

What you need to be a good manager

Author: Fadzai Danha . August 2020

We should never underestimate the power of a good manager. One Gallup study found that at least 70% of the variance in employee engagement scores is driven by who the boss is and more than half of Americans in a separate Gallup survey of over 7,200 workers said they had left a job to “get away from their manager to improve their overall life”. This is very concerning because the same research found that about 70% of people in management roles are not well equipped for the job. Most companies understand the importance of having highly effective managers, but few invest heavily in training to help them get there. One reason is that it’s difficult to measure and quantify what good management looks like. The definition of a *manager* is a person responsible for supervising and motivating employees and for directing the progress of an organization. Being a manager can be a demanding job with a lot of responsibility.

It is also vital to understand the difference between a good manager and a bad one. A good manager is the need of every successful organization. They make the organization go above its weight in its performance whilst bad management is estimated to cost the U.S. economy up to \$398 billion annually. According to Mark Graban, an internationally recognised management consultant, “A bad manager *makes* you work, a good manager *lets* you work.” “They are directive and tell employees what to do, without any explanation or context.”

He stated that a good manager follows the 3 ships of management: Leadership, Mentorship, and Ambassadorship.

- Leadership involves creating decisions such as which projects to choose.
- Mentorship is an efficient way to grow a team in mutually beneficial ways.
- Ambassadorship means representing the team within the broader socio-political context of your organization.

A good manager is seen by what it manages, if it is a successful enterprise, then it means it has good management managed by a good manager. A manager manages time and money, they are the gatekeepers taking an organization from where they are to where they want to be. This article looks at what a good manager looks like.

The Traits of a Good Manager

1. They set SMART goals. Great managers write their goals and map out the key steps they must take to get closer to their goals every day.

2. They manage their time. Successful managers manage their time effectively by cutting out activities that do not align with their goals.

3. They invest in others. Good managers continually invest in others. Investing in others includes encouraging, coaching, mentoring, and sponsoring future leaders.

4. They communicate effectively. Successful managers are good communicators. Effective communication requires attentive listening and asking questions. Good communicators also respond to questions when asked and they share information that will benefit others.

5. They focus on the big picture. Successful managers engage in strategic planning and effective implementation. To do so, they broaden their perspective to understand how all the pieces of a plan, project, or goal fit together.

6. They invest in their professional and personal development. The best managers understand the importance of investing in their professional and personal development. They read books, attend seminars, and/or seek advanced degrees. Continuing education enhances their credentials and allows them to stay on top of trends that will impact their areas of expertise.

7. They take risks. Successful managers are willing to try new things and experiment with new ideas.

8. They have integrity. Successful managers demonstrate consistency between their words and their actions. Their consistency inspires others to trust them and their ability to lead.

9. They are disciplined. Self-discipline fuels a successful manager's sense of determination and allows the manager to achieve goals.

10. They are strategic. Strategic leadership requires thoughtful analysis, planning, and execution. Successful managers invest time to think through various scenarios and consider the consequences of potential actions.

11. They ask for feedback. Good managers continually seek feedback to improve their performance and enable continued success.

12. They seek advice. Thriving managers seek advice to make effective decisions. Knowledgeable advice allows a leader to learn about blind spots. Receiving guidance enhances a manager's leadership style by offering a different point of view.

13. They promote collaboration. Successful management requires engaging others and inspiring them toward shared goals. Sharing information and inviting others to participate in collaboration builds trust within a team and a common sense of purpose.

14. They are visible. The best managers are visible and create visibility opportunities for their teams. Visibility facilitates connection points with others, spurs interaction, and provides a platform to showcase accomplishments.

15. They are respectful of others. Good managers are courteous and considerate of others. Genuine

regard for others engenders loyalty and fosters mutual respect.

16. They promote their team's accomplishments. Everyone wants to be part of a winning team. Giving others credit and acknowledging their accomplishments are two ways that successful managers create high achieving teams. Promoting their team's accomplishments encourages momentum for further achievement.

17. They build a network. Good working relationships are important for career and personal advancement. Successful managers work at strategically building networks that support their personal and professional goals. They create regular opportunities to establish genuine connections with people in and out of their professional community.

18. They position themselves for the future. In an ever-changing workplace that is increasingly being impacted by technology and global markets, positioning oneself for the future is critical for career and team success. Successful managers stay on top of industry trends by reading periodicals, attending conferences, and networking. They also seek opportunities to share what they learn with team members and incorporate new methods into their work processes.

19. They navigate office politics. Great managers embrace office politics. They understand that office politics is a fact of life. But, they also understand that navigating office politics does not require that they violate their values. Rather, they respect their organization's culture, strategically build their network, and interact sincerely to influence others effectively.

20. They manage conflict. Workplace conflict is inevitable. Rather than avoid conflict, successful managers seek to address difficult situations professionally and respectfully. They engage in difficult conversations, seek common ground, and preserve relationships.

21. They admit mistakes. Effective leadership calls for transparency and accountability. Successful managers, therefore, admit their mistakes, learn from them, and do better next time.

22. They are humble. The best managers are humble. Much associate humility with weakness. But humility is the ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations. It takes sober judgment and confidence to self-assess.

23. They strive for work-life balance. Maintaining a high-performance work culture requires a work-life balance. The best managers work to ensure that their teams stay engaged by encouraging time off and leading by example. All leaders need time to recharge. Taking time off to rest, connect with loved ones, and pursue personal interests puts work into perspective and makes managers more relatable as people.

24. They support their teams. Managers cannot succeed without the support of their teams. The best managers empower their teams by allowing them to take ownership of their work. Successful managers provide their teams with the encouragement, tools, and resources they need to get their [jobs](#) done.

25. They say, "Thank you." In a performance-driven workplace, expressing gratitude is often overlooked. Thanking others for their contributions lets them know they are appreciated and valued. Saying "thank you" takes a few seconds. But, the impact can last a lifetime.

Skills of a good manager

Every good manager needs to master the following skills.

1. People Management Skills

These people focus on their team. They have to manage people with emotional intelligence. You have to adapt your **people management skills** to different situations, different people, and often in **international environments**.

2. Business Finance for Non-Financial Managers

As a manager, there is a need to understand all the basic financial reports of the company – including the Profit & Loss, the Balance Sheet, and the Annual Reports. This is important for the role and strategy.

3. Influencing Skills

Managers don't always have direct control over all the people and processes, and still need to reach their goals. It is very important to be able to positively influence colleagues, get them to buy into the goals, and implement the strategy.

4. Communication Skills

Good managers need to be able to get people to listen to them, remember and buy into their goals and act on the information that you communicate to them. And you need to do all of this with **diplomacy and tact**.

5. Negotiation Skills

Negotiation Skills are a key part of every manager's role. They need to be able to develop win-win strategies using the best practice of negotiations. A great manager knows when to negotiate and when to stop.

6. Project Management Skills

Managing projects is part of every manager's role today. Whatever the project, you need to be able to structure, plan, and implement your projects.

7. Understanding How All Parts of the Company Work Together

It is not enough to just focus on your team or department, no one works in a silo. So you need to be a great “all-round manager” who understands how all the different parts of the organization work together and achieve the overall results.

8. Business Strategy and Planning

You have to create strategies that work and create value for your company. So you need to **learn all about strategic planning** – including the key steps in the process and the tools you need to execute your strategy.

9. Leadership Skills

An all-round great manager needs to be able to answer the question actively “what is the difference between management and leadership?” Once they have done this then they become good managers.

Conclusion

A good manager inspires a team, fosters growth and productivity, and frequently asks for feedback on their management style. Simply managing a team doesn't make a good manager. It's the amount of effort and leadership they put into making their team successful.

Fadzai Danha is a consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd a management and human resources consulting firm. Phone +263 4 481946-48/481950 or email: fadzai@ipcconsultants.com or visit our website at www.ipcconsultants.com

<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/What-You-Need-To-Be-A-Good-Manager->