



Roffey
Park
Institute

UK · Europe · Asia Pacific

A-Z Guide of Essential Management Skills

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AUTHENTICITY

Authentic managers act in a genuine and sincere way that is true to who they are as individuals. Managers who are consistent in their beliefs and actions are best positioned to inspire trust, loyalty and high performances from the team they manage.



BALCONY VIEW

Success as a manager means being able to observe and understand several different datasets so you can tune into what is important, what it means for you and your team and react accordingly. Regularly stepping back from the action so you can observe from the “balcony” is one way to make sense. This not as easy as it sounds. Emails, telephone calls, meetings all crave immediate attention but taking time out to listen and observe, will ensure you make the right choices.



COACHING

Coaching skills are crucial for managers to help develop your team by challenging them to think critically about issues and broaden their perspective. Coaching can also improve collaborative decision making by being able to ask questions that help people open up so you can tap into a broader perspective of ideas and expertise.



DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Having difficult conversations is never easy but managers must hold their teams accountable. Most of us don't want to be cast as the 'bad guy' so noticing and confronting the early signs of poor performance is often avoided. The most effective line managers will take control and talk about it.



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence is being able to identify and manage your own emotions as well as the emotions of others. Being able to effectively manage a team means being able to recognise people's strengths and understand how to deal with a range of (sometimes conflicting) personality types.



FOLLOWERSHIP

When do we lead, manage or follow? Followership is often seen as negative but maybe it's time to recognise that success in organisations is sometimes about great followership as well as great leadership and management. How do you juggle the balance between being a manager and a follower? It's not about micro-managing, but it is about empowerment and supporting your employee to take ownership and responsibility. They may make different decisions or choices, but they'll get the job done and you'll both have learned something in the process.



GROWTH-ORIENTATED

Your role as a manager is to help your team progress, both as individuals and as a group. Get to know your team so you can leverage their talents. Find out what works and doesn't work so you can create the opportunities and remove the obstacles so your team can perform at their best.



HAVE PERSPECTIVE

It's easy to stay focused on managing the task and ignore concerns raised from your team, particularly when juggling deadlines and priorities. But why has your colleague said something that frustrates you? If you were in their shoes how would you think or feel? What position are they coming from? Perspective taking allows you to understand the root cause of any problems and enable you to work with them to solve them.



IDENTIFY YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE

Take some time to consider your management style and understand how to flex your style according to your situation. Effective managers are those that can adapt their style to the situation and look at cues such as the type of task, the nature of the group, and other factors that might contribute to getting the job done.



JUDGEMENT

A key ability of a manager is being able to make good judgements that allow them to move forward. Good judgement is based on looking at what's around you, listening to what others have to say and learning from that information. Because you are relying on sensory signals, judgement is often described as "gut feeling" as your unconscious mind can process these signals faster than your conscious mind. But with too much information, too many opinions and too many points of view, the way forward may not be clear. The key is that manager's need to manage by relying on their own judgement. Get that balance right and the result will be the best decision you've ever made.



KNOW HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Managers need to be able to give feedback so knowing how to provide constructive feedback is an important skill. Effective feedback is given with positive intent, either to build confidence, recognise a contribution or to identify what might be getting in the way of progress. The more senior managers become, the more they are protected from feedback. Try to ensure you are always asking for feedback and that you are open minded when you get it.



LEARN, LEARN, LEARN

Successful managers aren't only good at what they do. They inspire their employees to reach their full potential, and they make those around them good at what they do too. But managers can't become the best versions of themselves on their own unless they work on developing their management qualities. That means starting with being honest with yourself about where you need help. Learning can take many forms from reading articles, online learning, management training courses as well as learning from others.



MINDSET

Moving from a “doer” to a “generalist” requires a considerable shift in your mindset. It’s no longer about you, as a manager you need to put the needs and development of others before your own. Watching others grow, learn and succeed because of your management will give you a greater buzz than you ever felt as an individual contributor.



NETWORK WITH OTHER MANAGERS

Building a network with other managers is one way to learn about your role in the organisation. Ask them questions about their role, why certain decisions are made, how their department functions and interact with your own team and so on. But don't stop with managers in your own organisation, build connects with outside managers can give you the external perspective needed to inform your decisions.



ORGANISATION

As a manager you'll juggle multiple priorities and responsibilities so excellent organisational skills are vital. You'll need to manage your own projects, supervise the work of others, attend meetings and contribute to organisational initiatives. Finding the right balance is down to prioritisation and staying on top of your short, medium- and long-term goals.



POLITICS

Office politics often conjures up negative connotations around competing agendas which leave managers feeling bruised, conflicted and stressed. We need different perspectives in order to achieve organisational goals and that's all politics really is. Effective management skills are about not getting so caught up in the task or sense of "being right" and looking at the wider context of what the organisation is trying to achieve. And that takes a lot of confidence to change your mind in the face of conflict, if you can see that it would be for the greater good.



QUESTIONS

Get used to asking questions.

Questions can be asked about how your team are feeling about change, what contributed to a recent success, what can be learnt, how the world is changing and what might be needed in the future, and so on. Questions are a great way of challenging people to take a fresh look at an issue and help them think about the outcomes they want.



RESILIENCE

Resilience is an important people management skill. Visibility brings with it criticism so the ability to pick yourself up after disappointments, to manage criticism, and to motivate yourself is key. Our own research on resilience tells us that our ability to be resilient is likely to vary over time and circumstance and be amenable to change through our own efforts. Effective people managers are self-reliant. They will recover from knocks because they know that whilst they cannot change other people, or external circumstances, they can always change their own response to a situation.



SKILL OF DELEGATION

Many people who become managers simply try to add management to their job instead of changing their approach. And then feel quickly overwhelmed. Delegation – managing others so they deliver results – is a key skill to learn fast. Delegating is not something you do TO people; it is something you do FOR people.



TRUST

Trust matters because organisations with low trust between employees require unnecessary monitoring, duplication and bureaucracy. The result is often a lack of engagement and high staff turnover. In our own research we found that where high trust exists, employees go the extra mile. Trusting relationships between managers and their team encourages people to focus on their work, to take risks and try different ways of doing things. Building trust is one way of winning hearts and minds of those you work alongside.



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

We all have unconscious biases. It affects our decisions in a much more subtle way, but with significant consequences. Managers can address this by increasing awareness of their unconscious biases, making the most of the abilities of their team members and being prepared to challenge their own biases.



VISIBILITY

Being visible with your team is important, the more visible you are the more connected people will feel to you. Spend time in the day informally chatting to your team instead of just communicating in meetings or sat in your office. That will go a long way to build trusting relationships.



WORKPLACE CONFLICT

It happens and all managers will be faced with managing conflict at some time. Depending on the way it is managed conflict can be positive, contributing to increased team and individual confidence in dealing with uses. As a manager, you play a crucial role in creating a safe and productive working environment for your whole team. The challenge of conflict lies in how you choose to deal with it. Concealed, avoided or ignored means that conflict will fester and grow, however where there is a desire to do so, conflict can normally be resolved.



EXPECTATIONS

It's important to set and clarify expectations with your team to establish team and individual performance goals and how you and your team will interact with each other. Clear expectations will lead to higher performance from your team. In addition, you will need to clarify expectations of your own manager so you can understand their priorities and the changes you need to make for you to be successful.



YOU – IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Effective managers are people who know themselves, from the inside out, good, bad and ugly. They can speak about their strengths and weaknesses without any embarrassment or defensiveness. Managers rarely feel safe about admitting vulnerability because they fear it will reflect badly on them. But being more self-aware, more open and transparent will mean you are more human to the people you manage, and they will connect with you as a result.



ZEN

You'll be a better manager when you take care of yourself physically, mentally and spiritually. Take time to eat and sleep, to exercise, to learn and to spend time doing the things that are important to you. In paying attention to this both you and your team will benefit.

HOW WE CAN HELP DEVELOP YOUR MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Our [Essential Management Skills course](#) gives a great grounding in tools and techniques for newly-appointed and more experienced line managers who want to improve their knowledge of management and understand how to manage people successfully, or reflect upon and further develop those skills. At Roffey Park we believe each of us can develop effective management skills, but we will do this in our own way. This management training programme explores a range of methods, models and approaches that enhances your people management skills.

If that's not realistic for now, get reading. There are some fantastic [books](#) out there to get you started and help you understand yourself better. We believe this knowledge underpins the best managers and leaders.