



How to Be a

Great

Operations

Leader in 2023

Introduction

It's 2023 and we're all taking part in that yearly ritual of changing our calendars and gazing at all that blank space ahead. But most of us have approached this with some hesitancy in recent years; the infancy of 2023 will be no different.

We already know that the coming year will be a time of economic uncertainty, doing more with less, and a heightened need for effective leadership. But if the last two years have taught us anything, most frontline leadership strategies for training, coaching, and retaining employees are outdated. In today's fast-moving world of evolving customer and employee expectations, it is critical for leaders to take a modern and efficient approach.

The pressure is on more than ever before. As an operations leader, are YOU ready to modernize your approach and processes to come out on top in 2023?

In this guide, we'll cover a few elements to help modernize your leadership approach and your transform your frontline teams, including:

- 1 A look at the state of operations leadership**
- 2 A profile of today's frontline employee**
- 3 The human-centric leadership checklist**
- 4 Your 2023 checklist and toolkit**
- 5 Key takeaways**

A Snapshot of Operations Leadership



“ When an employee is well-trained, aligned with goals, and feels like a valued part of the team, you will have a high-performing employee that delivers for customers and their company.

- Central Customer

Today's operations leaders aren't just tasked with the analyst role of executing business operations and ensuring metrics are met. Much of what used to be part of Human Resources, such as hiring, retention, culture setting, performance management, and learning and development initiatives now sits squarely on the shoulders of operations leaders. And it's become much more strategic in nature.

Think of their role as being a symphony conductor, with ops leaders responsible for being the eyes and ears of teams, ensuring that everyone is reading the same sheet of music and playing their part in concert.

In addition to employing a business analyst mindset, today's modern operations leader must recognize the need to balance outputs and the human element and relationships.

The Employee Evolution

We've just had a look at the profile of operations leaders. But to truly modernize your leadership approach, it is important to align on employee expectations.

Today's frontline expects more from work than in the past. COVID changed workplace expectations for baby boomers, Gen X, and older millennials. But the new generation of the frontline (younger millennials and Gen Z) is bringing an entirely new set of expectations to the workplace. They aren't just looking for a paycheck. They want meaning in their work, ownership of their progress, empathy from their managers, collaboration with teammates, and career progression. In other words, a human-centric experience and culture.

Like their managers, frontline employees have an incredibly tough job and need a supportive environment. In our time of digital self-service options, human interactions are usually an escalation and tend to involve unhappy customers. While ping-pong tables and free snacks are nice, they are not a long-term cultural or retention strategy for a frontline faced with increasing customer demands and matter not to remote employees.

Why does this shift matter? It is very simple – happy employees produce happy customers and tend to stay with companies. Frontline attrition is sky-high and voluntary or not, turnover is usually tied to underperformance. When an employee isn't engaged, lacks training and coaching, or is otherwise dissatisfied, they're not going to perform well and won't be around very long. But when an employee is well-trained, aligned with goals, and feels like a valued part of the team, you will have a high-performing employee that delivers for customers and their company.

In short, when employee expectations are met, customer expectations are met - and often, exceeded.



Skills for Modern Operations Leaders

We've just covered what is expected of today's operations leaders, had a glimpse at the future of the frontline, and established the importance of balancing operations intelligence with emotional intelligence. Below is a checklist on how to achieve it.



EXERCISE EMPATHY

Remember that you're not managing numbers – you're managing the people behind them. Also, keep in mind that employees are humans first - and are critical to your organization. Employees should feel that their well-being is important and that they are valued, respected, and part of the team/company.



COMMUNICATE

An agent's performance might slump. Or they might seem "off." Rather than react to the lower performance, react to the employee as a human. Ask them how they are doing, and how you can help. By asking questions, you are inviting a dialogue and open communication, which can enable you to create a strategy to get the employee back on track. Open communication goes a long way toward establishing trust and strong relationships.



BE PRESENT

Employees should feel that they can come to their managers with concerns and ideas. When they do, actively listen. They might want to share a concern or an idea, talk about something that's weighing on them, or maybe recommend a strategy or best practice for the team. Listen and be transparent (and empathetic!) in your response.



RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEES

Frontline work is tough and recognizing employees for their efforts and wins goes a long way. Regularly recognize wins both big and small. This will greatly help with keeping employees engaged and productive.

Now that we've covered some of the human-centric aspects of modern operations leadership, we'll cover a checklist and toolkit on working these and other aspects of today's employee expectations into your culture.

Your 2023 Frontline Teams Modernization Checklist and Toolbox

Modernizing a culture or team doesn't just happen. As with updating anything, you'll need the right tools to facilitate that change. When updating a kitchen, for instance, you'll have a concrete checklist – updating wiring and plumbing, buying and installing new appliances, modern backsplash tiles, new flooring, and countertops. Updating a workplace is similar but has a different type of checklist.

Central is your one-stop shop when modernizing your approach to operations leadership. Our platform provides a gamified experience that can be employed to address your biggest challenge and enable operations leaders to transform their teams.

Here is how we have helped our customers build high-performing, agile teams, that want to stay – and how we can help you, too:



GET GAMIFIED

Enterprise gamification isn't new. Over the past couple of decades, enterprises have increasingly incorporated gamification to keep employees engaged, motivated, and well-trained. While adding gamification is incredibly helpful in many areas, enterprises will often just incorporate a

leaderboard and badges and leave it at that. In 2023, leaders must ditch this outdated and incomplete strategy, not only understanding the immense power of gamification but also going beyond the leaderboard to leverage gamification to create a meaningful experience.



HOW WE HELP

The Central platform offers a robust, complete approach to gamification, going beyond the cosmetic aspect of measuring goals against a leaderboard. Our platform gamifies every aspect of the employee experience, including onboarding, ongoing learning and development, daily performance, and coaching by providing real-time performance feedback (like a fitness tracker for work), progressing game narratives and levels, individual and team competitions, milestone badges, and redeemable points and rewards for hitting goals. Employees can even earn points and rewards for recognizing their peers or sharing their knowledge and expertise. This drives ongoing performance improvement while building team camaraderie, employee engagement, and retention by fostering friendly competition and a sense of connectedness that taps into both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.



GIVE EMPLOYEES OWNERSHIP

We discussed employee expectations earlier, and ownership of their work and career path is in line with these expectations. To keep employees performing at their peak, they should have a sense of ownership of their work by being aligned with their KPIs/metrics, having timely performance feedback, relevant learning, and coaching, and motivation to hit their daily targets, and ensuring that these goals are achievable.



HOW WE HELP

Central offers real-time performance management, providing employees clarity around goals and metrics, and instant feedback on progress. KPIs feedback is based on real-time performance data, which is used to trigger personalized microlearning in the flow of work and actionable manager coaching insights.



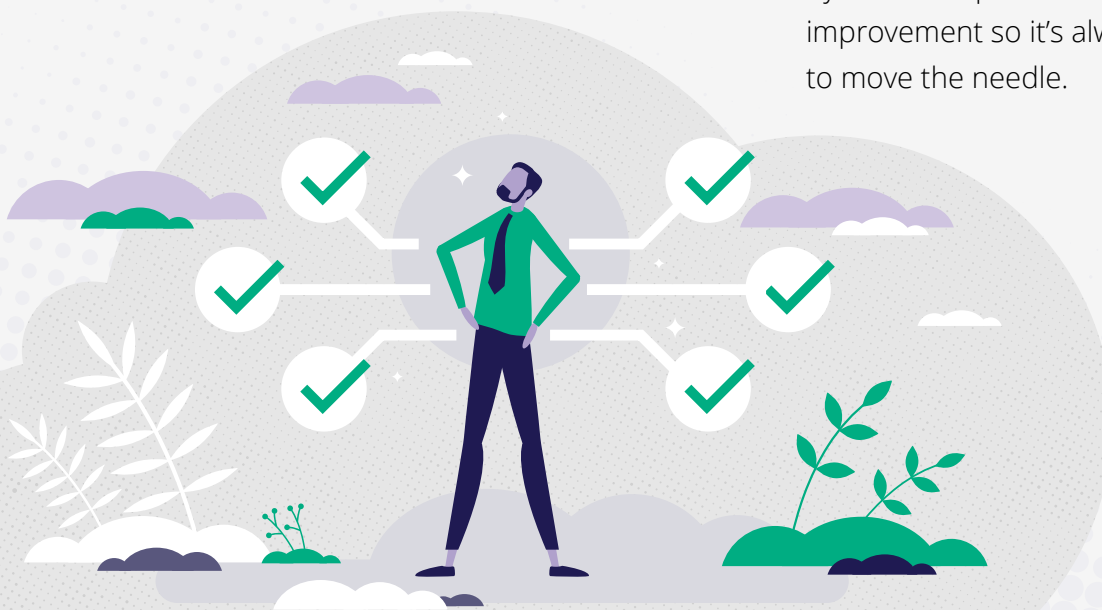
TAKE LEARNING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

When teams are well-trained, customers (and revenue streams) benefit. Whether it is gaining new product knowledge, keeping up on compliance policies, or learning new best practices for customer care, frontline teams across industries benefit from continuous learning and development. But training sessions tend to be infrequent, and the style of delivery is treated as a one-size-fits-all solution. Operations leaders must make training timely and personalized.



HOW WE HELP

One-size-fits-all learning has never been effective, and this outdated strategy has got to go. The Central platform delivers personalized microlearning modules as part of the daily workflow that, in just a few minutes a day, helps employees better retain their knowledge and level up their skills. These modules are triggered by identified performance gaps and areas of improvement so it's always relevant and working to move the needle.





MAKE COACHING CONSISTENT

Open communication is a huge part of modern leadership, and part of that communication is coaching. Traditional coaching often comes as quarterly or yearly performance reviews, or as a reactive conversation. Even in the modern call center, with regular coaching cadences, inefficient coaching processes, limit coaching impact. That's because managers must spend too much time preparing for these meetings by digging through spreadsheets and disparate systems and data with little time to think about strategies for improvement. In short, the traditional approach to coaching isn't always 100% helpful for the employee, nor is it easy on the manager.



HOW WE HELP

Coaching shouldn't be time-bound, or reactive. It should be proactive, delivered frequently, and provide actionable insights and next steps for improvement and career progression. And coaches shouldn't have to spend their time digging through spreadsheets and other data to prepare for these conversations. Central empowers managers to better coach teams via AI-powered coaching insights that leverages data from across the ecosystem, delivering just-in-time personalized coaching, daily performance insights, guided actions, and enabling a true

feedback loop. In addition to enabling a feedback loop, we also enable managers to lead with empathy by going beyond metrics with personalized wellness indicators. Each of these factors contributes to building stronger, more transparent relationships between employees and managers, fostering a human-centric learning culture.



AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF EMPLOYEE

The voice of the employee is another formerly-HR function that is increasingly handed to operations leaders. Typically, employees can fill out an anonymous survey – but either way, this old approach is a static solution that is largely reactive, not always encouraged by management, and usually has limited impact.



HOW WE HELP

The modern voice of the employee approach is encouraged and optimized well beyond the suggestion in a box. Today's VoE is no longer anonymous. It is individualized, two-way communication with direct reflection and feedback leveraged by the Central platform to trigger personalized, just-in-time coaching and learning. This data also drives actionable, AI-powered recommendations that personalize and guide the employee and manager experience.

Summary and Takeaways

Today, operations leaders face several daily challenges, including fighting sky-high attrition rates, motivating employees, keeping teams trained and aligned, and ultimately, ensuring metrics are met. 2023 is already shaping up to be a year of the added challenge of doing even more with less. But your day doesn't have to be a reenactment of the Twelve Labors of Hercules. By making a few changes to your approach and processes, you can transform your frontline team into a retained, knowledgeable, engaged, and high-performing workforce that not only meets their metrics but exceeds them:

- Take a human-centric approach to leadership
- Lead with empathy
- Listen to the voice of the employee
- Give kudos and recognition
- Fight attrition and unify teams by gamifying onboarding, ongoing learning and development, and coaching
- Improve performance by making learning part of the everyday workflow
- Implement frequent, proactive, actionable coaching

If only Hercules had a gamified process!

It's a new year, and you have an opportunity to face the year's challenges head-on with transformed leadership and processes. Have a quick look at what we do at Central or book a demo and personalized overview.

[SEE CENTRAL IN ACTION](#)

ABOUT



Central grew out of the business intelligence (BI) software segment. BI let managers know how employees were doing, but it typically did not convey how to turn manager-led performance insights into employee performance actions.

Since employees were the ones doing the work, Central's vision was to place them at the center of the process. To share with them insights about their work, to help them improve, be more focused, get better at what they do, as well as make it fun. Along with that, Central empowers managers to enable their team members to be more successful with AI-powered, closed-loop coaching that triggers personalized activities that impact individual employee performance and real-time performance visibility. That makes for better coaches and better performing employees.

Central, founded in 2013, is convinced that employees are the center of business success. We operate from offices in New York City and Israel. And are proud to have an expanding list of enterprise businesses as customers, including Microsoft, Novartis, Synchrony Financial, Unilever, and Swiss Life, among others.

[SEE CENTRAL IN ACTION](#)