



Ten tips to new managers

Moving into a management role, either within the company in which you have been working or in a new organization, is a huge achievement. For a lot of people, it is seen as the payoff for all their hard work, a reward that is a new and welcomed challenge. However, it can be overwhelming and quite daunting to be handed a new responsibility; people are suddenly reporting to you - seeking direction and expecting you to have the answers. Here are ten tips to help you through this transition and allow you to shine in your new role.

1. Be the best people person you can be

Being a manager is about more than making brilliant organizational decisions. It's about managing people. Pay attention to developing and improving your people skills including your emotional intelligence. Being great with people is more than half the battle, so work at it.

2. Communicate transparently with your employees

Similarly to the above, communication with your direct reports is paramount to being a successful manager. Transparency in this case means being open with them about your expectations, sharing any information that may help them do their best work and encouraging feedback on your performance. This also includes the importance of listening: listen to your employees' ideas and incorporate them into your strategies as much as possible.

3. Recognize a job well done

When someone who works for you displays excellent work, tell them and reward them in whatever way is appropriate. Positive feedback is a great way to establish a healthy and trusting relationship between you and your team.

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4. Don't be afraid to step into your new role

Since you have spent the vast majority of your career reporting to one or several managers, it can be intimidating to suddenly be given the authority of being “the boss”. You may feel like this power is unearned or even like you are an imposter. Taking charge and speaking with authority is important, it allows your reports to trust you and your decision making.

5. Learn skillful negotiation

As a manager, you will be negotiating more than ever before. Negotiation does not need to mean conflict and it is in your best interest to learn how to negotiate well. If you are looking for additional information on negotiation, there are plenty of great resources available at your fingertips that can help you learn more about this skill.

6. Anticipate and embrace change

In your time as manager, things will change greatly. It is speculated that as millennials take over more and more executive roles, the fundamental structure of workplaces will change dramatically. Resisting change is mostly a futile endeavor, so embrace the changing tides and adapt to the inevitable.

7. Foster diversity

A diverse workplace is a strong workplace. Different points of views are invaluable in a changing workplace and having people with a wide range of identities and experiences as part of your team will mean that you get multiple perspectives to appreciate and integrate.

8. Create a culture of learning

As a people leader, one of the most effective ways you can create a learning culture is by establishing a workplace in which continuous learning is encouraged at all levels of your organization. A culture of learning goes far beyond “training days”, lunch ‘n’ learns and the occasional seminar or workshop. Rather, it permeates every aspect of a business. It focuses not only on improving products, but enhancing and developing your organization’s most important asset – your people. Make your workplace one where learning new skills and information is rewarded and encouraged.

9. Start thinking about retirement

Moving into a management role means you have probably been working in your field for some time. If you have not already, now is a good time to begin planning for retirement, even if you are still young. It is never too early!

10. Take care of yourself

Management positions are stressful. Self-care is of utmost importance for you to do your job and do it well. When you find yourself working around the clock, make sure to build in time for yourself to rest, be with your friends and family and do relaxing, nurturing activities.

Taking on a new role in management is a challenge but hopefully it is an exciting one and you wouldn't be here if you weren't ready. Expect a learning curve and a bit of stumbling and adjustment at first and at the same time embrace your new role and step into it with grace - enjoy the ride and good luck!

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The pros and cons of flexible work arrangements

More and more, workplaces are investigating a shift to flexible work arrangements. What is all the buzz about and is it earned? Let's take a closer look at these arrangements, their benefits and some of the common pitfalls that they may bring.

What are flexible work arrangements?

Flexible work arrangements can come in different forms. One of the most well-known and widespread versions is **flex-time** which allows employees to make their own hours from a range of available options. Other flexible work arrangements include:

- **Flex-place:** Where the employee works from home or another location other than the office.
- **Compressed work week:** Where employees work longer hours over four days and have the fifth weekday off or another version of this arrangement.
- **Job sharing:** in which two people share one position, dividing the work and hours between them.

What are the advantages?

One of the most well cited advantages of flexible work arrangements is employee retention. It allows companies to keep valued employees who have dynamic lives. Here are some of the other pros of these arrangements:

- Employees can avoid rush hour commutes and have more time to actually work
- A more balanced work and home life, especially for employees with babies or young children
- Offices can more efficiently use space like desks and resources like computers
- Smaller businesses can save costs by having some employees telecommuting, reducing overhead
- Employees can work when they feel they are at their most productive, rather than have their hours dictated by a standard workday

What are the challenges?

Of course there are challenges as well to these new forms of scheduling work. For one, there is **stigma** surrounding these arrangements and people who make use of them are often seen as less hardworking than their peers, no matter their work quality. Women in particular suffer as a result of this bias when they are using it to be able to work and take care of families. Another bias commonly seen is one towards people who work in the mornings, as it is often unconsciously believed these people are sharper and more productive.

Some of the practical disadvantages of flexible work arrangements can include:

- Isolation for people who work from home
- Issues regarding trust and supervision

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- Fairness for all staff and feelings of jealousy when some staff feel they have to work regular hours while others get to work “whenever they want”
- Distractions and non-work related tasks in a home environment

How to help flexible work arrangements succeed

To keep work productive and employees on track in flexible work arrangements, here are some tips for success:

- Have a written policy on the arrangement and be clear about expectations
- Communicate with all employees about the possibilities for the flexible work arrangements, and strive for equality and fairness
- Have employees keep track of their work hours and be transparent about when they are working
- Evaluate employees on their quality of work, not when they choose to work

When flexible work arrangements don't work

How will you know if flexible work arrangements just aren't working? Work not getting done or quality well below the level you are expecting is a sure sign the arrangement you have isn't working. Further, if there are hours that you need covered and they just aren't being filled - for example if most staff aren't coming in until 10am or taking Fridays off - you might need to reevaluate how hours are distributed. When flexible work arrangements are clearly not doing what they are meant to do - that is actually *increase* productivity and make a happier, healthier workplace, it is probably time to either change or forego the arrangements.

Flexible work arrangements are likely here to stay and we will see innovative ways of making work even more flexible emerge in the next decade. The key to transitioning smoothly into these arrangements and maintaining positive work environment is regular evaluation and open, effective communication.

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