Workforce Engagement: *Unfreezing the Middle Layer*

Problem   The middle layer of management is perceived as the place where input from front-line staff stops, and where strategy from senior leaders goes to die. The middle manager role is complex and challenging, but it is critical to our ability to serve our citizens. In a survey of current middle managers, **28% would not recommend the job to others,** and **41% say their agency did not adequately prepare them for the job**.

Solution   The State of Missouri must **adopt a servant leader mindset to engage and support middle managers**. A servant leader mindset is focused on the goal of serving and developing others first. Servant leaders trade command and control for compassion, commitment, and relationships. Servant leadership is known to increase morale, loyalty, engagement, and team performance.

Senior leaders should build upon previous efforts with Engage 2.0, MO Learning, and behavioral interviewing to hire, develop, mentor, and engage middle managers to thaw the middle layer with a servant leader mindset.
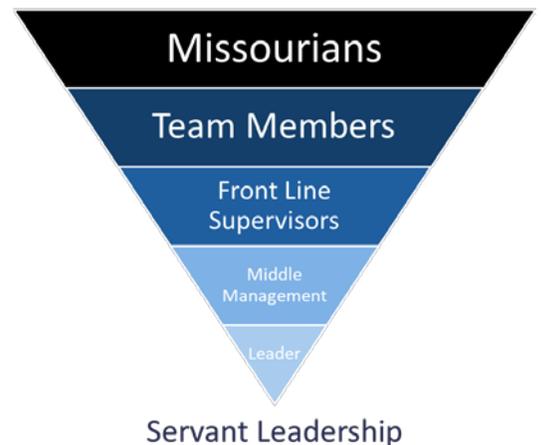
HIRE

- Assess potential managers for key traits using behavioral interview methods

DEVELOP

- Introduce all new managers to the concept of servant leadership
- Incorporate key traits as part of the Engage 2.0 Growth Model
- Use a Key Traits Assessment during Engage 2.0 sessions to identify gaps and map to a Personal Development Plan
- Emphasize MO Learning Course "Ken Blanchard on Servant Leadership" as part of the "New Supervisor Essentials" learning path
- Add servant leadership as a competency model per the State of Missouri Leadership Guide

MENTOR

- Establish a mentoring program for managers that spans all executive departments

ENGAGE

- Empower and serve middle managers by providing decision-making role clarity, clear objectives, and line of sight
- Institute a servant leader model of change where senior leaders execute change initiatives that are proposed and developed by middle managers