

Development for managers and sales staff

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ABSTRACT

Employees, managers, and companies find themselves always looking for good, developed talent that can move their business forward. Unfortunately, this tends to lend themselves to pass over internal candidates and look externally for top tier talent. While this does work sometimes, it does not move a business forward quickly and puts the company susceptible to losing their own good talent. This is where employee development plans are advantageous for not only companies, but employees as well. Development plans are customizable, and adaptable based on positions, personnel, personalities, and companies. However, the need for them in every dealership does not change.

While each employee has different motivation factors, and each company has different values, guiding principles, and mission statements, the need to grow and move the business forward while developing yourself as an employee and keeping your team engaged and motivated as a manager is apparent. Development plans are a framework and a tool to challenge employees and teams, while opening a structured conversation so both parties can understand where they are currently and what capabilities they need to contribute effectively to where the business is headed. Whether you are a sales professional, service manager, or parts manager within a dealership, you must have a certain set of baseline and competency skills to be successful. This thesis outlines what a development plan is, the importance of a development plan, and showcases what can be achieved when a correct development plan is implemented across a company.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Importance of Employee Development Plans

How dealerships develop and coach employees in the organization in a timely and effective manner is something that needs established in agriculture dealerships. Talent outside of the organizations is hard to bring in and the need to develop internally is the most effective way. An employee development plan is a framework set by a company's vision, guiding principles, and values to coach, develop, and move the business forward. It provides the opportunity for the manager and employee to have a structured conversation surrounding the employee's performance based on expectations set by senior leadership while looking into the future and creating goals and action plans to achieve those goals. Each department within an agricultural equipment dealership will have varying levels of experience, job expectations, and leadership styles. The need for alignment across the company, with two-way accountability is important to be successful. Also, employees enjoy feedback and want to grow within their respective roles. Development plans are needed to keep these employees engaged and lessen turnover for the business. Good talent is hard to find, and to be able to drive a business forward, a company must develop its own people. If they do not, they will not keep up with competition and could also lose good people. Also, without clearly defined employee development plans, the employee or manager can stray from a common goal, misinterpret information or conversations, or become stagnant.

Each department, no matter the personnel, has fundamental objectives that need to be achieved. This can range from productivity and efficiency to workload management in the service departments and proactively selling parts, inventory management, and

personnel expense management in the parts department. Development plans allow managers to keep on track and hold employees to a set of standards and goals. In an ever-changing world of competition, new business, and fewer customers, it is imperative that each service and parts department, and salespeople are developing and finding new ways to not only take care of customers but to grow the business. This thesis outlines the importance of development plans, how they are implemented, and the highlights of what can be achieved when implemented.

1.2 Parts Managers

Parts Managers and Parts Departments take certain responsibilities and characteristics to run. The Parts Manager needs to have a set of skills that can effectively take care of customers and be people oriented while being extremely detail oriented and driven. While parts managers do not typically have a big team, they are usually the first people customers meet when walking in the building. Customer-facing displays and having a retail-oriented mindset help influence and drive customer sales in and out of the location. As parts departments change, the manager needs to be willing to adapt, change, and be proactive with customers. A development plan for a parts manager allows the regional and store manager to help guide the department in the direction needed and build momentum for the success of the dealership.

1.3 Service Managers

Service Managers will typically have the biggest teams to manage in the service department. The set of skills needed to be a productive service manager includes customer service, time management, people oriented, scheduling, and conflict resolution. Unfortunately, the service manager more times than not gets the call or the visit from a customer that has an equipment broken down or having trouble. This can lead to high

emotions and lots of tension. The service manager, based on the situations and the customer, will have to take different approaches to deescalate the situation and help provide a solution to the customer. Development plans play a big role in helping coach the manager in all aspects of the department from different technicians, customers, and the vast amount of machinery they will work on throughout the year to dealing with unhappy and distraught customers.

1.4 Salespeople

Successful sales professionals possess a set of skills that creates deep, long-lasting relationships with producers to ensure loyal long-term business. Sales professionals must be extremely driven, forward-facing, time management experts, and creative. With the volatile agricultural economy and the instability of grain markets, salespeople must build relationships quickly and effectively to build trust and allow for creativity. Established salespeople can become comfortable with their book of business or new salespeople can struggle to get started and learn process, people, financing, and the equipment. Development plans can help a salesperson, whether they are new hires or an experienced person, stay focused, improving the overall success of the dealership.

1.5 Problem Statement

Leadership can come in a variety of ways, from different leadership styles to different needs in the company or department, to varying levels of experience. Regardless of the style and nature of leadership of any individual, the need to achieve company goals and objectives is a constant. When employees and managers are not on the same page, and the expectations are not clear and concise, turmoil within the dealership can be created and unnecessary stress, and turnover can happen. Proactive personnel management can address these issues. The question then is how do dealerships develop talent and coach employees

in the organization in a timely and effective manner while maintaining a level of consistency and growth with accountability?

1.6 Research Objectives

This thesis addresses the following objectives:

- Identify the foundation of development plans for parts managers, service managers, and sales professionals in agricultural equipment dealerships;
- Determine the value of considering people's personalities in building and implementing development plans; and,
- Assessing the value and impact of creating and implementing development plans.

These objectives are accomplished through the consideration of the current literature on development plans, a general discussion of creating and implementing these plans, and a case study of practice.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will outline the opportunities and enhance the dealerships' motivation to introduce employee development plans to help achieve dealership expectations of company and employee performance. The review discusses the challenges presented with development plans and the ability to overcome challenges after hiring, employee performance, and different personality types. The economic benefits to the dealership when they make the financial investment to give continuous feedback and coaching to their teams is also covered. Limitations to this research will include the lack of dealerships that publish information on the creation and implementation of development plans for their personnel. This review will draw literature from various sectors across the industry to develop a need to become more engaged with their people and coach daily while creating a framework to manage expectations.

2.1 Purpose of Development Plans

A development plan is a collaborative and actionable plan outlined according to position, employee, and company values. It is a collaboration between the manager and the employee to grow and develop not only the business but the employee and their goals. Development plans create a framework for the company and employee to understand expectations, what it takes to move forward, and allow the company and employee to grow. It also allows the manager to communicate with two-way accountability to ensure time is being invested in development for their people and the goals and the vision of the company.

Development plans are important to not only employee retention and engagement, but also helps employees stay up to date with industry trends while sharpening skills (Parsons 2022). Employees and companies want the best performance out of themselves

and their teams but sometimes can get distracted with the daily routine of business that is time demanding. Development plans allow employees and their managers to boost their confidence and credibility (Parsons 2022). This kind of behavior from employees and managers keeps everyone engaged, the teams moving forward, and improves the overall business.

2.2 Different Types of Development Plans

Employee development plans can change for each position, type of plan, and experience. Examples of these would be Side by side, professional, skill based, career, and performance (Trisca 2025). Each one has a separate benefit to the employee and the company. Side by side development plans do a great job making the employee and their manager equally responsible for planning and execution (Trisca 2025). A side by side plan will allow the manager to complete their opinion and the employee to create theirs. Then, when they sit down, they can review and discuss each other's answers. Sometimes the answers can differ based on each person's opinion on where the employee currently is at versus the overall vision. When they are different, positive or negatively, this leads to a great coaching opportunity. That can be in the form of communicating the vision and helping the employee understand the current situation or giving the employee praise for doing a great job and building confidence.

Skill based development plans are different in the sense that the manager is setting a ranking on the employee's skills. Managers will include a desired state therefore setting their expectations and outlines what they need to do to be promoted within the company (Trisca 2025). The tendency is for this method to be manager centric. It can also have the tendency to set a new baseline for expectations. Each situation and opportunity are different based on the employee and their personality. Some employees struggle with opening up

and therefore lend a hand to more coaching and communicating from the manager. This would be an example of when this development plan is needed.

A career development plan is when the employee and manager look at where the employee is today, where they want to be in one, two, or five years and what steps they need to take to ensure they develop in the direction to obtain their goals. These are needed but tend to be used on an annual or semi-annual basis. This employee development plan can span over multiple years (Trisca 2025). Career development plans put more pressure on the manager to outline the big picture and ensure the employee gets external training through courses and degrees if needed, and internal training through mentorship. Similar to skill-based performance plans, performance plans will focus more on the past and what has gone right or wrong. It will allow the employee and the reviewer to reflect and identify ways to improve (Trisca 2025). Comments can be inputted to reference later. Lastly, a professional development plan is much different as the employee owns the entirety of the work. The employee will search for members to shadow, search for their own learning, and create a more collaborative task for the employee and manager (Trisca 2025). When a company has a highly driven individual that wants to grow and develop, a professional development plan can be a great option.

Each development plan that a company will adopt will look a little different. Whether that is career, employee, or skill focused, or weather that is side by side with the employee to encourage a more collaborative environment for the employee; they all have a place. When a company sets their guiding principles, mission statements, and values, and establishes a baseline for where they are at today and the vision going forward, they can tailor a plan to best benefit the needs of the employees and the company. Adapting and

changing will always be a constant, so what works this year might not work next, and this is why we see multiple variations of plans to help drive success as it is adapted annually to meet the changes in the business.

2.3 Challenges and Reasons Why They Fail

Time management and accountability can explain the outcome of development employee plans. The number one reason why development plans fail is because they are not driven by the individual (Folkman 2016). When managers are trying to coach and develop their teams and people, if the people are not willing to change, or develop, then the plans will ultimately fail. Only management and a leadership that is committed to employee development can take existing talent to the next level by creating a company culture where people flourish (Hassell n.d.). When you create an environment that strives for employee development, employees are more likely to be engaged, stay around, and perform at higher levels (Hassell n.d.).

Accountability is a two-way street and must be in place to create an environment for the employee and the manager to be able to communicate openly. If the employee cannot accept feedback or the manager doesn't allow for two-way communication, both sides will get demotivated and disengaged causing the development plan to fail.

Accountability also comes in the form of timelines. Without structured timelines and reoccurring meetings, the development plan can and will get pushed aside (Trisca 2025). Thus, everyone involved needs to stay engaged, work together, and move themselves and each other forward.

2.4 Consideration of Personality Types

Personality types are looked at in a variety of ways, from the Clifton Strengths, DISC, or the Meyers-Briggs. For the sake of this study, DISC profiles give the most

simplistic view to each position and why. DISC as shown in figure 2.1 is defined by **D**ominance, **I**nfluence, **C**onscientious, and **S**teadiness (Herrity 2025). DISC is used when looking for talent to coach and develop, inside and outside of the organization. It is also used to help create a plan for the positions as it will help shape the vision the company sets. For example, if the salesperson is a DI, the vision would also align with proactive customer visits. Aside from the creation of the development plans, it also helps the manager find different ways to communicate with employees to motivate based on the plan. While each personality has its own set of strengths and weaknesses, each tailor to the dealership in different ways.

The DISC profile framework outlines four quadrants as shown in figure 2.1, but people can be a combination of two or more of the quadrants. This means that it is easier for the employee to adapt their personality with other another personality type. For example, if someone is an SC personality, their natural state is S but relates very closely to C. This makes them highly adaptable between S and C. Also, just because you have a different personality type than what the position typically would see does not mean you cannot be successful in that position. It shows that you may have to put more effort in than what is natural for you.

For example, a service manager needs to be detail oriented, outgoing, relationship oriented, and accept confrontation. In the DISC profile method, to be the most successful, they would need to be an ID or Influence and Dominance combination. These individuals thrive off team success rather than job promotions (Herrity 2025). This personality type lends a hand to being engaged with their team, enjoy talking to customers, and developing deep relationships with their employees.

A parts manager, however, can be a little different. They need to be more detail oriented, customer focused, and organized. An IS or Influence and Steadiness combination would fit naturally to this role. People with this personality type are intent listeners, empathetic, and put a high value on peace (Herrity 2025). When a parts manager can listen with empathy and be creative to find a solution for a customer, they tend to be successful.

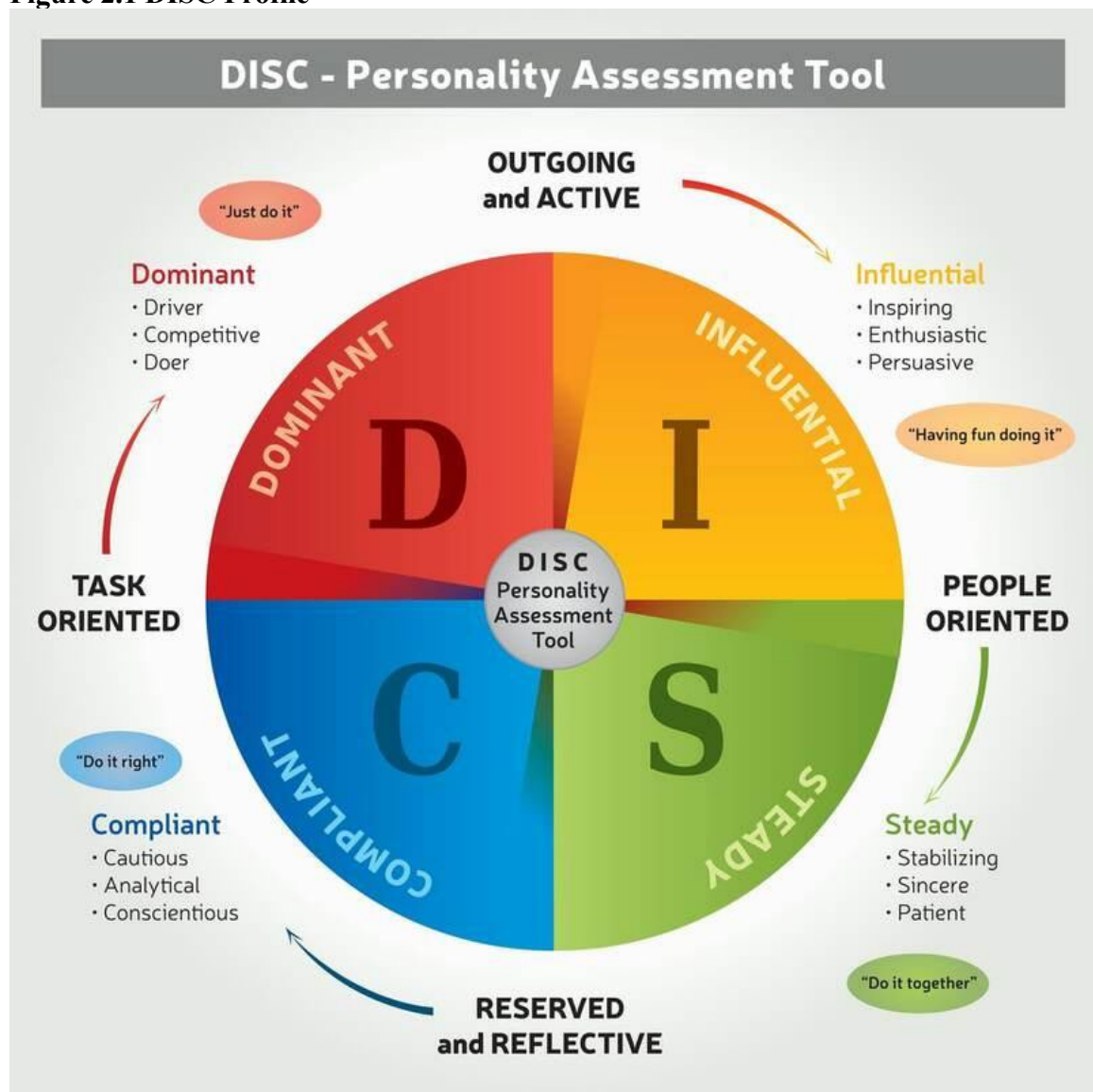
Sales professionals can be different all together as they need to be extremely outgoing, sociable, creative, and assertive. The personality type that fits the best with this career would be DI or Dominance and Influence combination. People with this personality work as action oriented, enthusiastic, and bring high levels of creativity and innovation (Herrity 2025). While you do not have to possess extreme levels of outgoingness, one could become burnt out or fatigued as a lot of their effort is exerted doing their normal job activities.

Each position is different within a dealership and how they communicate and work together can make all the difference. This framework inside of a development plan is key to being able to communicate effectively. Company values and vision are how the framework is established for each position. Without it, the ability to be consistent and have an effective baseline across the company is difficult. If one is reserved and is only task oriented and tries to communicate that way with a parts manager who is people oriented and empathetic, they will both struggle to grow and develop. One must understand themselves before they can understand someone else to ensure they are communicating effectively and efficiently.

While the DISC profile framework gives us a great way to understand each other's personality type, it is not set in stone to what each person must have to be successful. A person who does not exactly align with the typical mold can still be successful but could

take more energy to do so. For example, a successful salesperson is typically a DI personality, but a C or an S can still be a successful salesperson. The person will have to go against their natural tendencies of being reserved or cautious and still be outgoing with customers. This will just take more energy for the person and the tendency is to not be their “natural” self. However, there are customers that react better to a more cautious person or more detailed person. While each position has mold’s that tend to be the highest rate of success, each person must be adaptable based on their audience, and this is where self-awareness becomes important.

Figure 2.1 DISC Profile



(Career Fitter, 2025)

CHAPTER III: FOUNDATION

3.1 Creating Employee Development Plans

In creating an employee development plan, a goal is to create unity and symmetry across the entire company. This effort allows everyone to be held to the same standard. While these development plans can take months to create for each position, they are also changed and adapted based on market conditions, employees, and the manager. The baseline however should not waiver as it aligns with company values, vision, and mission statement. Once these plans are created, they should be piloted with a few positions and individuals. Then the company can expand the effort into multiple positions and create a standard across the company that development plans are crucial for success.

As an example, a service manager development plan is presented in Figure 3.1. This plan is a side-by-side plan to which the manager and the employee would fill it out separately and then sit down together to discuss the two evaluations. The example highlights three major categories as I, II, and III, then breaks down three statements that support the overall category. The manager and the employee will rank the employee on a scale of 1-5 based on how well the employee is doing the said statement. A one being not meeting expectations and a five meaning the employee exceeds expectations. Once the ranking has been established, the employee and manager can put comments in to justify their ranking. This encourages the two of them to discuss and understand both points of views.

Figure 3.1 Development Plan Example

Service Manager	
I	Culture and work environment- Create a team atmosphere aligning to the company processes and develop a high performing team. Provide long term vision.
I-1	Lead communication to the service department on workload, goals, Pips, Etc.
I-2	Coach and develop the service staff to get everyone on the same level and same page. Be positive about changes and what the future holds.
I-3	Proactive recruitment- be part of the community, go to local events, represent the company and promote job opportunities. (we must develop our youth now)
II	Performance & Profitability- Grow customer labor sales to drive revenue growth, to support long-term growth and sustainability.
II-1	Mange WIP- a) Have 2+ weeks of work for you technicians (productivity time) b) monitor labor punches (shouldn't have any work orders that haven't been clocked onto for more than 30 days) c) monitor estimate vs actual time to catch tickets before techs are buried in them (efficiency) d) A/R- proactively make payment arrangements to collect revenue (anything over 30 days is past due)
II-2	Proactive calling to promote inspection and service deals.
III-3	Proper work order creation- following work process so that when work orders get completed, they go through invoicing. a) Have meetings to discuss issues that hold up invoicing b) Ask for help or training
III	Customer Satisfaction- Provide industry leading customer support by creating trusting relationships with the customer base.
III-1	Embrace and understand the programs and technologies you are selling
III-2	Proactive communication with customers during progress of jobs, show urgency to get them back up and going
III-3	Proactively use quoting tools to give customers up front pricing and no surprises at the end. (You have the ability to make deals to get a job)

3.2 Implementation of Development Plans

Understanding employees, how they are motivated, and their long-term goals allows managers to challenge them to grow and develop. Then begin visiting with the employee about the development plan. While the company has communicated a vision to

be implemented, the manager must frame it in a way to motivate their people. Development plans start with the manager outlining the need for a framework that each other can work through to move the employee and company forward. Once established, the manager must then understand the employee's motivation factors to keep the employee engaged and motivated. To implement a development plan successfully, these steps need to be taken to ensure long-term engagement.

- Step one: Understand the employee and managers' DISC profiles to be able to more effectively communicate with each other. Understanding DISC profiles will help bring everyone together to capitalize on each person's strengths while overcoming weaknesses. To be able to effectively communicate and understand how each person is motivated, the manager must know the DISC profile of their employees.
- Step two: Identify where the employee is currently performance wise and why the employee needs to change and develop. The manager must be able to truthfully evaluate where the business is and how the employee is influencing that. The manager will then be able to show the need through a designed development plan.
- Step three: Select the style of a development plan that best fits the development type needed. This can be different for each position, current challenge, and employee, but selecting the correct one will allow for shown growth. Once the manager has identified how the employee is motivated and their strengths and weaknesses, the plan is much easier to select and develop.
- Step four: Communicate the vision and where the business/employee is currently to the employee. This step identifies the need for the employee and motivates the individual to change and develop towards the vision of the company. This is the

first formal sit down with the employee and the development plan both the manager and the employee will be working through.

- Step five: Set reoccurring meeting times to coach and hold each other accountable.

During these meetings, coach, develop, show grow, and be realistic on the challenges the employee is facing and give feedback on how to grow. Reoccurring meeting times and accountability is how both the manager and employee stay engaged in the development plan to ensure long term success of the employee and the business.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

4.1 The Beginning

The empirical evidence for this research is trained observations of a company that implemented development plans. Due to confidentiality, the company in focus is referred to as Company A. The creation of development plans originated from the guiding principles of the company, outside recommendations, and a group of leaders that set the baseline for each position. Prior to the development plans, a store for Company A had experienced limited leadership within the building for several years. The annual engagement survey completed by the employees determined their level of engagement collected information on their happiness and offered them the opportunity to provide feedback on various issues to management at the local and corporate level. For the year prior to a leadership change, the store ranked last in the company with a stunning 35% engagement score. It was apparent that a change needed to be made to help employee morale, turnover, and advancement within the location.

4.2 Development Plan Creation and Implementation

Once the management changed in the location, there was an immediate need for leadership, discipline, and accountability. Three months into the change in leadership, Company A implemented development plans for highly performing people. This included the parts manager, service manager, and sales staff (they did not have a sales manager). To successfully implement these plans, identifying the need for employees to change and develop and communicating those needs with the employee was important. This took multiple conversations of where the company was at currently, identifying the good and the bad, communicating the vision so employees could see where the company was headed,

and then explaining the need for discipline to stay focused on the development plan as the team moved in and out of the busy season and how this can easily get pushed back.

The first meeting between the employee and the manager was a collaborative effort to fill out the development plan. The manager had the employee fill their side of it out first with comments and then reviewed that input. The manager also filled it out and allowed the employee to review their assessment. By both sides having completed the development plan assessment, they were able to understand each other's rankings and begin moving them together. This showed the differences between the employee and the manager based on their respective opinions, interpretations of the development plan items, and the assessment of how each person thought the employee was doing. Some of the conversations became controversial, which led to the opportunity to coach the employee. At the same time, the employee had an opportunity to discuss where their viewpoints of their own performance were and how they could be different from the manager's assessment.

It was apparent that there was a gap between what the expectations of the employee were and where the business and employee was at currently. After being in a place of stagnation and complacency for a long period of time, the vision was no longer in sight and needed to be communicated multiple times. To keep employees engaged, the manager created a recurring meeting with each employee on the same day each month to facilitate the conversations that were needed to produce the focus desired by the development plan process. While there were anomaly's that led to changing the meeting dates, it kept discipline and eventually was a meeting the employee and manager looked forward to.

4.3 Process and Progress

The first two months after implementing the development plans, it was challenging to get feedback, and to get the employee to take time to fill out their side of the development plan with honest thoughts and opinions. The managers believed the employees had not seen the value yet and therefore struggled to take the time to reflect on and understand the need for change. From the manager's perspective, growth was immediate. It allowed for a point of reference in each coaching opportunity to reflect on what the employee was to do and if they were holding themselves to that. This change began to show in the people that reported to the management team, and they were much more proactive in situations instead of reactive. For example, when communicating the vision of proactively taking care of customers instead of reactive, the parts personnel naturally started asking for more business when customers walked through the door. While this is not fully being proactive, it was a great first step in the future of moving the team forward.

After the first six months of the new system, the business began to grow in sales and morale began to change. Employees, especially those actively involved each month with their managers considering their development plans, became much more engaged, happy, and overall better leaders. Unfortunately, this also led to some people choosing not to be a part of the change and they eventually parted ways with the team.

Surprisingly, these adjustments almost immediately changed the morale in the positive direction and the team could grow at a much quicker rate. These development plans are still in place at the location at Company A.

4.4 Results

One year into implementing the development plans, the team saw exciting growth. They overcame adversity in the form of less people, challenging conversations, and lots of change. This persistence led to many successes. One prominent example is the progression of a parts manager becoming a salesperson, and after two years being promoted to the location manager. This employee began the development plan as a parts employee. The first discussion began with the employee and the manager sitting down and talking about the need for leadership within the parts department and how he had the raw potential to become the manager. There was candid discussion of how it would take discipline and commitment to achieve that goal. The employee's personality was more of an "S" in the DISC profile but had great self-awareness to understand the need to collaborate with people and be direct when needed. The employee had the ability to continue to do more within the company, so the manager adapted the development plan to continue to build the employee's skills, knowledge, and performance towards the possibility of being a store manager.

The first meeting to discuss the new plan outlined where the department was at currently with respect to goals, where the employee's strengths were, and what the vision was for the department. The team needed to be more proactive with customers and become organized and disciplined to help morale. The team had some people that were not aligned with the vision of proactive customer selling and team-oriented departments and tended to do their own thing. The employee immediately had tough conversations to ensure alignment within the team. The development plan outlined this for the employee, and he needed to make it happen. After one year, the employee moved the mark from ones and twos on the development plan to fours and fives by understanding the needs, embracing the

plan, and excelling. Without the development plan, it would have been unclear what needed to change, not only in the team but with individuals, and therefore the team and personnel would have struggled to move forward.

After going through the parts manager development plan, the employee changed to the sales staff and began overcoming the differences in the personality type from a parts manager to a salesperson. The development plan outlined the need for the employee to adjust his communication style from an “S” to more of an “I”. The plan also outlined the need to be extremely proactive and adaptable as they were now the point person for the dealership with customers. The development plan started with ones and twos as they should with a new employee. If a manager is unrealistic and artificially inflates the employee’s assessment to threes and fours on the scale out of five when they are in fact lower, the person is falsely hitting expectations and the effort to grow and develop will be stymied.

This employee at the time did a great job adapting his personality type but struggled with time management. The employee and his manager discovered this when the development plan highlighted paperwork and getting things collected while visiting a certain number of customers per week. The development plan allowed pointed discussion of the challenges the employee was facing with time management. Through the development plan process, the manager and employee were able to identify a solution to fix the issues at hand. Two months into the plan the employee moved from a 1 to a 2 by hitting the number of customers but still struggled with paperwork and follow through. Again, the manager and employee utilized the development plan to highlight the vision and identify the issues with time management. Adjustments were made and therefore created success for the individual in a short time. After six months of working through the sales

development process, the employee was able to move several key indicators to a four on the scale and became successful. Without the development plan, the employee and manager would have had difficulty understanding why the employee was struggling, and what was needed to be successful.

One year later the employee developed quickly and had an opportunity to become a location manager within the company. This was the direct result of the development plan process and demonstrates what can happen when a vision is cast, a baseline of performance measured, and active coaching to develop a person is completed. While not all development plans work for different reasons, in this case, it was pivotal in this person's development and successful rise in leadership. It also allowed the company to move the business forward by increasing sales, filling a vacant position with a high caliber internal candidate, and allowing people around this person to grow.

Unfortunately, not every development plan goes as hoped. The manager in Company A had an employee that worked in a service advisor role for multiple years and helped run the service department. This role included scheduling work, invoicing work orders, and helping technicians with time management. While the employee did decent work, their attitude was not great. The manager and the employee went through a development plan with the intent to increase leadership ability and employee performance. For the first couple months of the plan, the employee started to change but kept having setbacks. This showed as employee turnover was still happening, and work orders were not being closed in a timely fashion. The development plan directly highlighted both problems. At the end of month three, the manager decided it was best to move this individual into a different role within the company to help with overall morale and that employee's job

satisfaction. This role for the employee lasted six months until the manager terminated the employee. The development plan helped move through the process quickly, gave the employee every opportunity to correct behavior, discuss with two-way communication on how and what was going wrong, and allowed the two people to part ways on good terms.

A few more examples would include a new parts person progressing to the parts manager, and a service advisor turned into the service department manager. Sometimes change and turnover in leadership positions in a store are hard on the team, but after the first year of implementing development plans, challenging the leaders within the stores, and getting the right people in the right positions, the business grew from 30 million to over 50 million annually, and the employee engagement score grew from 36% to 87%.

The location began the first year as the last in the company in terms of their engagement score. Within two years of coaching and implementation of development plans, the store was in the top five of the entire company. The location saw over ten promotions within the team and customer retention grew to an all-time high. It was apparent that when leadership implements a framework such as a development plan to encourage feedback, accountability, and open two-way communication, people can become more successful.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Companies and employees want to grow and develop every day. Whether that is grow the company, themselves, or a combination of both, growth and development is extremely important to each business. While there are many ways to develop your business and your teams, it is apparent that development plans are important, not only for business growth but employee engagement, retention, and professional advancement. Development plans encourage open communication with employees and managers, allow for the managers to help communicate the company vision, and gives the opportunity to coach and develop in a format that can be referenced. Development plans can be customized to meet company needs and employee needs, but need to outline key items such as values, focus areas, and give room for feedback and growth.

What was learned working with the team in Company A is if you do not give up on the first few tries and hold the team and yourself accountable to invest time and effort into each other, then buy-in can happen and employees and the business can flourish. The manager and company also learned that without an effective development plan, it is much slower and more difficult to move the business. The development plan allows for high effectiveness and allows for promotion within. No matter the personality type, and no matter what the experience, each person can perform at a high level. However, if you do not communicate the need, take the time and set schedules to ensure you sit down and have the conversations, then continuously follow up, development plans will fail. This process must be a priority from both sides and can yield high results. While implementing a development plan is different than what majority of dealerships do in the agriculture sector,

adapting these plans like the example highlighted in the document is something we need to change as companies implement plans for their employees.

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