

## How to be a Better Manager

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### ABSTRACT

*A management career path is not a straight line. Nor is it the same for everyone. Yet all management career paths have a starting point. All have milestones along the way. This page is the starting point for several management paths. Each path leads managers to what they need to know based on where you are in your career and where your interests lie. On each visit you can go further along the path, retrace steps along the same path, or start down a new path. Five paths are listed below.*

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### Considering Management

This person wonders whether a management career is for them. Maybe someone has suggested it. Maybe they just feel they can do it better than their current boss. Take this path to learn more about what management does and whether management might be for you.

**Going For It.** This person has decided to try the management career path. They have no management experience yet, but are interested and motivated. This path leads to the knowledge and skill needed to land that first management job.

### Just Starting Management

This person has just started, or is about to start, their first management job. This path will guide you through those first confusing, challenging days and months. It takes you through the basic knowledge needed to be a manager and how to deal with the problems that crop up.

**Experienced Manager.** This manager has had several years experience in management. He or she has had time to make some mistakes and achieve some successes in the real world and now want to improve. This path leads to the resources to improve their skills and their promotion potential.

### Management Pros and Consultants

These are veteran managers interested in increasing and sharing their professional knowledge and experience. They have managed different and difficult opportunities, but they know there is always more to learn. This path connects them with their peers and to cutting-edge theory.

Most urgent problems of personnel management:

- New approaches to organization of work of personnel, work regulations and scientific labor organizations, team - building, theory of leadership.
- Important problems of motivation, payment, methods of personnel estimation and effectiveness of work.
- The personnel of the state and municipal management bodies and business;

- The notion and classification of the methods of state and municipal management and business;
- The manpower policy in the state and municipal management and business;
- The competitive basis of the manpower policy in the state and municipal management and business;
- The staff appraisal procedure in the bodies of the state and municipal management and business;
- The staff estimation procedure based on the estimation center method;
- The international experience of the personnel training and skills improvement for the state and municipal management bodies and business;
- The personnel management at the bodies of state and municipal administration and so on.

Managers spend a lot of time giving direction to people. When done well you can achieve great results. Make a little slip up and everything goes wrong. Here's how to do it right. Management is both art and science. It is the art of making people more effective than they would have been without you. The science is in how you do that. There are four basic pillars: plan, organize, direct, and monitor. Four workers can make 6 units in an eight-hour shift without a manager. If I hire you to manage them and they still make 6 units a day, what is the benefit to my business of having hired you? On the other hand, if they now make 8 units per day, you, the manager, have value. The same analogy applies to service, or retail, or teaching, or any other kind of work. Can your group handle more customer calls with you than without? Sell higher value merchandise? Impart knowledge more effectively? That is the value of management - making a group of individual more effective. Management starts with planning. Good management starts with good planning. And proper prior planning prevents... well, you know the rest of that one. Without a plan you will never succeed. If you happen to make it to the goal, it will have been by luck or chance and is not repeatable. You may make it as a flash-in-the-pan, an overnight sensation, but you will never have the track record of accomplishments of which success is made. Look at all the probable scenarios. Plan for them. Figure out the worst possible scenario and plan for that too. Evaluate your different plans and develop what, in your best judgments, will work the best and what you will do if it doesn't. Figure out what your goal is (or listen when your boss tells you). Then figure out the best way to get there. What resources do you have? What can you get? Compare strengths and weaknesses of individuals and other resources. Will putting four workers on a task that takes 14 hours cost less than renting a machine that can do the same task with one worker in 6 hours? If you change the first shift from an 8 AM start to a 10 AM start, can they handle the early evening rush so you don't have to hire an extra person for the second shift? One of the most often overlooked management planning tools is the most effective. Ask the people doing the work for their input.

Now that you have a plan, you have to make it happen. Is everything ready ahead of your group so the right stuff will get to your group at the right time? Is your group prepared to do its part of the plan? Is the downstream organization ready for what your group will deliver and when it will arrive? Are the workers trained? Are they motivated? Do they have the equipment they need? Are there spare parts available for the equipment? Has purchasing ordered the material? Is it the right stuff? Will it get here on the appropriate schedule? Do the legwork to make sure everything needed to execute the plan is ready to go, or will be when it is needed. Check back to make sure that everyone understands their role and the importance of their role to the overall success.

Now flip the "ON" switch. Tell people what they need to do. I like to think of this part like conducting an orchestra. Everyone in the orchestra has the music in front of them. They know which section is playing which piece and when. They know when to come in, what to play, and when to stop again. The conductor cues each section to make the music happen. That's your job here. You've given all your musicians (workers) the sheet music (the plan). You have the right number of musicians (workers) in each section (department), and you've arranged the sections on stage so the music will sound best (you have organized the work). Now you need only to tap the podium lightly with your baton to get their attention and give the downbeat.

Now that you have everything moving, you have to keep an eye on things. Make sure everything is going according to the plan. When it isn't going according to plan, you need to step in and adjust the plan, just

as the orchestra conductor will adjust the tempo. Problems will come up. Someone will get sick. A part won't be delivered on time. A key customer will go bankrupt. That is why you developed a contingency plan in the first place. You, as the manager, have to be always aware of what's going on so you can make the adjustments required.

A manager's most important, and most difficult, job is to manage people. Managing people is not easy. You must lead, motivate, inspire, and encourage them. Sometimes you will have to hire, fire, and discipline or evaluate employees. However, it can be done successfully. And it can be a very rewarding experience. Remember that management, like any other skill, is something that you can improve at with study and practice.

## **Management Styles**

Managers have to perform many roles in an organization and how they handle various situations will depend on their style of management. A management style is an overall method of leadership used by a manager. There are two sharply contrasting styles that will be broken down into smaller subsets later:

Autocratic

Permissive

Each style has its own characteristics:

Autocratic: Leader makes all decisions unilaterally.

Permissive: Leader permits subordinates to take part in decision making and also gives them a considerable degree of autonomy in completing routine work activities.

Combining these categories with democratic (subordinates are allowed to participate in decision making) and directive (subordinates are told exactly how to do their jobs) styles give us four distinct ways to manage.

## **Ten Things To Do Today To Be A Better Manager**

Listed below are ten things you can do to become a better manager. Pick one. Do it today. Pick another one for tomorrow. In two weeks you will be a better manager.

### **1. Select the best people**

As a manager, you are only as good as the people on your team. Give yourself a better chance to succeed by picking the best people from the start.

### **2. Be a motivator**

Human beings do things because we want to. Sometimes we want to because the consequences of not wanting to do something are unpleasant. However, most of the time we want to do things because of what we get out of it.

It's no different at work, people do good work for the pay, or the prestige, or the recognition. They do bad work because they want to take it easy and still get paid. They work really hard because they want to impress someone. To motivate your people better, figure out what they want and how you can give that to them for doing what you want them to do.

### **3. Build Your Team**

It is not enough that people are motivated to succeed at work. They have to work together as a team to accomplish the group's objective. After all, if we just want them to all "do their own things" we don't need you as a manager to mold them into a team, do we?

Here are some ways to improve your team building skills

### **4. Be a Leader, Not Only a Manager**

You have built the best team from the best employee available. You motivated them to peak performance. What is missing? Motivating a team is worthless unless you provide direction; unless you turn that motivation toward a goal and lead the team to it. Enthusiasm, dedication and charisma are some of the

more important characteristics of leadership. Leaders are seen as good and evil, and take on many personalities and roles, from managers or coaches to world leaders. It is believed that every leader possesses a charisma that provides change and success. Thus leadership begins with vision, concern and mentorship. Leadership, a critical management skill, is the ability to motivate a group of people toward a common goal. Perhaps the one personal skill that has the greatest impact on your job satisfaction, promotion potential, and career success is your ability to communicate effectively with others. By improving your communications skills at work you increase your ability to achieve success, have your successes noted, and get yourself those promotions you deserve. It is the ability to lead others that truly sets a manager apart from their peers. Remember that leaders are found at all levels of the organization, so be one.

### **5. Improve as a Communicator**

Communication may be the single most important skill of a manager. After all, all the others depend on it. You can't be a leader if you can't communicate your vision. You can't motivate people if they can't understand what you want. Communication skills can be improved through practice.

### **6. Get Better at Managing Money**

To stay in business, a company has to make money. That means bringing money in the door and it means spending less than you bring in. Depending on your function in the organization, you may have more influence on one area or the other, but you need to understand both. You can help your company, your employees, and yourself be getting better at managing the company's money.

### **7. Get Better at Managing Time**

The one thing you will probably have less of at work than money is time. The better you get at managing time, yours and others, the more effective you will be as a manager.

### **8. Improve Yourself**

Don't focus so hard on your people that you forget about yourself. Identify the areas in which you are weak and improve them. The fact that you are reading this article shows you understand the concept. You need to put it into practice.

### **9. Practice Ethical Management**

Ethics is very important in business.

### **10. Take a Break**

You are less effective as a manager if you are over-stressed. You are less tolerant. You snap at people more. No one wants to be anywhere near you. Take a break. Give yourself a chance to relax and recharge your batteries. Your increased unbelievable productivity when you return will more than make up for the time you take off. Have a good laugh or go lie on a beach somewhere.