

Learning to Manage

Techniques and Tools for the New Manager

Overview

Employees value managers who:

- Are even-keeled
- Make time for one-on-one meetings
- Help employees solve problems by asking questions
- Take an interest in employees' lives and careers

Common pitfalls to avoid:

- Being bossy
- Micromanaging
- Being disengaged
- Displaying favoritism
- Seeking friendship rather than respect
- Ignoring performance problems
- Not handling stress well

People Management

- **Manage relationships:** Your overall goal should be to build trust, demonstrate empathy, and get to know employees as individuals.
- **Communicate up and down the organization:** Aim for clear and unambiguous communication. Tailor your message to share information that is most important to the recipient—employee or manager.
- **Give employees attention:** Show them you're listening by avoiding irritating habits such as interrupting or not making eye contact.

Project Management

Your job is to achieve results through others.

Develop a system to ensure that each employee is as successful as possible.

- **Set objectives:** Help employees prioritize their work based on organization's vision, your manager's priorities, the costs and benefits of each potential project, available resources, and your good judgment.
- **Determine key indicators:** Aim for positive measurements of success. Choose ones that make a difference in productivity, profitability, and performance. Watch out for those with unintended consequences.
- **Delegate work:** Choose projects that will develop your employees' capabilities.
- **Follow the A.B.C.D. feedback model:** A=Attention, B=Behavior, C=Change, D=Desired results.

Performance Management

- **Coaching:** Listen first, offer praise more than criticism, highlight one area for improvement, and follow up.
- **Developing:** Create a plan by setting specific learning goals, determining strategies to achieve each goal, and determining how accomplishments will be measured.
- **Evaluating:** Avoid common evaluation mistakes including the recency effect, halo effect, horn effect, mirror effect, lenient/strict teacher effect, and any stereotyping/bias.
- **Disciplining:** Be fair—treat employees appropriately. Be consistent—treat similar issues in a similar manner. Be prompt—address infractions soon after they occur.

Problem Management

- **Managing "Fires":** Recognize symptoms of mismanaging "fires" such as trying to control the uncontrollable, feeling like a victim, blaming yourself for every problem, and feeling paralyzed and unable to form a plan.
- Instead, deal with reality, take responsibility, be proactive in responding to a crisis, and be flexible in how to deal with it.
- Encourage employees to solve their own problems and resolve their own conflicts.

Personal Management

Develop a support system to help you grow as a manager:

- Find a mentor for career development.
- Create a network for troubleshooting and daily advice.
- Engage in continuous learning.

Manage your stress and daily pressures of the job:

- Get enough sleep.
- Get regular exercise.
- Practice deep breathing and simple stretches.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Get away—use your vacation time.