

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Becca Pike

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

Hi guys, I have a special guest for you today. I wanted to take a minute and let you all peel back the curtain on the behind the scenes of my brick and mortar studio and the relationship that I have with my manager. You guys, we just recorded this episode. I'm actually doing this intro afterwards. I can tell you that this is one of the best episodes you could ever get your hands on if you have staff members at all.

We go into our relationship and the way that she and I work together. It is freaking gold. So without further ado, this is our Massage Strong manager and my very best friend Kate Harper, episode number 136. I'm your host, Becca Pike, and it is time for your weekly dose of Hell Yes Coaching. Let's go.

Hey, guys. I'm Becca Pike and welcome to *The Hell Yes Entrepreneur* podcast, the number one show for entrepreneurs looking to create their first six-figure year. If you've got the drive and you know how to hustle but you're not sure where to channel your energy, we've got the answers. Let's dive into today's show.

Becca: Hello, Kate.

Kate: Hello.

Becca: I'm so happy you're here. I'm sorry I ambushed you. I know that you were just living your life, and you do not like being in front of people. Then I kind of tricked you into being here, but I didn't really trick you. You're here on your own.

Kate: Yeah, I am.

Becca: Okay, so this is what I want to do. I want to interview you as my manager. You answer these questions however you see fit. But I think this is going to be super, super valuable for a lot of my business owners who either already have a manager, or they have staff, but they want to hire a manager. Or maybe they have a manager, and they don't really know what to do with them, or they don't really know what the day to day looks like.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

So I'm going to be going all over the place with you. Hopefully, my audience will be able to pull out so many nuggets and get to peel back the curtain to see how we operate behind closed doors at Massage Strong.

Kate: Awesome. Sounds like a plan.

Becca: Love it. Okay. Before I get started, can I just say I hope that I say this enough, but thank you for everything that you do at Massage Strong. Like having a solid ass manager is absolutely priceless. Having you on the front end basically protecting me and Mark, like guarding us. That's the way I think of you.

Like everything catches on with you. You are in charge of almost everything. That is the biggest gift that any business owner could possibly have is just having someone like you, and you do it so well. You've evolved so much in the last few years. So just an overall massive thank you, and I love you. I'm so glad that you also accidentally became my best friend.

Kate: Yeah, it's the best. Yeah. I appreciate you saying that for sure.

Becca: All right. How nervous are you right now?

Kate: I mean, my heart's pounding.

Becca: But it's just us.

Kate: I know. You immediately turn the camera on me or a microphone on and I'm like what do I do? What do I say? So.

Becca: No one is here. Just me and you. We should have done this on mushrooms.

Kate: Yeah, we got to cancel our session on Friday because Mark's going to be out of town. So remember that.

Becca: Our mushroom session? We have machine appointments. Okay, we will cancel that. All right. Are you ready? Are you fucking ready?

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

Kate: Let's fucking go.

Becca: All right. Tell us a little bit about your day to day or your week to week just to get us started. Give us a sneak peek of like, what are your main tasks for Massage Strong? What does that look like?

Kate: Yeah, I mean, I think it varies week to week. But in general, it looks at hiring every week. Making sure that we're bringing on the right staff, that our ads are optimized. So we've gone through a season of not having optimized ads, and we just optimized it in October. We're finally getting the candidates we need. So it took some effort. That took a good amount of time for me to figure out, get on the phone with Indeed just because of the way that our business model is set up since we don't have employees and we have independent contractors.

So I do a lot of stuff around hiring. I do a lot of stuff with our scheduling team. I'd say like that's the bulk of my daily activity is really working with the scheduling team, making sure that they're maximizing the schedule, making sure that we're communicating well. Like we use Slack as our communication. So we're checking in twice a day. They're letting me know how the day is going. They're letting the other schedulers know what needs to be wrapped up. So a lot of my day to day is wrapped up in the scheduling side of things.

But in terms of the LMTs, they do a great job working independently. When I hire them, I just set the expectation of like I'm here for you. I'm available for you, and I check in with them often. But they're on their own. They're doing their work week to week really, really well. I usually meet with a once a month just having a check in making sure things are going well. They know they can reach out to me that type of thing.

Becca: This episode is already worth a million dollars.

Kate: Yeah.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

Becca: This episode is already worth. We could end now. We could be like goodbye, and it's over. Let me just clarify really quickly. You said that you are in charge of the ads and making sure that the ads are doing well. I just want to say to the audience, these are ads for hiring. These are not ads to get clients in the door. This is ads to get workers in the door.

We have these ads running. Everybody I talked to is always surprised at how often we are hiring. We are hiring constantly. We are no longer doing the thing where it's like we hire a couple people. Then we like take our ads down and relax for a few months until we need more people. Now we're at the level where it is just a constant part of your job, correct?

Kate: Yes. We were getting candidates that weren't super qualified and that just weren't, the way that we had the ad set up just wasn't working. But yes, we are constantly hiring. It's just like we're going through the process. Even if they're not the best candidates, we're always going through the process to see if it's somebody that we want to bring on to train. So we're just always doing the interview, the practical to see what that could look like for Massage Strong, and if it could work for both of us.

Becca: How much has our hiring process evolved since you were hired?

Kate: So much. I think the bones of it are the same. It's a phone interview or an in person interview. It's always been that way. The second step is a practical. Then beyond that it's hiring and training. That really hasn't changed. Like the bones of that are the same.

But I recently hired a lead LMT to help me with the practicals because it was getting to be a lot to do the phone interviews and the practicals. I myself am not a massage therapist, and I think it's really important to have support for your team in that way. Like if you're not the actual practitioner, I think that hiring somebody who has the skill set and is in the daily grind with the people that you're going to hire, like building that relationship is really important.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

So I recently hired a lead LMT to do the practicals and go through the entire onboarding process with us. So recently, the hiring process I've made to be like a 90 day process. So from when we hire them with the practical to 90 day check in, that's like the whole onboarding process.

Whereas like, when I first started as a manager, it was just like you get trained, you go to work, that's it. There was not like a 30 day check in. There wasn't like a schedule for the manager and the lead LMT for those first 30 days of what our responsibilities were with each LMT.

It's actually been like a huge burden or weight lifted off my shoulders because I always felt like I was throwing people to the wolves. I was like I'm just throwing these guys to the wolves and like expecting them to get it figured out. In some ways, that's great. Like, that's what every job requires. Like you have to learn on the spot.

But they don't have to be alone in it. They don't have to feel like they have to reach out to you. So it's like an act of building a culture, an act of checking in that we've created. So that's been really helpful. So it's changed and evolved a lot.

Becca: Yeah. So what I'm hearing you say is it's not the best avenue to not have a process for nurturing your new hires. You have to bring in the new hires, and you have to have active scheduled nurturing campaigns basically. Checking in with them, making sure that they're doing well, seeing what they need, and not just doing it in a willy nilly I hope I get around to it. But actually having literal alarms go off that say hey, it's time to check in with so and so.

Kate: Yeah, like I have created a whole schedule in our drive for myself and Josh, our lead LMT, of like what our tasks are each week with a new hire. We have to sign off on it on there, and we talk about it every meeting. Like what we've done, we talked about the new LMT with, what we talked to them about. Like questions that they might have or things that they see in

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

our business that maybe could improve. Just like getting camaraderie and rapport knowing that type of thing. So.

Becca: To my audience listening right now, can you see already we're like literally six minutes into this. Can you see now more clearly how it's possible to have multiple big businesses? Because we have people like this. This is why I'm constantly talking about delegating and training and keeping good people on your team.

Because the only possible way to have a yoga company and a massage company and a coaching company and other companies and companies on top of companies, and when you hear about people like Tony Robbins who have 108 companies, it's not because Tony Robbins is in there pulling all the levers. He has people that are good at what they do pulling the levers for him.

So like as Kate's talking about all of this, please know that these are things that I'm not a part of. This is why I'm picking her brain for you guys because I'm not in on all of this. I'm in on the big decision making, but Kate has been crafted and trained and loved on and trained again and evolved over time to be what she is. I want to talk about that too.

I have a lot of business owners who hire a manager. In the first six weeks, they're like oh my god, I fucked up. Like, they don't do it exactly the way I want it. Like they're not understanding. They don't do it like I do. Can you talk a little bit about how much you have evolved overall as a person, and what it looks like when you first got hired? Maybe the patience that it required on my end and on Mark's end and on your end as well to create who you are today?

Kate: Yes, I'm going to try and do this without going to off topic because I think this is a bigger subject than just Massage Strong. I think that when I got hired, I was depleted. I was sick. I was overworked. I took a huge pay cut to come work in Massage Strong because I was like I am miserable. I am miserable. I can't do it anymore.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

The minute that I started at Massage Strong, I was like I can do this. I can do this. I can make this work. When I first got hired, I was really just a scheduler. You wanted me to kind of be in charge of the schedulers, but that was a really tough task to do the way that we had the scheduling team set up at the time. I think through those first couple years, or maybe the first 18 months, I was really trying to find my footing within the company. I wasn't sure how to implement my ideas.

I had this background in Orangetheory Fitness, and the guy that I worked for was really good at scaling business, really good at opening businesses. I felt like that was a huge strong suit of mine, and I wasn't quite sure how to like actually execute it with Massage Strong. I don't know why that is, but I wasn't quite sure how to get my foot in the door there.

Then I realized maybe you don't have to do it the same way as this other business. Maybe it doesn't have to be the same membership model, maybe it doesn't have to be the way that Orangetheory Fitness does it. So I kind of had to like break down all my ideas about that and just take like bits and pieces that made sense for the job.

Then once I got hired as manager, I wasn't exactly sure what it was going to look like, but I worked mostly with Mark. So Mark and I worked as a team together. Mark is so good at leadership. Like he has done a lot of work getting his mindset to where it needs to be with leadership qualities. Because of that he's able to guide people, and he guided me through a whole evolution of what it means to do a task as a manager to what it means to run a company as a manager.

So he started so small with me. Like hey, I'm going to give you these three things. These are your responsibility. That's what I did for three months, maybe even two months. Then after that, it was like five more things. Then it was like just building on top of it. Always like giving me props. Like sending me texts, always making sure that I knew that it was like appreciated what I was doing.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

When I had ideas after those like first six months of like kind of getting me to a point where my confidence level was really good. When I started having ideas and throwing them out in the meeting, he was like oh yeah, that's great. Let's give that a shot. See what you can do. Implement that. He was just very encouraging.

He never really said no. He was like well, we're going to do it this way for now, but in a month go ahead. See what you can do with this, and we'll see if it works. Like he's not afraid to try new things and put his trust in me because he like built all of this time, all this trust, and all of this like confidence in me for the six months to where it was like I know that Kate can do it. Kate knows that Kate can do it.

Then from then I feel like it's just been constantly honing in on each thing. Then we went to UPW all together. That's what changed my mindset on everything.

Becca: What is that?

Kate: UPW is the Tony Robbins event, Unleash Your Power Within. It was wild. Like I'm a huge Tony Robbins fan, but it was wild y'all. But it really changed a lot in my entire life. But specifically to my confidence level and being able to tell myself what the actual truth is about my abilities instead of being in this story of it's not good enough. It's never enough. You're not going to make Mark and Becca happy. Those work thoughts that I was having in the back of my head as all of this was going on.

But really after that it was just like you're doing your best. You're doing amazing. The truth is that you know how to do this. The truth is that you have a smart business mind. The truth is that you're going to help bring Massage Strong into the next era of Massage Strong. It's awesome so. Yeah.

Becca: So, just a side note. If you have somewhere that you know that your manager would excel by going, pay for their fucking ticket. Take them to Tony Robbins. Take them to Thirty More. Take them to Hell Yes Live. Take

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

them to church, I don't know. Take them. Take them through life. Pay for their shit to change their mind.

To me that is, and that was ultimately why we wanted to take you. We knew that you were a big future of Massage Strong. It's like of course we would like to pay the \$1,500 or whatever it was at the time to UPW so that you could get your mindset right around setting your goals and having a strong outlook on who you are. I love that.

Kate: Yeah. I think not only that, but also pouring into me as a human. Like you and Mark, it's not just about what I can do for Massage Strong. It's like how can I make Kate love Kate's life but more? Like, how can we make sure that she's just like experiencing life on the highest level? How can we, and it wasn't like an everyday thing. It was just making sure that my quality of life was good. You guys were always prioritizing that and making sure that that was important from your standpoint as well.

Becca: I love that. So yes. I believe from my standpoint, from my viewpoint, we had a lot of patience. What I mean by that, I don't mean like, she was so terrible, and we had to really grit through it and have patience. Not like that, but just like we had a viewpoint when we hired you have a long haul. This is what I'm trying to get my business owners to understand when they are hiring staff members, especially important staff members that are high level in close proximity, like a manager or like an OBM or a VA. You want to have a long distance idea of where they're going.

So instead of being like okay, I'm going to hire this person, and they better fucking prove themselves in the first three weeks. It's like no, I'm going to hire this person. I'm going to pour everything I possibly can into them for the first year. I mean, aside from it being very obvious that they need to go, and they do not fit the script.

But if they fit the script, and they are the type of person that you want then it is on you as the business owner to continue to pour into them, into their life, into their personal life, into their business into who they are as a person

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

and continue to just give them the resources and the tools so that they can be where you and I are now, where you and I and Mark are now. Which is we are years deep, and you have evolved and sharpened into exactly what we needed the whole time. But it required patience on the business owner to get us there.

Kate: For me, I feel like now I am a leader. Now I can be a leader because these two people exemplify what leadership actually looks like. It's not telling people what to do and having unrealistic expectation. It's guiding them and having realistic expectations. Like the this is the long game. I'm in it for the long game with Kate.

For me, that makes me now feel like I can do that as a leader, as a manager. I can do that with LMTs. I can do that by elevating a new staff member to like lead LMT. I feel like I'm now at that level where I can guide people the same way that Mark guided me.

Becca: I think that, this goes for every relationship. So I remember when Mark and I started dating. I was a very wounded female like that had had a long past with men. I remember like kind of butting heads with him, almost like a self-sabotage, and he would come and he would smother it with love. He would be like giving me reasons to think that he's loyal and loving and patient and trustworthy. Even though I would be rearing my head at him, he would come at me with like I'm still here. I'm not going anywhere kind of thing.

I think that there's a parallel to that with you and me and with you and Mark, and with me and you and Mark, which is you and I have had multiple conversations where I'm talking to you about trust and trusting me. I feel like I could see a little bit of a past with you. I'm trying to say this in a way to make sure that I'm not offending you by any means, but I think I could see what kind of bosses you have had in the past, and that some of that baggage had come over in the very beginning.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

Do you remember us sitting down in the lobby at Brannon Crossing that one time, and we're like crying. I'm like telling you that you need to trust me and stop trying to rear your head at me. Then also we've had conversations on loyalty and on and on love and on longevity and stuff like that. Just true heart to hearts.

Like the way that you would if you want it to be in a relationship with someone for a long time. It's the same with staff members. I think that that's important. I think that a lot of times that's not used in the workplace. But if you think about it, these are relationships just like our spouses are relationships.

Kate: I've never had a manager or owner or a manager above me in the past who is really like been a kind of a partner with me or like supported me. It's always been almost like this butting heads all the time. It's like are you meeting my expectations? If not, we're going to come down hard on you. I don't work well in that type of environment. I think most humans don't work well in that type of environment.

So I just really believe in the idea of making sure that you're actually supporting the person that's underneath you, you know. It might take a little bit of extra effort at the beginning to have like that longevity mindset. Like I have so much trust that I can fall back on you and Mark and like always look back at you. I never feel like I'm in danger. I used to have like these feelings of going to meetings and like I'm going to get fired today. It's going to happen.

Becca: You do. Guys, the first year of us working together, I would be like hey, can you meet me at the office in a minute? She'd be like, "Am I getting fired?" I'd be like Kate, for fuck's sake, I just need you to buy some more CBD cream.

Kate: Yeah. Yeah. But I think now like finally, and it's not of any fault of you guys, but because of the support and the patience that you've had, now it's just like I know I can mess up, and I know I can make mistakes. It's like

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

okay, fix it. We'll do it better next time. Nothing is too bad. Like, I'm not going to do anything that's going to make me lose my job at this point. You know what I mean? I mean, I'm sure that there's some things I could do, but nothing that I would do as a human. I can make mistakes and be okay.

Becca: Yeah. You make a mistake, and you're still at our house the next Sunday eating chips and queso watching football.

Kate: A very safe feeling. I don't want to lose that. That's like the most important thing to me in this job is like the safety of like, we can have disagreements. We can have these conversations that maybe I don't agree of the way that you guys want to do it, but I'm going to do it anyways. It's still a safe conversation, you know?

Becca: Yeah. Man, I feel like this episode, like we could have just ended it 17 times now, and people would walk away with so much. Like, this is so good. This is so good. I should have thought of doing this before. I mean, having a conversation about the actual behind the scenes relationship with your managers, like this is everything. I love it.

Kate: Yeah, it's everything to me too.

Becca: Aw, let's hug.

Kate: Virtual hug.

Becca: Okay, let's get back on track. All right. So tell me what was, maybe you already answered this. Maybe this is just a continuation of what we just talked about. But what was one of your biggest things that you had trouble wrapping your head around in the role of management? Like, you just couldn't seem to get it? Or it took more time than anything else to become proficient at? What was it? How did you get past it?

Kate: Yeah, this one's very easy for me. I like to be liked. So if people don't like me, it's very, very uncomfortable. It is a natural thing that happens when you're in a leadership position in a business or in management that

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

people are not always going to like what you do or the ideas that you have or the things that you're asking them to do. That's okay. It's okay that they have that momentary frustration with you. It doesn't last. A lot of times you can address it easily. I think that that's the biggest thing that I struggled with was addressing those issues.

Getting past it was really talking to Mark about it, and him being like this is not a one-time thing. You're going to you're going to run into this time and time again. This is just how it works. It's not the majority of your job, but like you will have people that just simply don't agree with you and don't like how you do things. You still have to have the conversations. They still have to do it our way, and that's okay. It's okay that they don't like us. We're not everybody's cup of tea. It's okay. So yeah.

Becca: So now, do you feel like you're at that place?

Kate: Yeah, I do. I definitely still have moments where I don't like being, I know that employees don't always agree with everything that I'm trying to do. So it can be challenging to have those conversations. It is definitely still like my heart gets going. I'm like okay. I have to give myself a pep talk in my office, but it happens rarely these days because I feel like we're a very open company and people can come to me with a lot. I'm definitely like an open book and very available to them. But yeah, I do feel like it's gotten better. Absolutely.

Becca: Yeah, something I want to touch on too is a lot of business owners think I can't afford the type of manager I want because the type of manager I want is where you are now. Right? So they want a very evolved manager. In their minds, they're thinking of a manager that can do all things. So they think they can't afford it.

So number one, I just want to tell everybody, a lot of times your best managers, the people that become the Kate's now, don't start that way. They start as a receptionist. They start as someone that is getting minimum wage, or whatever it was that we were paying for you to answer phones.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

But secondly, I just want to throw out there that not everybody is accepting manager positions because of the money. You took a pay cut to be with us. You took a pay cut because you wanted somewhere healthy to work. You wanted somewhere that you could relax and be yourself, where you could have input, where you could have trust, where you could have loyalty. Can you speak a little bit on that? Like when you took this position, it wasn't like it was for the cash bags that were flowing in. It was for other things.

Kate: Yeah, that's something that I hold so sacred in my life is just my time freedom. There's so much trust in me from you guys now that I do have so much time freedom. You know that I'm going to get the job done. You see that it gets done. So that I am able to work from home when I need to. I can go to the office on the times that work for me and my schedule.

I know that not every business is set up that way, but that's been really, really helpful. I would take that and freedom to go see my kid in Utah whenever I want to over anything. I cannot work a job that only gives me seven days' vacation a year. Like that's just not going to work for me. If I have the flexibility to do those things, I'm going to take the pay cut.

But even now, like now that this position has evolved, and I've been with you for a long time, like the pay is great. I'm super happy with my pay. I'm super happy with when I get to see my kid and leave Kentucky to go see him. I'm super happy with all the flexibility and time freedom that I have to just do this job and also live my life. I have a lot of time to live my life. That's, I mean, that's priceless, honestly.

Becca: So you're telling my audience that if they structure a management position that allows for time freedom then they don't have to pay multiple six figures a year to have a manager?

Kate: That's correct. Yeah, that is 100% correct.

Becca: And provide them a safe place to work and strong leadership and loyalty. In return, the business owner receives all the free time in the world and a loyal manager who gets shit done.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

Kate: Yeah, it's pretty great.

Becca: Wow, what a relationship. Okay, this is my last question. Then we will wrap up. I'll probably just come over to your house right when we get off this call so I can hang out with you. Okay, what do you think a business owner should be looking for, for top qualities in a manager?

Kate: I think I'd say the top quality would be something like thick skin, meaning when you have a conversation with your owners, they have to be able to say things to you that they want done that may not be the way that you think it needs to be done, or it's different from the way you've been doing it. So you have to have the ability to not take it personally. That is not an easy task, but it's something that's super necessary. Especially if you're close with your owners, like you have to be able to compartmentalize your business relationship and your personal relationship.

So honestly even if you're not super close with the manager and the owners, you have to be able to compartmentalize those two different things. Because when you have those conversations, they can be really challenging. Then beyond that, like you do have to just, like you were saying, you just have to be able to jump right back in and start doing your work. Like you have to get it done. You have to be able to follow through for what your owners want. You have to do exactly what you guys have agreed upon during that conversation.

Becca: Yeah, someone that's capable of getting past all the mind fuckery of being told to do something different or better than what they had originally wanted to do.

Kate: Correct. Yes.

Becca: Yeah.

Kate: Agreed.

Becca: Yeah, I would agree with that. Love that.

Ep #136: How to Hire Your Next Manager with Kate Harper

Kate: We've had a lot of conversations around that.

Becca: Thanks for being here, Kate.

Kate: Yeah, thanks.

Becca: I'm so glad that you like did this last minute. I think it's going to be one of the best episodes, especially for my brick and mortar people, but definitely also for my online people that are going to be hiring VAs and OBM soon. So thank you for being here.

Kate: Thanks for having me.

Hey guys, this podcast is the blood sweat and tears of a lot of different people. The planning and the preparation of each episode is extensive. My team and I are really proud to bring you this free and abundant content each week, and we hope that you're loving it. If you are, the very best thank you that we can receive from you is a review and a share.

When you share this episode with a friend or leave us a five star review, it is like pouring a little bit of magic into our podcasting bucket. It is what gets our work recognized. It's what gives us energy and keeps us going, truly. Not one share nor review goes without recognition from our team. As always, we fucking love you here at Hell Yes Coaching. Have a beautiful day.

Hey, thanks for taking the time to listen to today's episode. If you're looking to get more clarity and momentum for your business, visit hellyescoachingonline.com. See you next week here on *The Hell Yes Entrepreneur* podcast.