

Choosing a Manager

The Senior Management in a company chooses employees as managers depending on their reputation in front of their subordinates and the general observation about them. These observations often point towards many of the significant characteristics of a good manager and a great leader.



An ideal manager should usually exhibit the following behaviors and qualities –

- Credible with the customers
- Attentive towards the job
- Driven by internal motivators
- Polite to clients and subordinates
- Empathetic towards everybody
- Passionate towards the designation
- Engaging sportively in the job
- Presentable in front of clients and customer
- Good Listener

While it is very important to make new managers understand the elements of the art of managing, what it takes to do so is a very different aspect.



Channeling the Inner Manager

A true manager is so nurtured that he excels at five basic areas of skill development, which are –

- Good communication skills.
- Efficient presentation skills for carrying out team meetings.
- Strong command over the company's process in relation to the business.
- Efficiency when it comes to doing Business, and
- A mastery over industry operation and the marketplace.



A manager does not ever completely remove himself from the previous profile he was in. In many different enterprises, a manager is expected just to manage, while at other enterprises, a manager is actually responsible for a certain number of clients. A manager is expected to meet his target while ensuring that his team does it too.

When a manager had built and had forged a great deal of relationships while acting as an executive, the companies reason that there is no reason that he needs to lose any of the rapport and momentum just because he is now a manager.

In an enterprise that follows this philosophy, a manager would be greatly involved with the clients during the conduct of the entire process. He remains the single point of contact for all his high-profile clients.

Exclusive Qualities of a Manager

An ideal manager should possess his own exclusive qualities and characteristics, which includes an ambition for achieving the required targets, while being caring

towards the subordinates. Most companies keep an eye on such people at the supervisory level, so that they can be guided and promoted as managers.

- A manager should be dedicated towards the process and be driven by motivation. However, he should also abide by the ethical way of conducting business.
- He needs to be supportive towards the staff and understanding in nature as these will be his weapons.
- He should be able to help his employees and clients alike, motivate the sales team and collaborate with all the other members of the organization.
- In addition to all this, he has to be empathetic towards everybody in his team.

Finally, managers need to be morally sound, passionate towards their work, but they should exercise patience when solving problems. A “can do” manager is result-oriented rather than being process-oriented.

Managing The Work Culture

Before having a glance at some of the hurdles a professional may face as a new manager, it is crucial for his seniors to provide him with a deeper perspective of the company’s corporate and departmental cultures. The work culture that a manager inherits may either be positive, negative or indifferent depending on the larger environment of the corporate.

In general, culture is an extremely broad topic to be discussed, whether it may be within an organization or within an industry. In this scenario, culture is not related to an individual’s country of origin, religion or ethnicity, but to the encircled feeling that the individual gets while working under a specific industry or designation.



The total work culture can be further subdivided into three major sets of culture, which are –

- The culture within the whole industry,
- The culture within the company and
- The culture within the specific department of that company.

This perplexing truth behind work culture is that the cultures do not align properly and tend to overlap on each other, which might not be a bad thing at all. In fact, it is observed that the more it is overlapped, greater are the chances of success.

It is crucial to determine the amount of cultural overlap there might be prevalent in between the specific department, the company and the industry, so the following questions can help a person to determine the work culture that surrounds him/her.

With respect to the Industry

- Is the environment conservative?
- Is there a specific dress code?
- Is type of business very analytical in nature? (research, consultation, etc.)
- Is the environment creative? (consumer products, advertising, etc.)

With respect to the Company

- What is mostly valued by the senior management?
- In what way does the company communicate with outer stakeholders, media, etc. (public relations and corporate communications)?
- How well is the corporate culture actually defined by the organization?
- How are the management of performances and feedback analysis conducted by the company (may be either hierarchical analysis, 360-degree feedback analysis, or reviews from peers, etc.)?

In context of the Department

- Is there a prevalence of good communication and understanding among departments, or do the employees or the groups of employees prefer working in silos?
- Is there a competitive mentality among various groups in the company? For example, is there competition for budgets made, resources provided, work culture, etc.?

In addition to this, it is also important to tell them the basic variations or similar aspects among the departments, which may include operations, human resources, marketing, finance, sales, research and development, etc.

How Managers Meet Expectations

When a person is designated a management profile, he will have access to various dimensions for change to take effect, regardless of it being a minor or major one. Some of these changes might be as simple as providing more opportunities to organize discussions with other entities of the organizations such as –

- Marketing
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Research and Development, etc.



Still a manager is capable of affecting a larger initiative like inducing change in the process of management of performance in order to achieve tougher corporate challenges. Now that the manager is familiar with the essential aspects to understand the work culture and the workplace environment a manager may operate in, it is crucial to shed some light on some critical challenges and opportunities that may be included within the new responsibilities of a manager.

Handling Issues of Cultural Sensitivity

The issue of misalignment in cultures is often noticed within huge organizations operating on a diverse number of business entities, where a significant cultural difference could be noticed from departments to departments.

Some of the most prominent industries that fit this category are financial services, consumer products, media conglomerates and a huge number of multinational enterprises. However, to everyone's irony, many similar enterprises are also subjected to exactly the same kind of culture differences within various entities of the companies.

A manager is not usually anticipated to be in a position to affect major change within the corporation, but a manager his own significant role and the manager should always be well acquainted with the various levels and natures of cultures (that are industrial culture, organizational culture and departmental culture) to be able to correlate his department with the company as a whole.



For example, he should be aware of the perception of the company and whether there are limited or abundant resources related to human resources, time, monetary findings available within the organization.

He needs to be prepared for future collaborations of his department with other entities of the company and be informed of the escalators and hurdles that he may encounter in such scenarios.

In addition to this, the role of a manager is also to see that the Human Resources Department is naturally supportive of training when it comes to the manager's

efforts, rewards programs compensation planning, recruitments, internal problem counseling, etc.

Managing New Transformations

A complex aspect of becoming a manager and in one's life as a whole, is accepting change. A lot has been documented on methods of dealing with change and how we can accept it so that it amplifies a person's personality rather than bringing him/her down.

The most significant thing to remember is that change is unstoppable and perpetual in nature. Whether talking of a person's personal life or his career, nothing will ever remain unchanged, and if something did, it would eventually result in becoming boring, monotonous, repetitive or regressive.



In managerial ranks, change is often observed to have a negative consequence because it brings about severing of many communication chains and operating networks. However, change is not always bad; in fact, what may seem a tough change, can be managed and forged into a positive one.

Excellent managers actually peak in a transitioning environment, rather than being intimidated by it. The ways of handling change may differ from person to person, as most people tend to struggle with it (or at least tend to be cautious or hesitant around it), but a manager may have the capability to do just the opposite.

Dividing A Big Change into Small Changes

The two most significant points the managers should think about when a change occurs are –

- The possible ways the change will affect them and
- In what way the change will affect their team.

Keeping this in mind, the next step would be to evaluate the change by breaking it down into numerous pieces. Since change may vary from a major downsizing of the corporate, to simply adjusting the way the team turns in reports, a manager needs to find out the threats and/or the change may inflict on the present scenario. Some of such threats that a manager needs to be prepared for are –

- The extent to which the changes with respect to layoffs or procedure will be and
- The impact of the change – directly related or tangential – on the team.

The manager also needs to find out whether any change will practically occur and if it does, then at what speed. Finally, he needs to know the agent behind that change, because it will help him in understanding the objective of the person. By dissecting the core anatomy of change, a person starts to accept it better.

While change can initially look as either positive or negative, with proper analysis and planning, such scenarios can be avoided or molded in such a way that the effects may not be so dramatic, or forged in the person's favor. While some transitions maybe entirely out of a person's reach, the way in which the person may choose to handle it is entirely his choice.

Understanding the Nature of Change

Once a person understands the nature of the change, he may avoid being stressed about the change before anything actually happens. It only intimidates the person and overshadows his thinking or judgment. Once the direction of the change has been determined, work should be carried with it not against it.

This, of course, is only possible if the person has confidence in himself. He needs to recall that he had earned this position by efficiently handling change many a times in the past. He should welcome a change in something without overanalyzing it. However, that doesn't mean that he blindly follows instructions. He should keep asking questions to get a clear cut idea about the change or can suggest his own strategy, if any, to deal with the change.

Managers know that change is unstoppable, so they work in coordination with it, in spite of resisting it. This approach towards change will help a manager stand apart from others.

Managing the Manager - Managing The Team

The very initial challenge faced by many newly-promoted managers is to manage the people who are at the same profile as they were, just days ago. Several challenges erupt suddenly when a person is subjected to promotion in order to manage people who used to be colleagues formerly.

Positive Aspects of a Newly-appointed Manager

A newly-promoted manager is already acquainted with many of the pros and cons of his team. This is a very valuable asset when it comes to delegating the job as per the necessities. This also provides an advantage to the newly-promoted manager with initial speculations, while making a plan for the training and development aspect of the members of the team.

Adding to this, the newly-appointed manager already has a good reputation within the team. This opens the gates for discussing openly about many issues. A good reputation also adds to achieve a supportive culture to solve problems and achieve goals. As a newly-promoted manager, a person may already possess certain managerial and leadership qualities and may have the backup of the management team. This enhances a manager's credibility within the management team and all the other teams.



As a newly-appointed manager, a person has gained the power of the position overnight. Irrelevant of the fact that the individual may now have a new office corner, or he/she may remain within the same area in the workplace, the reality is that power has been shifted. At the same time, as a result of having inadequate managerial experience and practice under his belt, making the transition from an executive profile to a managerial profile needs a great deal of adjustment. This is where the management needs to step in and guide him on dealing with the new responsibilities.

For a new manager, even the tasks that seem very basic and straightforward will require a great deal of efforts and attention. He is after all answerable to the management. Keeping that in mind, some basic challenges that a newly appointed manager might have to face during the transition phase from an executive to a manager are –

- Management of Friends
- Management of Non-allies and
- Managing the senior members of the team

These three factors will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Factors Affecting a Manager

A newly appointed manager might have to face the following challenges during the transition phase from an executive to a manager –

- Managing Friends
- Managing Non-allies and
- Managing the senior members of the team

In this chapter, we will discuss how a manager should deal with these three challenges.

Managing Friends

The most common issue that people commit with friendships is that they tend to overlap personal and professional issues. This may sometimes mislead the manager to advice to his friends on problems that are out of the boundaries of the job, yet the blurred line still prevails.

Advising a person is a part of being a friend, but a manager is in a superior position in the relationship. Advising a friend (who is a subordinate now) may instantaneously seem as if the newly-appointed manager is judging his friend.

Even when the manager is advising about matters that are related to the job directly, it can prove to be immensely difficult to do so; if a negative feedback is given, he may feel that the manager's perceptive view on him/her has changed in a negative direction. If this dilemma begins, the friendship and the company gets hurt as a result.



This issue can be diminished by setting proper goals and maintaining a good correlation between the feedback and the goal. If goals are set properly and these goals are well accepted by both the parties, the subordinates, even those who are friends of the manager, would never perceive the manager to be judgmental in nature. The achievements of the manager's friends will be measured by whether or not they achieve their goals.

Consultants working in the field of management and psychologists studying the field of management, both acknowledge that any bond of friendship within the team should be kept aside whenever there is a hierarchical change within the team.

It is a very complex task to maintain discipline and give direction efficiently whenever friendship is given more weight compared to the manager-subordinate relationship. Also, the inherited nature in friendship is that both the people are agreeable to each other.

Now the basic task of changing the individual's title can induce effective changes in the perceptive and emotional points of view. Friendship is very sophisticated even before the promotion of an individual, so with the involvement of business and money, friendship would only sophisticate any problems or challenges.



From a different point of view, friendships don't necessarily always make working relationships more complicated. With correct handling, a close relationship of friendship could yield better positive results for all the parties that are involved.

Another big challenge that may be faced by a manager, earlier in management is to deal with weaknesses faced by friends and/or the colleagues who were peers previously. Is there a way that a manager may approach these people in order to rectify any problem without hampering the relationship of friendship?

In these circumstances, the manager must specify the definition and take steps for isolation of the negative behavioral aspects and give emphasis on the job and the requirements in performance and not on any specific person.

Example

Let us take a look at an example of sharing constructive feedback with a friend. For instance, a manager might be wanting desperately to say, "Sam, what complaints do you have against the finance department? I think you're being over-reactive with respect to the terms they are demanding for newer customers. It is making the perception on us look bad."



Rather, a manager should say, "Sam, let us plan a meeting together with Scott who is from the finance department and have a conversation regarding their requirements. They probably may have some policies they must hold on to and that must make sense. We can concentrate on the significance of getting new customers on board with minimum amount of delays and emphasize on making some suitable changes that will help you in closing new business. Is this sounding fair?"

In this context, the manager has avoided the use of subjective words like “over-reactive”, which rather would have likely caused Sam to become defensive, than being open for a conversation. If the manager makes the discussion more objective in nature and emphasizes on positive aspects, Sam would likely be more welcoming towards the manager’s feedback.

Managing Non-allies

As a manager, a person may have to come across the hurdles of managing people who usually don’t support him. In a number of instances, many members of the team may not have been allies from the beginning, thinking themselves or somebody else worthier of the promotion instead of the current manager.

They won’t accept that the person who has got the promotion deserves the job of the manager. The manager should not let people like these affect his mindset, because he has been promoted due to some strong reasons on his side, such as past achievements and proficiency. However, the manager needs to keep an eye open for them and not take them for granted.



The good part is that, a manager can at least diminish, if not completely eliminate, the negative perceptions of himself/herself in most of the cases. This is not a miracle that can happen overnight. It may need a great deal of patience on the manager's side as well.

If a person practices strong fundamentals while managing his team, these non-allies can actually convert to great allies. A manager could be pleasantly surprised to find out that some of the most tough team members could turn into the manager's most supportive staff members.

Managing Senior Members



Some resistance may be offered by some of the experienced executives to a newly-promoted manager. A new manager may feel intimidated when it comes to managing the experienced and seasoned executives, but it commonly occurs because the managers themselves often doubt their own capability when it comes to managing these experienced executives.

It is not expected of a manager to come into this position with all the necessary practice and skills. A manager should be realistic about his staff as well as himself/herself. It is not in the best interest of a new manager to avoid, be ignorant to or control every part of the seasoned players.

In order to win the trust of the veteran executives, a manager must set various goals. A manager must resolve any personal issues with any of the experienced team members as soon as possible.

This will help him to claim the respect of the team members quickly by knowing and maximizing the talents buried within each individual member of the team, including those who live in the delusion that they would not require any aid. Just as the manager has more room for growth and development, the same goes for the top players of the team.

The experience acquired by the seasoned executives in the team can also prove to be one of the most valuable resources. Referring to them before making any

decision can eliminate a great deal of trial and error, specifically, if they are good at playing corporate politics and are thus capable on shedding a positive insight on the manager.

One of the most crucial and initial responsibilities of a manager is to maximize the talents of each team member regardless of the level of their experience. A key responsibility of a manager is to help his subordinates in eliminating any disadvantages by guiding and helping them to develop better habits. At this occurrence, the manager may wish to analyze some key areas of pros and cons of each of the members of the team, which they can work on later and eradicate them.

Managing Various Teams

One of the most critical challenges encountered by new managers is the fact that the manager has now become a team player, who has a significant role in the management, both as one of the managers and in the team as its leader.

This ambiguity in the job profile results in the rise of some specific issues related to loyalty — specifically when there is a conflict between the team and the management within the corporate office. But the position of the manager has at least two positive aspects –

- The first being the fact that the manager now has the opportunities to change some of the decisions that were inappropriate when the manager was in an executive profile.
- The second positive aspect is that the manager now has access to various data that he was not allowed to access before.

As the saying goes: The higher you go up the tree, the farther will be your vision. When going through a certain concern, justification of the current system may become available.



What may apparently be broken, after some adjustments and manipulations, may actually prove to be working. On the other hand, the manager's newly-achieved perspective may actually allow him/her to develop plans that maybe carried out to convince upper managerial entities in making some reforms, which may repair a broken system that maybe directly related to your department.

For the new manager, it is very critical to set the priorities first and then, incorporating a coordinated effort by both the executives and the management team to sort out or resolve the issues. Also, it should be kept in mind that most of the issues cannot be fixed right away. In many situations, careful planning and an immense amount of patience are necessary in order to find out solutions.



One of the other challenges faced by the manager is the flow of information. It is up to the manager to work as a part of the management team to maintain communication and coordination with all the other teams. The way of interpretation and dissemination of information by the manager – **from the senior management team, to the other teams** – is the key to gaining the respect that will help in producing the desired outcomes out of the team.

When the individual was in the executive profile, the job used to be very clear, at least to the individual. There were tasks supposed to be completed within a specific time period. The individual could control the overall job and this allowed the person to accomplish his targets successfully. With change in time, the individual's knowledge regarding the job and his confidence level becomes high.

Pitfalls Of Micromanaging

A good manager should always keep in mind that having exact replicas of himself/herself in the team is never considered to be a good idea. Unless there are real issues affecting the performance. The manager must allow some dissimilarities in the way the team members handle things and must avoid micro management.

Various researchers state that the most significant reason behind employees leaving a company is because of a horrible relation with their direct bosses. While a bad relation with a manager is not necessarily always the outcome of micromanaging, it can induce a bad feeling in an already weak or strained relation.



The most effective way to be sure that a manager doesn't end up becoming a micromanager is to follow strict managerial ethics and by consistently holding on becoming a better manager. If a person is working under a micromanager, it would be wise if he does not overreact and let all the anger out on the micromanager.

Micromanagers behave arrogantly because of problems not related to the workplace. Their behavioral style may be related to their personal life crisis than their business life. People need to realize that when working with a micromanager, battles should be picked carefully; not everything is worth quarreling for.

Managing Short and Long-Term Goals

A newly appointed manager may very often have to “hit the ground running”, which means he has very less time to settle into the job before he begins **facing the challenges**, which preexisted his appointment, that he is expected to handle.

A person may probably feel overwhelmed when he realizes that he has now stepped into a whole new dimension of challenges. However, he can find solace in the fact that he does not have to resolve every issue at once. A manager should give emphasis on the bigger perspective, especially where he is today and where he wants to be in the future. This calls for short-term goal and large-term goals too.



Short-Term Goals

Within a short term (i.e., over a smaller interval of time; typically, over the next three months), a newly appointed manager would get to acquaint himself with the staff member, managers, customers and the major requirements of the new role. He can do this by trying to know the staff members' verdict about their job, identifying the areas where they are excellent or they require the most support.

- He should also learn to be empathetic about their workload (follow-ups, sales in progress, proposals in progress, pipeline, etc.), and should focus on identifying any major customer opportunities or issues that need immediate attention.
- If he were to find out any larger issues with the staff that may require either his attention and/or the involvement of others, he should try to diffuse the situation within his own authority, before escalating it to the higher management.
- A manager should always let the supervisors know his expectations clearly. He should find out their daily, weekly, and monthly demands and keep an eye on what initial reports, analyses, and/or assessments are expected from him/her.

A manager realizes that working without collaboration is a recipe for disaster, so he builds a network with other people in the organization, which involves meeting people from various levels and from various departments and understanding how working with different departments benefits the manager and how he can take advantage of them.

A manager should determine which customers are “strategically prioritized”. In simple words, it means building a network of high-profile clients and providing them premium customer service, and issue resolution by over the phone or by meeting personally along with the corresponding executive.

Long-Term Goals

Looking forward towards the future, a manager needs to analyze where he wants both himself and the team to be in the future. He should want to know what the shape of the team will be within the next six months, year, etc. He should try and identify all major gaps in resources that are likely to crop up. In the end, he should try and find out what his supervisors expect from him and the team.



The manager must also pay heed to his career aspirations – whether he wishes to move up the rank of the same management or to another department such as marketing or operations. He should ask himself if he has ambitions to eventually become a C-level officer (CEO, COO, CMO, CIO, etc.) or about switching industries.

Whatever maybe the manager’s interest and long-term aspirations, he is supposed to act like a committed person who, for a combination of financial and/or nonfinancial reasons, is motivated to succeed as a manager. So the manager should sit back for a moment and take a look at the bigger scenario before he gets caught up in the minor details.

While some solutions may be tougher to find than others, every situation has a way out but the time it takes to get there may vary. Many times, a single person alone will not be capable of remedying a problem. The manager needs to collaborate with multiple people to get assistance along the way. However, the manager needs to become capable of recognizing the different scenarios so that he can react appropriately.

Now that a manager has a better knowledge over the work culture, he is ready to be a part of the major transitional challenges in his company.

- He should now be introduced into a world of managerial communications, because without effective communication, no amount of motivation or passion will get him/her to where he wants to be.
- Then he may have a glance at the process of planning that directly affects both the company and the team.
- After that, he may move on to the Interviewing and Recruitment Process, a sophisticated field that maybe simplified into some core, understandable steps.

Finally, the manager may explore what is needed to really provide inspiration to his team and become a proficient leader.