

THE FIRST TIME MANAGER BY L. BELKER, J. MCCORMICK AND G. TOPCHIK | BOOK SUMMARY & PDF

The First Time Manager by L. Belker, J McCormick and G Topchik is a great guide for anyone looking to step up in their career and take on the role of a manager. They cover different types of managers, different types of employees and discuss how to handle the transition from employee to manager. With plenty of tips and tricks on what to do and what to avoid this is a must-read!

SO YOU'RE GOING TO MANAGE PEOPLE

There are many different ways that individuals become managers. Unfortunately, many companies don't go through a very thorough process in choosing those who will be moved into a managerial position. The best individual contributor doesn't always make the best manager, although many companies still make the choice on that basis.

The theory is that successful past performance is the best indicator of future success. However, management skills are very different from the skills one needs to succeed as an individual contributor.

Managers need to focus on people, not just tasks. They need to rely on others, not just be self-reliant. Managers are also team-oriented and have a broad focus, whereas non-managers succeed by having a narrow focus and being detail-oriented.

Management is not for everyone

Unfortunately, far too many organizations still use the 'sink or swim' method of management training. All employees who move into supervisory positions must figure it out on their own. This method assumes that every- one intuitively knows how to manage. They don't. Managing people is crucial to the success of any organization; but in too many cases, it is left to chance.

Far too many people accept management promotions because they feel (often rightly so) that they will be dead-ended if they reject the promotion.

The omnipotent one

Some people believe that if you want something done right, you'd better do it yourself. People with this attitude rarely make good leaders or managers because they have difficulty delegating responsibility. They have so little faith in their team members that they trust them with only trivial tasks. What they are really saying is that they don't know how to properly train their people.

There is often a staff turnover problem in a team with this kind of manager. The employees are usually more qualified than the "omnipotent one" believes and they soon tire of handling only trivia.

Omnipotent ones seldom give out recommendations for promotion. They are convinced that the reason they must do all the work is that their staff doesn't accept responsibility. They can never admit that it is because they refuse to delegate.

The chosen few

In the best organizations, you're not chosen for a managerial position because of your technical knowledge, but because someone has seen the spark of leadership in you. That is the spark you must start developing. Leadership is difficult to define. A leader is a person others look to for direction, someone whose judgment is respected because it is usually sound.

Leaders are people who can see into the future and visualize the results of their decision making. They can also set aside matters of personality and make decisions based on fact.

People are chosen to be managers for a variety of reasons. If you're chosen for sound reasons, acceptance by your new staff will, for the most part, be much easier to gain.

STARTING OUT

1. Don't believe that everyone is happy about your promotion. Some of your coworkers will feel they should have been chosen.
2. Some coworkers will put you to the test early.
3. Most—you hope the majority—will adopt a wait-and-see attitude.
4. Initially you will be measured against your predecessor in the position.

Changes

One of your first decisions should be to refrain from immediately instituting changes in the method of operation. Keep in mind that most people find change threatening. Sudden change often results in a fear response that will work against you.

When you do need to make changes, whether soon after your promotion or later, be as forthcoming as possible in explaining what will be taking place and why. The more forthcoming you can be, the more you will help your team get past the resistance to change that is a normal part of human nature.

In all settings, but particularly when implementing changes, answer questions as honestly as possible. If you are new to the position, don't be afraid to say 'I don't know' if you don't.

If you make changes immediately, you'll be resented. In addition to being disquieting to your team, your actions can be construed as being arrogant and an insult to your predecessor.

Using your new authority

View the authority of the new position as you would a limited inventory. The fewer times you draw on the inventory, the greater is the supply that remains for when it is really needed.

If you don't draw down your inventory of authority too often, the authority you may have to use in an emergency is more effective because it is infrequently displayed. The people you lead know that you are the manager. They know that the requests you make carry the authority of your position. The vast majority of the time, it is unnecessary to use that authority.

A personal touch

Sometime during the first sixty days on the job, you should plan on having a personal conversation with each of the people in your area of responsibility. Don't do this the first week or so. Give your people a chance to get used to the idea that you're there.

When it comes time to talk, ask them into your office for an unhurried discussion about anything that is on their minds. Do no more talking than necessary. This first discussion is not designed for outward communication with your team members; it is designed to open lines of communication from them to you.

Show a genuine interest in their concerns and learn what their ambitions are within the company. You can't fake genuine interest in others; you're doing this because you care about the employees' well-being. Such attention is advantageous to both sides. If you can help employees achieve their goals, they'll be more productive.

Friends?

One of the problems many new executives confront is handling friendships with people in the department who now become their employees.

It is obvious that you shouldn't have to give up your friendships simply because you've received a promotion. However, you don't want your friendships to hurt your performance or the performance of your friends. It is a mistake to allow your friendships to interfere with your method of operation.

As a new manager, you will need to establish some expectations of how you will work with all of your team members, whether they are friends or not. You need to hold all individuals to the same standards of performance, behavior, and accountability. Also keep in mind that what might look like friendship to you can often look like favoritism to others.

Structuring your organisation

With time, you will want to consider whether you can improve the structure of your organization. It is best not to do this too soon. Restructurings tend to be very stressful for all involved. It is best to do them less often and well.

As you look at the reporting relationships within your team, you will need to pay particular attention to how many people are reporting directly to you. This number is referred to as your **span of control**. In recent decades, information technology has allowed organizations to have fewer but broader layers. This flattening of organizational structures has had many positive results. Executed well, it has allowed for more efficient communication and improved decision-making.

Less experienced managers sometimes make the mistake of an excessive span of control. It is easy to do. Nearly everyone would like to report directly to you. The problem is that you can only effectively manage a limited number of direct reports. An excessively broad span of control is a setup for failure.

So, what span of control will work for you?

There are a number of variables you need to take into account.

1. The physical location of your direct reports. You can handle a little broader span

of control if they are located in the same facility as you. The ability to meet with them in person will ease communication.

2. Another factor is the level of experience; a direct report who is a proven performer is not likely to require as much of your time. A new employee or one who has recently been moved into a new position or given additional responsibilities will probably require more of your time, at least for a while.
3. A good rule of thumb is not to have more direct reports than you can meet with once a week. Five is a good maximum number. This allows you to have one of your one-on-one meetings each day of the workweek. If your direct reports know they'll get face time with you every week, they will be able to save up items they need to discuss until that meeting.

BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

The success habit

Building confidence in employees is not an easy task. Your goal is to help them establish a pattern of success. Confidence is built on success, so your job as a leader is to give them tasks at which they can succeed. Especially with new employees, assign them tasks they can master. Build in them the habit of being successful, starting small if needed, with smaller successes.

You can also build confidence by involving your people in some of the decision-making processes. Without delegating any of your supervisory responsibilities, allow employees to have some major input into matters that affect them.

The importance of building trust

- Share the vision of the organization and the department with your team members.
- Give individuals clear directions.
- Share examples of how you have succeeded and what mistakes you have made.
- Talk to each of your team members to learn what each one wants from the job.

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

Praise lets employees know that you care about what they are doing. It also lets employees know that their work is important. Your goal as a leader is to inspire your team members to perform at the top of their ability. Praising them in an appropriate way when it is deserved is part of providing this inspiration.

Consider the following points when providing praise:

- Be specific about the action/behaviour/work.
- Describe the impact their work had.
- Don't overdo it.

Giving praise

Giving praise or appreciation involves two steps.

1. First, you specifically describe the behavior, action, or performance that deserves the appreciation.
2. Then you describe why it deserves your appreciation and the business impact of the contribution.

BEING AN ACTIVE LISTENER

Active listening means letting the other person know that he or she has been heard. You do this by involving yourself in the conversation, making clarifying statements, asking questions, summarizing what you have heard, and using appropriate visual and vocal cues. The best listeners are active ones.

Active listeners encourage the other person to talk. When listeners finally talk, they don't turn the conversation back to them-selves. They continue the other person's line of communication. They use certain phrases or gestures to signal that they are truly interested in what is being said.

Being an active listener also means that all three forms of communication are in accord. That means that the words you use, your facial expressions, and your tone of voice all give the same meaning.

Conversational terminators

Once a manager achieves a reputation for being an outstanding listener, the staff lines up to discuss many matters. Some people will overstay their welcome. The conversational terminators are key:

- "I appreciate your coming in."
- "It was nice talking to you."
- "You have given me a lot to think about."
- "Let me think about that a while and get back to you."
- Picking up and glancing at a piece of paper

It's not only important to be able to carry these out but also to read when they are done to you.

THE NEW MANAGERS JOB AND PITFALLS TO AVOID

As a manager you need to play many roles—coach, standard setter, performance appraiser, teacher, motivator, and so forth. You select the appropriate role based on the situation you're in and the objectives that you want to accomplish. Often, new managers are given the advice to "just be yourself." This is actually bad advice. It will prevent you from using the different roles that will make you a successful and effective manager.

The manager's major responsibilities

1. Hiring is finding individuals to succeed on the job.
2. Communicating is sharing the vision and goals and objectives of the organization with your employees. I
3. Planning is deciding what work needs to be done to meet the goals of your department that
4. Organizing is determining the resources that are needed to perform each job or project.
5. Training is assessing the skill level of each of your employees to determine skill gaps, and then providing instructional opportunities to close these gaps.
6. Monitoring is making sure that the work is being done.
7. Evaluating is assessing the performance of individual team members and comparing it to the levels needed for that individual contributor and the team to be successful.
8. Firing is removing people from the team who are not able to make the contribution necessary for success.

Genuine concern

One way to perform your job well is to give full attention to the needs of the people in your area of responsibility. Some leaders make the mistake of thinking that the concern they show for their employees will be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Genuine concern, however, is a sign of strength. Your concern must be genuine, you cannot fake it.

Pitfalls to avoid

1. You must resist the temptation to make your old job your occupational hobby, simply because it is familiar and comfortable.
2. You may manage others, but you still have tasks of your own to perform; you

wear two hats. If this is your situation, you must stay interested and involved in the details for a while.

3. Many first-time managers who have been promoted from a line position, are so enthralled with detail that the overall objective is lost. Balance is required.

DEALING WITH YOUR SUPERIORS

It is also important for managers to pay attention to their attitude toward superiors. Their future success depends on both their subordinates and superiors.

- Be loyal to them - the kind of loyalty we're talking about has to do with carrying out policies or decisions that are morally valid.
- Make recommendations that are broadly based and consistent with the greater good of the company.
- On occasion, a decision or policy will be made that is directly contrary to the opinions you've expressed; you'll be expected to support that decision or policy, and you may even have to implement it. If you don't already know, ask your boss why the decision was made.

You have a responsibility

- Keep your manager informed of your plans, actions, and projects.
- Be considerate of your manager's time and try to schedule appointments or meetings at your manager's convenience.
- Be well-prepared. Present your arguments and concerns logically and objectively and have examples and facts to back up what you're saying.
- Be willing to listen to your manager's point of view.

Know your managers style

There are 4 basic manager personality types;

1. The Monopolisers. These managers like to be in charge of everything and are fast decision makers who stick to their decisions, are very organized, and are bottom line-oriented. They are "my way or the highway" types.
2. The Methodicals. These managers are analytic types who like to take their time gathering information and data before making a decision. They are very steady and predictable and overly concerned with accuracy.
3. The Motivators. These are the bosses who are fun to be around. They are charismatic and seem to have good relationships with everyone in the organization. They have high energy, creativity, and a competitive spirit.
4. The Mixers. Mixers have a strong sense of dedication, are loyal team members,

patient, sympathetic, understanding, dependable, and great at keeping the peace.

CHOOSING A MANAGERIAL STYLE OF YOUR OWN

The autocrat vs. the diplomat

Autocrats want to make every decision and view the staff as providing robotic responses to their commands.

Autocrats also believe that if they take a softer approach, employees will take advantage of them, thinking that a softer approach will be seen as a sign of weakness.

The autocrat type doesn't want to be bothered. This person's attitude is; "Do it because I said so."

The diplomat knows that the time spent up front, getting everybody involved, pays off with huge dividends down the road.

The diplomat realizes that the more people understand what and why, the better they perform.

People working for the autocrat believe they are working for someone, while those reporting to the diplomat believe they are working with someone.

The need for awareness

As a new manager, you should use the "awareness approach" when selecting an appropriate managerial style. In order to be aware, you must use the right amount of control and encouragement for each of your employees. Control is:

1. Telling employees what to do
2. Showing them how to do it
3. Making sure that the work is done

Encouragement is:

1. Motivating
2. Listening
3. Removing interference so employees can do what is expected of them

The amount of control or encouragement each employee requires will depend on what she is working on or what is occurring in the department.

There is a connection between what your staff needs from you and how much control and/or encouragement you give them; in other words, are you being aware of their needs?

TACKLING YOUR NEW DUTIES

Building a team dynamic

In order to build a team dynamic, the following six factors are essential:

1. Open communication
2. Empowerment
3. Clear roles and responsibilities
4. Goal clarity
5. An effective leader
6. A reward and accountability system for both individual team members and the entire team

Managing problem employees

Generally, you'll be much more effective as a leader if you can solve your own problems in your own department and not unload them onto another department.

But, some employees will have personal problems that hinder their attendance and performance on the job. You would be quite naive to believe that alcohol, drugs, or serious family difficulties were not going to affect your management responsibilities.

Just because you're a manager doesn't mean you're equipped to handle every problem that comes your way. These are situations where you need to look outside for help.

As a new manager, you are likely to run into many different types of employees whom you find challenging. When faced with managing them, you must deal with their behaviors. If you let these behaviors slide, you're giving the message that it's okay to keep behaving that way. Here are a few of the types of employees that most new managers find particularly challenging; the attacker, the comic, the deserter, the limelight seeker, the moonlighter, the not-my-jobber, the bleeding heart & the complainer. Keep an eye out for these types and learn to deal with them effectively.

HIRING AND INTERVIEWING

Almost without exception, managers say the most important ingredients in hiring a new employee are experience, qualification, or education. They rarely come up with the missing ingredient: attitude.

You can hire an employee with all the experience, education, and qualifications you could hope for, but if the person has a bad attitude, you have just hired a problem employee.

Screening

Your aim is to get to know the prospect better, and that means not creating a confrontational tone to the interview. Rather, make statements or ask questions that will relax the applicant. Hold the tougher questions for later in the process.

Some sample questions to ask are:

- What did you like best about your last job?
- What did you like least about your last job?
- Tell me about your last manager.

Look over an application over before you sit down with the applicant, not for the first time in the presence of the applicant. Then ask the questions that reveal work attitudes.

Never hesitate to ask colleagues you respect to interview a candidate you are considering. Get a second or third opinion.

When describing the job

In describing a job, you should include some basic information that every- body would like to have, so that they don't have to ask. Tell them the hours, starting salary, length of probationary period, and whether successful completion of the trial period generates a salary increase. You can also include a brief overview of the benefits package. By getting this basic information out of the way, you avoid cluttering up the open-ended questions that provide the attitude clues needed to make a hiring judgment.

TRAINING TEAM MEMBERS

You must know what needs to be done, not exactly how it's done. A lot depends on what level manager you are. If you are responsible for doing some of the work yourself and leading others in the same function, you will know how to perform the operation.

New employees need to be trained as soon as possible in their job, learn how things are done at your company, and understand how they fit into the overall organization.

The role of a trainer

Pick a trainer who is very good at explaining what is going on—one who can break the job down into its component parts and who doesn't describe it in technical terms that will be hard for the new employee to understand at first. The technical terms will be picked up eventually, but this "foreign language" must not overwhelm the trainee.

During the training period, it's a good idea to break the job down into small parts and teach the functions one at a time. In showing new employees the entire function, you run the risk of overwhelming them. Of course, you should first explain the overall purpose of the job including how it fits into the broader operation.

MANAGING CHANGE

As a manager, not only do you have to be prepared to embrace change and be a champion of it, but also to accept and support changes that you may disagree with. It is best to admit that you do not like the change (as your staff may already know this), but state that you will actively support it and expect your staff to support it as well.

Reduce resistance to change

The best strategy is to involve your employees in the change. First, explain why the change is occurring and point out any benefits to them. Often there are no benefits for them. The customer may benefit or some other department may flourish as a result. Sometimes, you just have to be honest and say something like "This will not help our team, but it will help make the entire organization more successful."

DISCIPLINING THE EMPLOYEE

1. Never make it personal. One of the oldest rules of management is that employee discipline should always be done in private. Never humiliate an employee, even in cases of dismissal. The employee must always be made to understand that what is being discussed is the performance, not the person.
2. Give and take. You should have a conversation, not deliver a monologue. You need to encourage the employee's participation in the conversation. Without it there is a good chance you won't solve the problem.
3. Eliminate misunderstanding. Get feedback on what you've mutually agreed upon, so there can be no misunderstanding later about what was said.

Disciplinary techniques

1. Recommend zero salary increases
2. Put employees on probation
3. Start new employees on a probationary program

FIRING

Most companies have guidelines on the termination process, you need to ask your manager or human resources department if you are not sure what they are. It is best to err on the side of excess deliberation rather than on the side of excess haste.

Trying to make it work

Firing is not the first thought that should come into your head. Turnover is expensive. If you do ultimately have to let the underperformer go, you may incur costs and you will have to invest time in replacing them. Doing all you reasonably can to bring her performance up to acceptable standards needs to be your first priority.

Needs to be fired

Only after you are completely convinced that you have a below-satisfactory performer with little or no hope of bringing the performance up to proper standards should you consider termination as a possible solution.

Prepare the documentation

Documentation of the underperforming employee's results is critically important. Of course, you must keep these records for all your employees. If your company has a formal performance appraisal system, then you may be adequately covered.

The dismissal

Most managers like to stage the drama late Friday afternoon. By the time it's over, all the coworkers of the person being fired have left the office.

A good way to start the dismissal or termination interview is to review in brief what has happened. Don't drag it out and make it a recitation of all the other person's mistakes.

Any money due at the time of the dismissal should be given to the dismissed employee at the end of the interview. Being fired is enough of an emotional blow; wondering when the final check will arrive can only add to the misery.

Put yourself in the other person's position. Despite your best efforts, he may still not feel the termination was completely justified.

Another courtesy that is owed to the employee is to keep your intention to fire her as confidential as possible.

LEGAL AWARENESS

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT as a first-time manager that you know current employment laws, practices, and regulations set by federal, state, and local governments in order to avoid any legal liability. Consider the following;

- sexual harassment
- disability
- substance abuse
- privacy
- family and medical leave
- violence in the workplace

WORKING WITH PEOPLE, BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS & MANAGING RISKS

No secrets

Too many managers, take some private pleasure in knowing something that others do not know. They assume that if they don't give others certain information, the others don't know about it. That is a flawed conclusion. If you do not let your people

know what's going on, they will either seek out the information from other sources or simply make assumptions.

Human resources

It is a good idea for you to familiarize yourself with what your HR department or HR person can do for you. For your own success and the success of your team, you need to build a good working relationship with HR.

Loyalty

It's in your best interest to be reasonably loyal, not only to the organization but also to your manager and your team members. This means not criticizing your company in the community.

A reasonable level of loyalty also means not trashing the people you lead. Even if there are times when you feel completely justified, avoid the temptation.

Give the organization and its people the benefit of the doubt. If you have come to the conclusion that your organization absolutely does not deserve your loyalty, it is time for you to move on.

Motivation

The only motivation that really works is self-motivation. While your people may genuinely want to see the organization succeed, they are primarily motivated by their own interests. The most successful managers artfully align the self-interests of their team members with the goals of the organization.

Some people are self-motivated by the possibility of a promotion. As soon as they see a relationship between their current performance and a promotion, they'll strive to perform at the top of their ability. Others seek their manager's approval. Since satisfactory performance is how they receive approval, that is the route they follow. Still others like to compete in a friendly way with their peers. This type of person wants to be the best performer in the area and so will work hard at achieving that objective.

Learning how to maximize the performance of staff is a permanent part of your daily work life. You'll have varying levels of turnover, which brings in new people. You need to get to know and understand them.

UNDERSTANDING RISK INCLINATION

By accepting your new management position, you decided to take some risks. Foremost, you moved from a position where you were likely performing well to take on a new challenge with no guarantee of success. This suggests that you have some willingness to take a career-related risk.

Colleagues and risk

People who are less risk inclined are likely to be more careful and methodical. On the other hand, more risk-inclined people often have a bias for action that can be vital to getting an initiative started. The goal is not to change a team member's risk inclination, but to be aware of it so you have a fuller understanding of how to motivate her and utilize her talents.

An awareness of individual risk inclination is important when you are working with members of your organization beyond your team. Think about the level of risk inclination of the various senior executives in your organization.

What does this tell you about how you would sell them on an idea? You would want to explain to the executives with lower risk inclinations all the steps that can be taken to lessen the risks involved. For the executives who are more risk inclined, you would want to focus on the opportunities presented by the idea. Spending a lot of time telling more risk-inclined executives about the risk reduction steps you presented to their less risk-inclined peers may not interest them.

For all these reasons, it is valuable for you to have an awareness of your staff and colleagues risk inclination.

ENCOURAGING INITIATIVE AND INNOVATION

A structure and culture that requires centralized decision making is no longer sustainable. To be responsive to the challenges of the ever faster pace of business, good decisions need to be made at lower levels. Your organization needs to be agile. Stated simply, you and your team will not be successful if you create a structure in which you make all the decisions.

Responding to flawed decisions or actions

Someone will make a flawed decision. When this happens, as it inevitably will, you need to bite your tongue and keep the long-term view in mind. To continue to encourage initiative taking and the decentralized decision making that will make your team more agile and effective, you need to take these steps:

1. Review the circumstances of the situation with the team member(s) involved.
2. Do not be critical.
3. Explain that your goal is to make sure everyone learns from the experience and that the mistake is not repeated.
4. Drive the conversation toward what can be done differently next time to get a better outcome.
5. Make it clear that while the team members cannot afford to make the same mistake again, you appreciate their willingness to take initiative and want to encourage them to continue to do so.

Promoting innovation

At its core, innovation is important because very few organizations can continue to exist, let alone be successful, if they are not continually improving.

Innovation involves risk. By definition, risk means uncertain outcomes. So, how do you encourage your team members to be innovative knowing that all their ideas will not be successful? The answer is by rewarding the effort as much as the outcome. If you reward only successful outcomes, you will get very little, if any, innovative effort from your team.

It is how you respond to the negative or less successful outcome that will determine the climate for innovation in your organization.

Reward initiative the same as outcome

In practice this means you have to treat a well-conceived and executed effort that was not fully successful the same as a successful effort in performance appraisals, bonuses, rewards, and awards. If you have an award program for innovation, you need to have two tracks of awards. Those involved in the successful efforts may receive the Innovators Award. Those who are a part of the well-conceived and executed effort that was not fully successful may receive the Strivers Award.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

Intelligent risk taking centers around increasing the chances of a positive outcome and decreasing the chances of a negative outcome. It involves six steps:

1. Identifying the risk
2. Assessing the likely outcomes
3. Improving the chances of success
4. Updating the assessment of likely outcomes
5. Conducting a disaster check

5. Deciding and proceeding

THE GENERATION GAP

First time managers can be any age. There are new managers who are in their twenties, others in their thirties and forties, and some in their fifties and sixties. Three situations exist with regard to age differences between managers and the people reporting to them:

1. The mature manager supervises people who are younger.
2. The young manager supervises people who are older.
3. The mature or young manager leads a group of varied ages, some younger, some older, and some of the same generation.

Conflicts sometimes occur when a young manager supervises older workers. In some cases, mature people may resent working for a young manager.

The younger manager

If you are the younger manager, you want your approach to be a little more gradual than may be your inclination. You want the staff to think of you as mature beyond your years. If your actions create that impression, sooner or later it becomes a fact in everyone's mind.

Take time making changes; go a touch slower. Don't throw your weight around by making decisions right and left, and too quickly. Many older employees will read quick decisions as being impulsive.

You don't have to know the answer to every question brought to you. Faking an answer when you don't know it is a mistake, and the experienced employee sees through it instantly. If you can't answer a question say, "Good question. I don't know the answer, but I'll find out and get back to you." This candor avoids the image of being a know-it-all kid.

Make your older employees more comfortable with your supervision by delaying some of the commonsense and fairly obvious decisions you have to make as manager.

WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

A job description typically tells what is done, the educational background required, how much experience is needed to perform the work competently, what the specific accountability of the job is, and the extent of supervisory or management responsibility.

The description may also spell out short-term and long-term objectives and detail the relationships of people involved, including what position to which each job reports. It will often mention the personal contacts the job requires, such as with the public or governmental agencies. The Three-Tier Approach

When writing job descriptions, you'll find it helpful to use the "three-tier approach." The three tiers are:

1. Technical skills and knowledge
2. Behaviors
3. Interpersonal skills

DOING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Performance appraisals are a powerful management tool that are often underutilized or neglected. Done well, they will help you be more successful as a leader. Done poorly or not at all, they can expose you and your organization to unnecessary liability.

As a manager, you have a responsibility to follow some basic guidelines when writing and conducting performance appraisals. Here are the seven tenets of performance appraisal: 1. Set goals and objectives so employees know what is expected of them. 2. Provide training and coaching to help employees succeed. 3. Provide ongoing feedback on performance. 4. Prepare the paperwork for the review. 5. Conduct the review in a timely manner. 6. Understand and communicate the review's importance. 7. Be thorough and base the review on the employee's performance, not your own attitude.

SALARY ADMINISTRATION

If you have a job evaluation program, you probably also have salary ranges for each position in the organization. As a manager, you work within that scale.

It makes sense to have a minimum and a maximum salary for each position. You can't allow a situation to develop in which an individual could stay on the same job for years and receive a salary out of all proportion to what the task is worth. It's important to make certain that long-term employees are aware of this situation, especially as they get close to the salary "lid" on the job.

Equity

As the manager, you're concerned with equity. You should review the salaries of all the people who report to you. You might begin by listing all the jobs in your department, from top to bottom. You might then write the monthly salary next to each name. Based on what you know about the job performances, do the salaries look reasonable? Is there any salary that looks out of line?

In recommending a salary increase for several employees, you'll have some tricky decisions to make. If the company makes all its salary adjustments at the same time each year, then it's fairly easy to compare one recommendation against another. You can make all your decisions at one time and see how they stack up with one another. But if salary decisions occur throughout the year—for example, if they are tied to the worker's employment anniversary—it's more difficult to have all the decisions spread out in front of you.

The salary recommendation

In making a salary recommendation, be as sure as you possibly can that it's a reasonable amount. It should be neither too low nor too high and at the same time fit within the framework of the performance the employee gives the company. An increase that is too high, for example, could create an "encore" problem. Anything less than the same amount offered the next time around may be considered an insult by the employee.

Since a small increase can be considered an insult, you'd perhaps do better to recommend no increase at all rather than a pittance. Sometimes a small increase is a cop-out, and is given because the supervisor lacks the courage to recommend no increase. But this only postpones the inevitable reckoning; you are better off confronting the situation immediately and honestly.

IMPROVING AND DEVELOPING YOURSELF

Having emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a management concept with which you need to be familiar. Social scientists and psychologists have found that managers and leaders who have high levels of emotional intelligence, seem to do much better in their managerial and leadership roles than their counterparts.

Having emotional intelligence basically means that you have emotional smarts. If you can answer yes to the following questions, you probably have high levels of emotional intelligence:

- Can you walk into a room and sense the mood?
- Can you recognize the emotional states of others?
- Do you know when you are becoming emotional and can you control it if you want to?
- Under stressful and chaotic situations, can you evoke positive emotions in others?
- Can you and do you express to others how you are feeling and what your emotions are?

The skills of recognizing your own feelings and the feeling of others; being able to express your emotions appropriately; being self-motivated and getting others to be; and being able to deal with stress, tension, and chaos and helping others do the same mark the excellent manager of today's workplace.

Developing a positive self-image

People can get awfully mixed up in dealing with this ego thing. There are always people who want you to feel guilty if you have a healthy opinion of yourself. But as the old saying goes, "love your neighbor as yourself." This implies that your capacity to love your neighbor is determined by your capacity to love yourself. This principle applies to management, too.

The fact is, we fall or rise by our self-image. If we have a low opinion of ourselves and believe we're going to fail, our subconscious will try to deliver that result to us. Conversely, if we have a high opinion of ourselves and think we're going to succeed, our chances for success are greatly increased.

Be careful that you don't mishandle your feelings of success so that you are seen as being arrogant. A manager can feel pride in having been elevated into the managerial ranks without appearing cocky. Rather, the impression conveyed should be one of quiet confidence.

Office politics: play the game

As we already mentioned, you're judged by the performance of your area of responsibility. The people who report to you are as important to your future as are the people to whom you report. That leads directly to the matter of office politics. It exists everywhere. Consider the following points:

1. Prepare your understudy. Don't risk leaving a void.
2. Avoid the perils of indispensability. Do not allow yourself to be indispensable.
3. Following your predecessor. It helps if they left the place in a shambles.
4. Continue your own education. To prepare for a promotion, consider expanding your knowledge.
5. Dress for success. If you're not sure what to wear, you're better to go more formal than casual.
6. Toot your own horn. But do it softly.
7. Develop your presentation skills.

Managing your own time

1. Recognize that we all have the same amount of time per week. What you do with this time makes the difference.
2. Set deadlines for your projects.
3. Remember the difference between something being urgent vs. being important.
4. Try keeping a record for a week or two on how you spend your time.
5. Plan your day. The best time to do this is the evening before.
6. Plan your week.
7. Follow the 70/30 rule: Only schedule about 70 percent of your day. Leave the rest of your time for unplanned assignments.
8. Schedule set times for sending and returning telephone calls, reading and sending e-mails, office hours, and so forth.
9. Reward yourself when you get one of those A-priority items completed.
10. Develop the on-time habit. Show up on time, hand in things when they are due, and encourage your employees to do the same.
11. Consider working from home, in a remote office, in a seldom used conference room or a vacant office—somewhere people will not expect to find you when you have to work on a task that requires total focus and a minimum of interruptions.

THE WRITTEN WORD

Keep in mind that not only does an e-mail represent you to others, but it is also likely to be permanently archived. E-mails can be forwarded countless times. Something poorly stated can find its way to colleagues you have never met. You do not want to start at a deficit in their minds when you meet them because they have

read a poorly written e-mail you sent. On the positive side, a well-written e-mail speaks well of you and burnishes your reputation for being thoughtful and persuasive.

Do your best to write and speak the language correctly, give it the dignity it deserves, and represent yourself well.

DELEGATION: YOUR BEST FRIEND

There are many benefits to delegating. You get employees who are more involved and motivated because they are acquiring new skills, developing themselves, and being more involved in the success of the organization. Delegation is cost effective for the organization. The company now has someone in-house who can do work that only you were able to do previously. And it frees you up to do other things that are a better use of your time and talents.

Delegating also can help you broaden your perspective. Being a successful manager requires you to be able to see challenges and opportunities as they are approaching and before they arrive. Delegating has the potential to free you up to see further into the distance. Think of it this way—your distance vision is quite limited when you are in the trenches. Delegating helps you get out of the figurative trenches of performing recurring tasks that are not the best use of your abilities.

Finally, delegating is one of the most powerful training tools at your disposal. Sending a team member to a class to expand his skills is great, but actually giving him the opportunity to take on a real task with all the challenges it presents will result in a lot more learning and professional development than any class.

COPING WITH STRESS

React to the Problem, Not the Stress. To succeed, you must convert the fear of a stressful situation into the challenge of a stressful situation. If you are going to be a manager who periodically faces stressful situations, here are seven suggestions for you:

1. Don't make things worse. Don't be panicked into impulsive action.
2. Take a breath. Take several deep breaths and try to relax.
3. First things first. Reduce the situation to two or three key points that can be

- handled right away to lessen the urgency of the moment.
4. Distribute the load. Assign three or four major elements to members of your team to process in parts and then be combined into the whole.
 5. Seek advice. Ask for suggestions and ideas from the experienced members of your staff.
 6. Be levelheaded. Think about the problem and not your reaction to it.
 7. Visualize wisdom. See yourself as an actor playing the role of the wise, calm, and decisive leader. Play that role to the hilt, and after a while it will cease to be role-playing and will be you.

HAVING BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE

A healthy life must have balance, however; while your career is important, it is not your entire life. Actually, you will be a more complete manager if you are a more complete person. You cannot separate the two.

You must have the ability and determination to separate work from the rest of the day. It is important to be able to leave work at work and go on with the rest of your life. We need to have interests, hobbies, and other things to do outside of work. A fitness program that meets your needs and keeps you interested is of great value. Exercise is an excellent way to relieve stress.

Working from home?

You will inevitably need to take work home with you at times. At the very least, you will likely find yourself at home in the evenings catching up on e-mails. Ideally it would not be necessary to do work at home, but in reality that is nearly unavoidable. Work hard to minimize the work you do at home. Try not to fall into the trap of getting less done at the office knowing you can catch up at home. When you do have to get work done at home, set clear boundaries such as allocating specific time blocks for the work and abiding by them. Above all, do not let the work you take home overtake your personal life, which you need to preserve in order to maintain a healthy balance.