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How to Be a Good Manager



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Nov 04, 2019

Incorporate these five habits into your leadership strategy to become a good manager.

- A good manager sets a positive example and knows how to use their strengths to encourage their team to succeed.
- Successful managers work alongside their employees, coach team members and create an inclusive work environment.
- To be a good manager, it is important to communicate goals, expectations and feedback.

Anyone with experience or credentials can manage a team, but your managerial responsibilities include more than just task delegation and timecard approval. To be a good manager, you must focus on the growth of your team members as well as your company.

The best managers know how to strategically incorporate the strengths of each team member to build a successful organization. According to Deborah Sweeney, CEO of [MyCorporation](#), good managers use emotional intelligence and soft skills to do this.

"Traditionally, we have been taught to believe that the person with the highest IQ in the room is the smartest," Sweeney told Business News Daily. "However, science is increasingly proving that individuals with emotional intelligence and its four core skills – which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management – are actually the top performers within any company."

Those with a high emotional quotient (EQ) have the ability to engage with their team and develop strong relationships – both key factors to good management. If you want to be a good manager, incorporate these five habits into your daily leadership style.

1. Work with your team, not above them.

You might be used to having full control over your workload, but becoming a boss will force you to give up that control and delegate some responsibilities, said [Ora Shtull](#), an executive coach credentialed by the [International Coach Federation](#).

"If you don't break the addiction to doing it all, you won't have the capacity to step up and do more senior stuff," she said. "Letting go involves delegating. But it's important to note that delegating doesn't mean deserting the team or sacrificing accountability."

As a manager, you have a different set of responsibilities from your entry-level team members, but you should still get your hands dirty. Additionally, you should include your team in decision-making processes. [According to a recent study](#), 74% of American workers surveyed said they prefer a collaborative working culture to one where the boss makes most of the decisions.

Working with your employees builds better relationships, helping you learn about the strengths and weakness of each team member. Your employees will also trust you more if they feel you're working with them rather than above them.

"By choosing to lead by example and demonstrating that [you] are an expert at what [you] are asking employees to do, it will often result in more respect and productivity," said Sacha Ferrandi, founding partner of [Source Capital Funding Inc.](#) "It's impossible to deny that the work ethic of a boss is contagious – if you work hard for them, they are more likely to return the favor and work hard for you."

2. Create a positive and inclusive work environment.

The example you set for your office can greatly impact the success of your organization. It is important to create a positive, fun work environment that makes team members feel included and respected. A happy employee is a more productive employee. You can [create a diverse and inclusive work culture](#) by exemplifying good behavior on a daily basis, as well as implementing occasional team bonding activities.

You should frequently provide recognition for team successes (even small ones). Great leaders recognize their employees and express their gratitude whenever possible. Employees want to feel appreciated and have their work noticed. When you credit them for a job well done, it motivates them to keep working hard.

"Simply put, great bosses pause frequently to praise others and promote the positive, rather than harping on shortcomings and mistakes," said Shtull.

Offering praise can boost team morale and build a positive work culture. If you fail to give positive feedback and recognition, employees may think their work is going unnoticed and start to care less. In addition to daily recognition, [Leah de Souza](#), leadership communication coach and managing director of [Trainmar Consulting](#), recommends motivating people through team bonding and celebration.

"Set aside time for team bonding (pure fun) and team celebration (reward for a milestone team achievement)," she said. "Each of these team events are important to the cohesiveness and element of fun in the team. What is fun can differ culturally and from team to team, so make sure to get feedback on ideas."

Ask your team what types of recognition they prefer and how often they would like team events to occur. These events can be related to work, volunteering or just general fun, but take precautions to ensure that each event is inclusive and appropriate for your workplace.

3. Communicate goals, expectations and feedback.

One of the most important parts of being an effective manager is successfully [creating goals and communicating expectations](#) to team members. Managers should focus on creating SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound) goals for their team. De Souza said the objectives that are set at an organizational level should also be translated into departmental and individual goals.

"There must be a transparent link between all goals set throughout the organization," she said. "Goals must be set in agreement with team members."

After setting goals, good managers are transparent with team members about their expectations. De Souza recommends reviewing goals on a structured basis. You can regularly check in with team members to ensure they are happy and feel challenged in their roles. Communication is not one-sided, though; you must listen as much as you talk.

"Leaders who don't listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say, nothing to add," said Shtull. "In addition to giving up control of all the work, as a boss, you'll also have to break the addiction to being right all of the time. Don't always promote your own view. If your own ideas sound set in stone, your team members won't want to offer theirs."

Xan Raskin, founder and CEO of [Artixan Consulting Group LLC](#), added that great leaders don't just listen – they listen to understand. "Making sure your employees know you not only heard them, but you understand (even if you disagree) goes a long way to building a long-term rapport with employees."

4. Coach your team members.

To create a valuable, dedicated team, you'll have to advocate for them. Like good coaches, bosses should keep employees motivated and passionate about the work they do. This will help your team avoid [burnout](#) and enjoy delivering their best work.

"Effective managers coach by asking questions, empowering their team members to think deeply, and generate solutions," said Shtull. "In turn, team members gain confidence and grow, and ultimately become amazing bosses themselves."

Let employees know you care about their futures and careers. Provide them with the training and knowledge they need to succeed in the workplace. Good managers are not threatened by the growth and success of their employees; instead, they embrace and encourage change.

"I believe a great manager knows how to tap into the strengths of their team members and turn their unique abilities into strong performances," said Sweeney. "A good manager is not threatened by change in the workplace – whether it's a change in how certain processes are done or new leadership – and embraces and encourages new ideas and ways of doing things."

If you mentor your team so they can achieve their full potential, you will also see your organization succeed as a result.

5. Practice self-awareness and grow your leadership skills.

Effective leaders know that managing others doesn't mean they know everything. Managers should always be learning and growing alongside their team. There are several leadership skills that you can build upon, such as time management and [delegation](#). Raskin said that managers can do this by learning how to conserve their energy for the most important tasks.

"Figuring out exactly how much effort, time and attention an issue needs before moving on to the next is a critical skill to get you through a workday (and also make sure you have enough left for your personal life)," she said.

As the leader of the pack, you should practice self-awareness. Be mindful of your behavior and the message it sends to your employees. Raskin said that recognizing both the intentional and unintentional impact you have on others is a critical part of being a good manager, since you set much of the tone and culture for the organization.

"It will definitely take time and energy to get it right, even something as simple as how a manager conducts themselves at a meeting," she said. "Do they pull out their phone during a presentation and start reviewing emails? Knowing the message that sends to employees is critical – e.g., 'if the meeting isn't important to the boss, why should it be important to me?' Even these small things carry big meanings."

Successful management of a team has many moving parts, and it takes consistent self-reflection and change. Learn something new each day to work toward being the best leader you can be.

"It's OK not to know everything – that's actually not your job," said de Souza. "Show your team that you are a normal human being who can mess up sometimes and laugh at a silly joke. Being a manager is not about becoming a faraway figure. Your job is to engage and guide."

Additional reporting by Sammi Caramela and Brittney Morgan. Some source interviews were conducted for a previous version of this article.

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