

**Summit**

# **5 ISSUES**

***NEW MANAGERS FACE AND  
WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM***

## ***FIVE ISSUES NEW MANAGERS FACE AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM***

Stepping into a managerial role for the first time is a significant transition for any employee, and one that can throw up many challenges if the right support is not in place. This article aims to outline five of the main problems faced by new managers and how they can be avoided to ensure your organisation's new managers can hit the ground running and deliver quality outputs from the start.

## ***1. ESTABLISHED PEER RELATIONSHIPS DON'T CHANGE.***

One of the challenges of internal promotions is how to navigate the change in relationship between the new manager and their team. The relationship between manager and subordinate is substantially different from a peer-to-peer relationship, and making that transition within established relationships is tricky. Many new managers worry that their work relationships won't just change, but actually suffer as a result of their promotion, but this doesn't have to be the case. Though the dynamic of the relationship will inevitably change, as long as boundaries and expectations are clearly understood by all parties, there is no reason why the relationship will not continue to be friendly, co-operative, and productive. In fact, being clear and open about the new context of your relationship with colleagues will likely improve those relationships – as it removes the ambiguity that often leads to awkwardness and tension.

The new manager's own line manager can play a major role in smoothing this transition. One way to do this is to (re)introduce the new manager to their team as their manager, and clearly lay out to everyone the context of their new working relationship. This includes the changed boundaries and expectations, as well as explaining why they are as they are. It would also be wise to advise the new manager that people pleasing (whether seeking the approval of subordinates or higher-ups) is neither healthy or productive.

## ***2. THERE IS AN ABSENCE OF RELEVANT AND FOCUSED MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT***

It is a bad idea to drop a new manager into position and expect them to perform optimally straight away and without training. However, many organisations have a flawed understanding of how training can help their managers succeed. It is often seen as a quick fix to send new managers on a training course and expect them to be able to hit the ground running on return. This perspective is focused on simply getting the training done rather than on how that training can help the new manager succeed in delivering what they are expected to. And this difference of perspective matters, because even though it is routinely offered, one-size-fits-all training simply doesn't work. These courses often focus solely on managing people and resources, and don't spend time coaching managers on the importance of managing themselves effectively first – their focus, their self-awareness, their relationships... all of which are fundamental to being a successful manager.

In order to be valuable to the individual and organisation, management training should be relevant to the organisation's current needs and be focused on creating value for the organisation through developing the new manager as a human being first, and as a manager second. Before booking a training course for new managers, think: how do I know this is going to deliver value? An 'off-the-shelf' course is unlikely to do so. Instead, look for a training course that has clear relevance to your organisation and its current issues, opportunities, and goals. Ensure you know how the new manager will be supported after the course finishes to put their learning into practice – and be positively held accountable for doing so.

### ***3. FAILURE TO DELEGATE.***

There are a multitude of reasons a manager chooses not to delegate a task. I can do it better myself. Everyone else is too busy. I'd only have to check their work anyway. Some managers would rather do a familiar task themselves as to avoid doing new tasks that they consider too tedious or challenging. This behaviour is unproductive and unsustainable. If you get a new job, you have to stop doing your old one. Being a manager doesn't mean getting higher pay and/or more benefits for doing what you've always done, it is a new role entirely (even if you're working in the same team!), and it has different responsibilities and a different focus. Delegation is necessary to enable the manager to focus on higher value activities and projects.

Though failure to delegate can cause problems, it is just as important to understand the ways in which effective delegation can positively affect both workplace culture and outcomes. Delegation builds trust within a team, and those trusted to carry out a task feel valued, increasing morale. It helps create a coaching culture where the manager is enabling others in the team to develop new skills and improve existing ones. It's also important to delegate upwards – ask for any support you need from your own line manager, and ensure they clearly set out the commercial boundaries you and your team are expected to work in.

## ***4. NO AWARENESS OF PERSONAL IMPACT.***

We all have impact. Tone of voice, facial expression, and movement are some of the factors that influence the impact we have on others. Sometimes these help communication and collaboration, and sometimes they hurt it. Sometimes we make people more willing to engage with us, and sometimes we make them less. Not because we are intentionally doing so, but because we aren't aware of the impact we are creating. Poor self-awareness can lead to acting in a way that makes the recipient feel under attack, even when that was not our intention – something that is especially important to remember in times when emotions (such as stress) are high. Managing personal impact better starts with recognising how we all act differently depending on the situation we find ourselves in. What is appropriate in one situation may not be in another. Being self-aware about how your behaviour and communication styles are impacting others allows you to consciously choose how to communicate based on what is most appropriate for the environment.

In order to develop this self-awareness, ask colleagues and subordinates for honest feedback on what you could do for your team. Be careful to ensure this does not take the form of approval-seeking ('Am I a good manager?'), but instead is focused on improving collaboration ('Is there something I could do more/less of?' 'What is something you would welcome from me?') Asking this of your team creates clarity for you and gives permission for them to continue this open and honest feedback in the future.

## ***5. EXPECTING ONE STYLE OF MOTIVATION TO WORK FOR EVERYONE.***

Managers often seek to motivate their team by using the same tactics that they use to motivate themselves. However, this won't always work, as different people are motivated by different things – and so, in a team you are likely to have people with a variety of motivation patterns. Some people are motivated by variety, and some by routine. Some work better with a 'towards' motivation (improving, achieving, delivering), and some work better with an 'away' motivation (avoiding, reducing, stopping) – meaning they are more motivated by preventing a negative outcome than ensuring a positive one. Understanding what motivates each member of your team will help you get the best out of them. When you don't understand this, any attempt to motivate your team will be no more than hoping and guessing. While in some situations hope and guesswork is a decent way to start, it is a very bad place to finish.

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