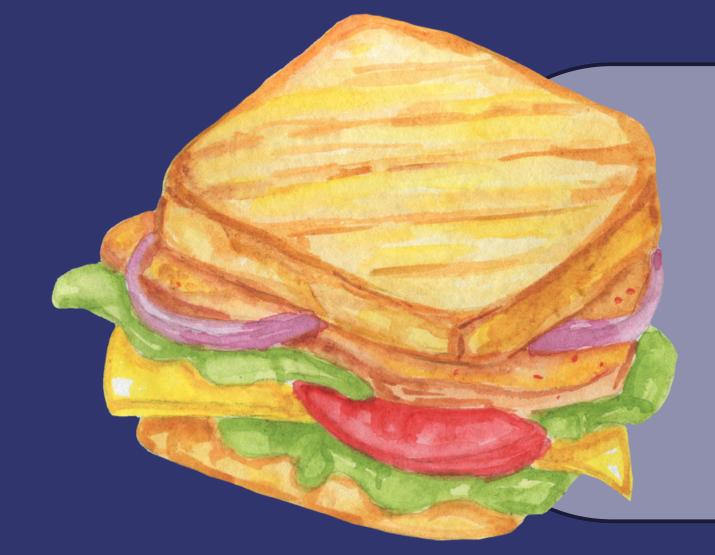
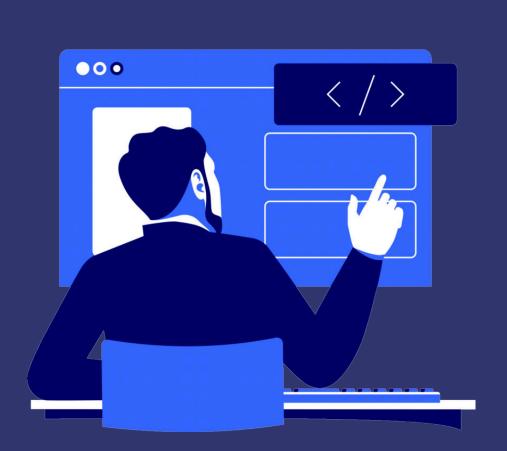
# Leading in the Sandwich Position - Unappreciated High Performers in Middle Management



Most people think of a sandwich as something to eat, with various fillings held between two slices of bread or toast. Just like the pressure from the top and bottom can squeeze out the fillings, leaders in the 'sandwich' position experience pressure too, but squeezed between layers rather than applying

pressure themselves.



Mostly at least one boss above them to whom they report



The greatest challenge of "leading in the sandwich" lies in bridging the gap between the more strategic upper management and the operational level of direct employees. Moreover, these leaders face pressure from their own superiors while also receiving pressure from their employees in return.

Every leader has employees hierarchically "under" them that they manage



## **Promotion Based on** Performance in **Previous Roles**

Many leaders in middle management are promoted primarily based on their exceptional performance in technical or operational roles, rather than their leadership potential or ability to manage people. This mismatch can result in leaders who are illprepared for the complexities of their new managerial responsibilities.

# **Managing Perceptions of** Superior Knowledge

Employees often perceive their sandwich leaders as having superior knowledge, especially during periods of change or uncertainty. This perception can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, highlighting the importance of transparent communication and managing expectations effectively

#### **Opportunities for Sandwich Leaders**

Despite its challenges, the sandwich position offers opportunities for leaders to demonstrate resilience, strategic thinking, and effective communication skills. Successful navigation of this role can lead to personal growth and organizational success.

# below. Mental and

**Emotional Stress** 

Pressure from both sides

Sandwich leaders manage

both operational

employees and report to

superiors. They navigate

pressure from both sides,

balancing strategic

directives from above with

operational realities and

employee expectations

Sandwich leaders often experience mental and emotional stress due to the dual pressures of managing up and down, highlighting the risk of burnout in these roles.

Leader in a Sandwich Position Challenges and Requirements

# **Lack of Training** for Sandwich Positions

Middle managers require diverse skills in technical, managerial, and leadership roles. However, they may not receive adequate training, leading to challenges in effectively managing their responsibilities.

## Managing **Communication Gaps**

Sandwich leaders must manage communication gaps between upper management and frontline employees. They play a critical role in ensuring clear and effective communication across different levels of the organization.