo, Egypt and emigrated with his family to Canada when he was sixteen. He came to know the Lord through a local church in Montreal and was discipled as a student through the Inter-Varsity group at McGill University. From 1972 to 1980 he developed and directed the ministry of the Groupes Bibliques Universitaires du Quebec. In 1980 along with his wife and two children he returned to Egypt, where he became the IFES Regional Secretary for the Middle East. He attended the first Lausanne Congress and was appointed as a youth representative to the Lausanne Committee in 1975. He served on the Committee from 1974 to 1994. In 2006 he rejoined Lausanne as Program Chairman for Lausanne III Cape Town Congress. After the Congress, he was appointed as one of the Deputy Chairs of the Lausanne Movement until 2015. Since 1990 he has been the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt, the position he still holds until now.

Why they are so important

- ❖ They think outside the box
- ❖ They therefore think creatively
- ❖ They add “spark” “color” to the organisation
- ❖ They push the boundaries
- ❖ They look at the situation from a “different” perspective
- ❖ They believe everything is “possible,” do not get daunted by people telling them “no,” just keep looking for other ways to do things.
- ❖ Extremely persistent and insistent
- ❖ Determined to succeed

Some examples of these folks:

DW – evangelizing girls on dancefloor
SD – natural student evangelist but clueless otherwise
SEB – sales wiz
NM – running after the carrot (him & SEB purchasing building)
WF – fundraising pioneer
YN – the failed manager to international speaker
HN – from sales failed sales manager to brilliant PR
Ambassadors
Businessmen (gets people to attend meetings)
Church leaders
Government officials
Visit of Pope Francis

Why they are so difficult to keep employed

- ❖ Don’t keep office hours

- ❖ Often late to meetings
- ❖ Often distracted by personal matters
- ❖ Often don't feel they have a boss
- ❖ Consider themselves "free" (working for God) so expect all their excuses to be accepted.
- ❖ Often overspend budgets
- ❖ Can't easily be asked to do things they don't like to do
- ❖ Resent being asked to write reports
- ❖ Very sensitive to "rebuke," easily hurt and offended
- ❖ They are, therefore, very hard to manage and often take a disproportionate time to manage as compared to other staff.
- ❖ Frustrate disciplined colleagues who expect all the staff to be treated alike
- ❖ Create confusion by "breaking rules" without consequences others would incur.

The leader's role in protecting and guiding "mavericks"

- ❖ The main reason mavericks survive is that they are protected by the leader who hired them.
- ❖ They tend to work because they respect/admire their leader rather than because they are under his/her authority.
- ❖ It is the leader's responsibility to coach, encourage, advocate for, and guide mavericks.
- ❖ The hardest thing for a leader is to know when a maverick he/she admires is not respecting the values of the organisation. There are limits to everything and the leader must know when to put his/her foot down when the maverick has gone too far.
- ❖ The leader must also know when to fire a maverick.

Leadership change problem for "mavericks"

- ❖ When a new leader takes over - who does not appreciate the great contribution of these "mavericks" - and wants to "standardize" the organisation to avoid headaches and complaints, they are very likely to want to fire the "mavericks." Thus, when leadership change takes place it is important for new leaders to be helped to understand the value of each of the mavericks in the organisation.

Suggested Readings:

Is The Maverick At Your Company A Genius Or A Jerk?

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3001535/maverick-your-company-genius-or-jerk>

Managing the Maverick employee

<http://work911.com/articles/maverick.htm>

6 Principles for Managing Mavericks by Welford Orrock

<http://thev3movement.org/2015/09/6-principles-for-managing-mavericks/>