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A New Manager's Tutorial



Your boss has just rewarded your dedication and hard work by giving you a managerial position. But, you have never managed before, and you don't know where to begin.

"New managers often suffer because they haven't had good role models and have experienced training that only helped in their prior job," says Alan Weiss, Ph.D., president of Summit Consulting Group Inc. in East Greenwich, R.I., and author of *The Unofficial Guide to Power Management*.

Here are some tips to transform your panic into progress as you begin your new career as a manager.

Be effective, not popular

"Managing is about effectiveness, not about being liked," emphasizes Dr. Weiss. You can drive yourself crazy if you try to please all your employees all the time. Instead, focus on communicating with clarity, firmness and fairness, realizing you may not be able to give your employees exactly what they want all the time.

Understand expectations

Employees also have different work expectations. Some prefer a structured environment, while others want more freedom. Some like to work in teams, while others work best alone in a quiet office. Some need a lot of recognition for their work, while others prefer to stay out of the limelight.

Regular one-on-one lunches with your employees will help you to understand their personality styles as well as their work expectations and personal goals.

Manage your time

"Invest in your best people and don't be usurped by attention to your remedial performers," says Dr. Weiss. In business, time is money. Instead of using your time trying to transform poor performers into dynamos, give them simpler tasks they can perform well, then spend your time and effort building your best people.

Do the right thing

"Ethical conduct doesn't exist in operations manuals or the legal department. It exists in your own value system. Always ask yourself, 'What's the right thing to do?'" says Dr. Weiss. "This will not only be best for your company but also will help you avoid sleepless nights."

Appreciate your employees

Managers and supervisors who show their appreciation to their employees will find their employees willing to go the extra mile. Take a minute to write a note of appreciation, create a certificate of progress or give a small gift or award.

Keep a daily journal

What worked? What didn't work? What got accomplished? What were you happy about? Frustrated about? This will help you analyze your problems as well as see your progress.

Find a mentor

"These times are too complex for trial and error or gut feeling. Don't reinvent the wheel. Find someone who's successful and respected to guide you," says Dr. Weiss.

Maintain perspective

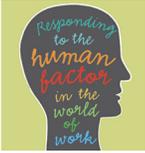
"Don't worry about your next job or promotion or about future raises," says Dr. Weiss. "Worry instead about delivering value to the customer and support to your subordinates. If you do those two things well, all the rest will happen, too."

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**A Message to
Managers from
Claremont EAP**

Often, the employee who needs their Employee Assistance Program the most doesn't think to call for assistance. A manager's referral to the EAP can be an effective strategy for improving an employee's effectiveness, productivity, motivation and morale. A referral to the EAP can also decrease absenteeism, reduce turnover, foster acceptance of change and reduce stress.

**An EAP referral
can make a
difference.**



Creative Problem Solving 101

Don't despair if the same frustrating problems shackle you at work time and time again. Perhaps you're bored with your job or concerned because the competition is passing your company by. Be aware that you can solve these problems with creativity.

Whether you realize it, you already have creative ability. "Ninety-eight percent of people are creative, but our socialization process causes them to put it on the back burner. The fastest way to tap into your creativity is to learn how to use creative problem-solving techniques," says James M. Higgins, author of "101 Creative Problem-Solving Techniques."

Two of his favorite techniques -- one for individuals, the other for groups -- may work for you.

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping helps individuals brainstorm solutions to a problem; plan a meeting, party or vacation; organize daily work duties; compose a speech; or take notes at a staff meeting.

An Englishman named Tony Buzan originated the technique, which starts with a core idea and works outward instead of from lists or outlines. The idea resembles streets radiating from the center of a city.

"What makes mind mapping work," says Mr. Higgins, "is that it mirrors the way the brain thinks, from a central idea out, with connections made between thoughts."

How to mind map

Draw a small circle in the center of a large piece of unlined paper, and in it write a word or draw a picture representing your main topic. This is like the center of your city. Radiating from the circle, draw lines representing your topic's different facets. These are like your city's main streets.

On each line print only key words rather than complete sentences. Connect smaller lines to the main ones to represent sub-categories, ideas, items or names. These are like your city's side streets. Whenever you think of a new idea, simply add a line where needed.

To spark more creativity and add organization, use different-colored ink for different categories, or draw symbols next to similar or interrelated items.

Besides awakening your creativity, mind mapping allows you to see the total picture on one page.



Storyboarding

With storyboarding, a group can come up with a multitude of creative ideas quickly while viewing them in an organized fashion.

To use storyboarding in a group setting, encourage people to call out their ideas no matter how off-the-wall or outrageous they sound -- and allow no negative comments. One person's zany idea can spark creative ones from other group members. Later on you can decide which ideas to use.

As people express ideas, someone should write them on separate 4-by-6-inch sticky notes, which should be placed on a wall so everyone can see the ideas together. Put the notes under appropriate headings, and move them around as needed.

Begin with these three headings: Topic, Purpose and Miscellaneous. When several miscellaneous ideas have the same line of thought, group them under a new heading.

When dealing with a complex project, create four separate storyboards -- one each for planning, ideas, organization and communication.

Balance your brain

Mind mapping and storyboarding use both the brain's creative right side and its linear left side. "This is important," says Mr. Higgins, "because you want a balanced brain so you can take your creativity and do something with it."

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