



**INNOVEST SME**  
Accelerating Small Business

A group of six business professionals, three men and three women, are gathered around a table in a modern office setting. They are all dressed in dark blue suits and white shirts. They are looking intently at a document on the table, which features a bar chart with red bars. The background shows a large window with a view of a city skyline.

# Managing Team Leaders *and* Managers

Rick Chisholm and Tala Chisholm

## **COPYRIGHT NOTICE**

Copyright © 2017 by Innovest SME

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. Permission requests should be submitted to the publisher in writing at one of the addresses below:

30/192A Kingsgrove Rd  
Kingsgrove, NSW 2208  
Australia

Phone: +61 2 8007 2907

E-mail: [admin@innovestsme.com.au](mailto:admin@innovestsme.com.au)

Website: [www.innovestsme.com.au](http://www.innovestsme.com.au)

# CONTENTS

	<b>Preface</b>	5
<b>1</b>	<b>Grooming a New Manager</b>	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Coaching and Mentoring (I)</b>	14
<b>3</b>	<b>Coaching and Mentoring (II)</b>	20
<b>4</b>	<b>Measuring Performance</b>	26
<b>5</b>	<b>Motivating Managers</b>	32
<b>6</b>	<b>Signs of Poor Management</b>	38
<b>7</b>	<b>Trust Your Team of Managers</b>	44
<b>8</b>	<b>When an Employee Complains About Their Manager</b>	50
<b>9</b>	<b>When Do You Step In?</b>	56
<b>10</b>	<b>Remember These Basic Qualities</b>	62

*Management is efficiency  
while climbing the ladder  
of success; leadership  
determines whether the  
ladder is leaning  
against the right wall.*

STEPHEN R. COVEY

# PREFACE

Management is known as a form of art and a science. The key is making employees more efficient and productive while finding the correct way to do it. When preparing to manage one or a group of managers, you are preparing for them to be able to manage their own employees. Every manager is a different personality type and learns differently. But with some helpful tools and tips, you can help them become great managers that will continue to grow and succeed with their new teams.

*Good management  
consists of showing average  
people how to do work of  
superior people.*

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER



# GROOMING A NEW MANAGER

Bringing in a new member to the management team is never easy. If you hire from within, they have to learn to transition from their previous position to this new one. If you hire from outside the company, the new employee will have to be taught everything from scratch. But with a little patience and open communication, you can groom your new manager for success in their position.

### SET SPECIFIC GOALS

When training a new manager, one of the first things to accomplish is to establish what goals you and the manager want to achieve. Ask the manager what they want to accomplish and find ways to work together to reach it. Set goals that are realistic and can be achieved by the employee in a reasonable amount of time. Be specific about what you want them to achieve and note the progress you want to see from them. The more detailed plan they have, the better they are equipped to know what is expected of them.

## **Common topics to include when making goals:**

- Familiarize themselves with the office area
- Find ways to improve productivity/reduce errors
- Improve manager skills and duties
- Introduce themselves to their employees

## **AUTHORITY (WHAT THEY CAN AND CAN'T DO)**

One of the hardest responsibilities a new manager has is asserting their authority to their employees. Many come across as too mean or overbearing, but when they back off they can seem like a pushover. A helpful tool is to create a list or diagram about what the manager has authority over and what areas they cannot control. Sometimes there can be a gray area that new managers can get lost in, so it is important to outline these things in the beginning. Also let the manager know who they can come to if they run into a problem, whether it is you or another person in command. Don't throw them to the sharks without a life preserver.

## **CREATE A SHARED VISION**

When a new manager is introduced, it is best to create a shared vision with them to help establish what you want to see happen. This will also benefit both parties as they can share what they are hoping to achieve. The new manager will need the proper support from management to succeed, so it is important to work with them from the beginning. Speak openly with them and let them know what you want from them. Let

them speak openly with you about what they want and how they plan to get there. Together, form a vision with realistic goals that you can both work to help the other achieve. Once a plan has been made, schedule a follow-up meeting to let them know how they are doing and what kinds of progress has been made.

**Tips:**

- Give specific feedback and visions you want to see.
- Focus on goals and progress the employee can reasonably achieve.
- Form a plan or outline that can help illustrate how your shared vision can be reached.
- Follow-up as periodically.

**THE MORE THEY LEARN, THE MORE RESPONSIBILITY THEY GET**

Becoming a new manager is a learning process. It wouldn't be expected for them to know or handle everything from the get go. To help them ease into their new position, start the manager out with a fair load of responsibility and duties. Monitor how they handle themselves and if they make progress. As they grow and learn, gauge how they would handle new or different responsibilities. Sometimes adding a new project or assignment gradually can help them have hands on learning while gaining new responsibilities. With anything new, moderation is a key.

Don't overload the manager too quickly or they could lose interest and fail to succeed in their position.

**Tips:**

- Start the employee with a fair amount of duties/projects.
- Monitor success and setbacks.
- Gauge when to add new or additional tasks.
- Follow up as needed.

**PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Angela recently hired a new manager for her sales department. She welcomed Jeffrey to the department and Jeffrey expressed he was a little nervous about the job. Angela sat down with him and outlined what goals they want to achieve while he is working there. She talked about what areas he would manage and what would need to be managed by the other managers. Before Jeffrey went on the floor, Angela reassured him that she would be following up with him to see how he was doing and would look into increasing his job responsibilities if he worked hard and did a good job.

*The conventional  
definition of management  
is getting work done  
through people, but real  
management is developing  
people through work.*

AGHA HASAN ABEDI



# COACHING AND MENTORING (I)

Having a coach and mentor available is very helpful to a new employee's career and success. While a mentor and a coach are two different roles to play, they share some of the same characteristics that are meant to benefit the employee, such as giving career advice and being available to offer help when it is needed. There are many tools available to help coach and mentor any new employee, including performance reviews, feedback, and open communication.

## WRITING PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Performance reviews can be a key tool in helping a new manager know how they are doing and where they need to improve. They are an efficient way the employee can receive effective and accurate feedback from their supervisors. Reviews often cover a certain period of time, from a few weeks to several months, and document the employee's achievements, statistics, and any issues they may have experienced. When discussing the review with the manager, minimize distractions and focus on the employee and having clear communication during the entire session.

### **Helpful hints for performance reviews:**

- Make the reviews a priority – don't let them lapse.
- Hold personal, one-on-one meetings.
- Give praise where it is due and discipline where it is needed.
- Offer tips for improvement, if needed.

### **Provide Clear and Timely Feedback**

Feedback is the main way of educating employees on how they are performing on the job. Feedback can be given informally, such as orally or in a meeting, or formally, such as on an employee review. Providing effective and timely feedback can help the employee identify what is needed, and can lead the way to creating goals to fill in these 'gaps' or other areas of improvement. They also provide praise and credit when it is due, which can encourage the employee to continue on their successful track. Monitor how much time passes before feedback is delivered – if given too long after an incident it may not hold much bearing and may not be taken seriously by the employee.

### **Tips:**

- Prepare and outline what you want to say or address
- Decide if feedback should be given formally or informally
- Identify the reason for feedback – whether positive or negative
- Track each feedback session or meeting given.

## **PRAISE IN PUBLIC, CRITICIZE IN PRIVATE**

Even a new manager has a reputation to uphold in front of their employees. If you have some sort of criticism to deliver, ensure that it is done in private and not in front of other employees. Confronting the manager in public can not only embarrass them, but it can make you lose respect from the surrounding employees. This can also make the manager angry and defensive, which can counteract the purpose of trying to offer help or create a solution.

However, praise and positive feedback should be delivered in public and among other employees because it can be a positive influence and encouragement to others. It recognizes hard work and success, and it shows that hard work can be recognized and applauded. The manager will get a sense of accomplishment from being praised for a job well done and will be more likely to perform at high levels.

## **MAKE SURE YOUR DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN**

Whether the manager is new to the office or new to the position, the role of manager can be intimidating and somewhat scary. Give your employee the assurance that they can always come to you for advice and support. Reassure them that they are not alone in their journey. Keeping an open door policy will let them, as well as other employees know that they are free to approach you with any questions or concerns. Your employees will appreciate the gesture and know that you are there to help.

**Tips:**

- Be open to listen to the employees and their needs.
- Maintain an open door policy – make sure your employees are aware of it.
- Always be approachable – avoid becoming too distant.
- If you are busy, schedule a follow-up as soon as possible.

**PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Ben has been monitoring his new manager, Cecilia's, progress since she was hired six months ago. He decided it was time for a probationary review. The plan was to let her know how she was doing and possibly progress more before her yearly review. He called her into his office so they could have a private, one-on-one meeting. Ben offered several forms of positive feedback about Cecilia's recent work, but also gave some constructive criticism about how she handles her paperwork and what she can do to improve it. Cecilia listened and asked questions when needed. Before he excused her back to her work, Ben reminded Cecilia that his door is always open and he is available to offer his assistance when needed.

*Good timber does not grow  
with ease; the stronger the  
wind, the stronger the trees.*

J. WILLARD MARRIOTT



# COACHING AND MENTORING (II)

Now that your manager has branched out on their own, you are still an important role in their professional development. You've built them up and prepared them for anything, but now you need to ensure they can get the job done right. Offer a follow up meeting to see how they are doing and offer any advice or help. When they bring their problems to you, you'll be ready to take them on.

### **OFFER ADVICE, NOT THE SOLUTION**

When our employees come to us for help, our immediate reaction is to offer a quick solution to fix the problem. Often times we assume that offering the solution will help our employees and allow them to move on, but in reality, it only hinders them further. Instead, the next time you are approached by one of your troubled employees, think about the problem and how it can be solved. But don't offer the solution to them just yet – offer advice and support to help them reach the answer on their own. By helping them reach the solution themselves, you're improving their critical thinking skills and helping them develop their own key strategies for the future.

As the Chinese Proverb says *“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”*

## **CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Managers and other employees don't want to feel like the office is a place for criticism or persecution. They don't want to fear coming into work every day. Instead, show your employees an environment that offers them the support they need and may want. Establish trust and open communication with your manager and employees and let them know you are available to them. Check in with your employees periodically to offer help and see how they are doing. When they do come to you for assistance, take time to listen to their problems and help them work through them. Your employees will appreciate the support and in turn will feel confident that they are not alone in the office.

### **Benefits of a supportive environment:**

- Employees are more open to approaching you with problems or concerns.
- Allows you to deliver news or criticism to employees without frightening them.
- Employees feel more at ease hearing constructive criticism.

## **BUILD OWNERSHIP**

When employees feel a part of the development of the office and the leadership, they feel as though they have a sense of ownership in what

happens. This feeling of ownership can make employees feel more committed to their jobs and usually feel more confident about the work that they do. Building a sense of ownership among employees allows them to share the failures and successes of the office. This will make them feel not like they are working *for the company*, but that they are *part of the company*.

### **Tips to help build employee ownership:**

- Listen their input and ideas
- Offer advancement opportunities
- Keep all employees informed and ‘in the loop’

## **360 DEGREE FEEDBACK**

360 Degree Feedback is a process in which managers and supervisors receive confidential and anonymous feedback from the employees that work around and with them. These forms or surveys often include a space for open comments or a rating scale that cover a range of office duties and competencies. Since this process is anonymous, employees feel freer to express feedback that they may not be able to say in person. Managers and supervisors use this feedback system to get a better idea of their strengths and weaknesses from their employees’ point of view. This gives them the opportunity to adjust any behaviors and skills that will help not only themselves do better, but their fellow employees also.

## **Keys to 360 degree feedback:**

- Must be anonymous and confidential
- Include a rating scale, comment boxes or a combination of both
- Once feedback is reviewed, develop a plan to implement the improvements

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Eve is continuing to coach and mentor her recent manager hire, Matthew. She has let him know that she is available to him and that her office is always a safe place to talk. Recently she allowed him to assist her in selecting a new reporting program that will increase data processing speed. Matthew gave several good points about how it would benefit their department. However, shortly after being installed, Matthew came to Eve and expressed that he was having trouble getting the employee reports to sync in the new program. Eve went over the data with him again and asked him to repeat the process. She helped him double check his steps and asked leading questions that helped him find new ways of inputting the information. Matthew then found the computing error he had made and was able to fix the problem himself. Eve knew since Matthew had discovered the problem on his own, he'll be more likely not to repeat it again and understand why it didn't work.

*Everything depends on  
execution; having just a  
vision is no solution.*

STEPHEN SONDHEIM



# MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Performance measurement is an ongoing tool that supervisors and managers use on a timely basis, whether it is random or annual. As a supervisor, measuring a manager's performance can involve many areas and topics, including their general understanding of their position as well as adherence to policies and procedures. While many different indicators can be used to measure performance, the main goal is to seek improvements where they are needed and offer praise where it is due.

## STAYING WITHIN THEIR BUDGET

Besides ensuring that projects are completed in a timely manner, the manager must also be sure to adhere to the company budget. Budget tools such as planning and comparison are great ways to help stay within a set limit, but mistakes or errors can be made. As the supervisor, you will need to take the time to monitor the manager's spending and expenditures. If there are deficits or overages, the manager will need to be spoken with and possibly need more help on learning how to budget correctly.

## SETTING MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

An objective is considered a specific step or milestone that helps accomplish a certain goal and usually involves a lot of research and planning. The key to setting measurable objectives is to know yourself and your manager, what they are capable of and what you both want to accomplish.

When setting measurable objectives, be specific and clear about what you want to see from your manager. A vague goal may be to increase product output in the next year, but a defined objective would be to decrease product production time by 50% or package 12 cases of product a day.

### **Tips when setting objectives:**

- Set goals first
- Decide on desired outcomes from goals
- Be specific and use details
- Be definitive about how they can be completed

## SKIP LEVEL FEEDBACK

Similar to 360 degree feedback, skip level feedback allows for an employee to make suggestions and comments about themselves and management, but is normally done in a direct contact meeting. This type of feedback is generally done orally with prepared questions, instead of printed on forms or surveys. Skip level feedback allows for a manager and their employee to meet directly and talk openly. The manager or

supervisor is able to view the employee's progress and their general contribution to the company. Since the employee's direct supervisors or bosses are not included in these meetings, the employee is free to make unbiased comments about their management and what they want/need from them.

### **Keys to skip-level feedback:**

- Usually done orally in a private meeting
- Open ended questions allow the employee to make comments and suggestions
- Once feedback is received, a plan for improvements can be made

## **COLLABORATE ON CRITERIA TO BE EVALUATED**

A supervisor normally has a written evaluation plan with pre-motioned ideas of what areas they plan to monitor and assess. One of the best ways to ensure the manager knows what is expected of them is for the supervisor to discuss what areas and performances will be evaluated. When you collaborate with your employee about what criteria will be assessed and measured, they not only know what to expect in the future, but they also feel as though they are part of the process and will feel more responsible for upholding their end of your new bargain.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Victor has called Maria into his office to perform an oral and written review on her. He greets her with a smile and welcomes her into his office for

privacy. Victor has some pre-designed questions he will use later to get Maria's open comments. He congratulates her for staying within her budget, even though it was decreased in the last quarter. He pulled out a list and asked Maria if she remembered it.

*"That was the criteria sheet we designed when I came to this department."*  
She said.

Victor nodded and reviewed the different areas of performance with her.

*"I'm happy to see that you are following the criteria sheet I gave you and that you are doing such a great job here."*

*Really great people make  
you feel that you, too,  
can become great.*

MARK TWAIN



# MOTIVATING MANAGERS

It's been proven that a company with employees who feel motivated and inspired will perform better and take pride in their work. However, employee motivation is not an exact science and needs to be personalized to the individual employee or employee group. One employee can be motivated by monetary gain, while another is moved by personal recognition. The key to helping them both feel appreciated is to find a way to motivate them that enables them to earn it.

### **PROVIDE THE NEEDED RESOURCES**

One way of motivating your managers is to make available and additional support and resources they may need, such as other members of management or various training resources. A manager cannot complete their job well if they don't have the resources they need. As a member of upper management, don't forget to offer plenty of encouragement and personal support. Ensure that they can always use you as a resource and that if they need something they cannot find or get on their own, you will do your best to help them acquire it.

### **Example support and resources:**

- Emotional support and encouragement
- Co-worker and other management support teams
- Additional training times and materials

## **BONUSES AND INCENTIVES**

Bonus and incentive programs are a popular motivation tool with employees. They are normally given for jobs well done or increased employee performance. Rewards come in many shapes and sizes, including monetary bonuses, gifts, or special recognitions; which can make this type of motivation easily flexible among employees. Some employees may not respond to the prize itself, but by becoming personally involved in what they desire and what they want to strive for, you can motivate them to excel and achieve their goals while adding a bonus on the side.

### **Tips for bonus and incentive programs:**

- Determine the bonuses or incentives you want to accomplish
- Decide who will take part in the program
- Develop clear performance goals
- Ensure open communication throughout the program

## GIVE CREDIT FOR GOOD WORK

One of the most overlooked forms of motivation is the simple “*Thank you*” or even “*Good job*”. As upper management, we forget that the small gestures can make a big difference in how our employees are motivated and inspired at work. Since timing is the key, give recognition as soon as possible after the accomplishment or success. The employee will be grateful to be recognized and will not feel as though their hard work has gone unnoticed by management.

### **Tips:**

- Recognize all forms of good work, large or small
- Give credit right away – over time it can lose its effect
- Be sincere and avoid sounding “cheesy”

## KEEP THEM CHALLENGED

Keeping your managers and other employees challenged is often referred to as the ‘grow or go’ situation, where management needs to keep their employees challenged and help them feel as though they are growing, or they may ‘go’ elsewhere. While they may not physically leave the company, their desire, and job pride may have already left. So it is important to keep their job interesting and allowing them to grow and expand their duties. If they excel in one area and have become limited in what they can do, try them in another area or give them more responsibility in their current position. Don’t feel threatened by those that want to move forward – they

are not all out to become the next vice president or CEO, but many do seek the challenge of new opportunities.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Kim wanted to motivate her employees to exceed their sales quotas before the end of the year break. She decided a bonus/incentive plan would be the best choice. She gathered her group of employee and announced the program. She announced the rules and explained what aspects of their sales quotas had to be met and exceeded. Kim then explained how the winner will be selected.

*“What will we win?”* asked one of the employees.

*“Well, the choice is up to you. You’ll be awarded a cash certificate to purchase an item of your choice from select stores. I know some of you would love a new wardrobe, while some of you would enjoy a small vacation.”* Kim smiled.

At the end of the year Kim reviewed everyone’s sales quotas and announced the winner was one of her veteran employees, Andrea. She praised her for her high sales and then gave her credit for improved customer service as well. When Andrea had been given her reward, Kim told her that she felt she was ready to move to the next level of her section. Kim assigned Andrea some new areas to make sales in and had her train some of the new hires.

*“With skills such as yours, we want to be sure you can stay sharp and challenged.”*

*Not only must we be good,  
but we must also be good  
for something.*

DAVID HENRY THOREAU



# SIGNS OF POOR MANAGEMENT

Poor management can be an important factor when it comes to the functionality of the office and company. When management is not up to par, it can cause problems with other employees, including morale and job performance. The key is to identify these signs of poor management before it has a chance to go any further down the line or taint any other employees.

## MISSED DEADLINES

Missed deadlines are generally a sign of poor time management, which can affect several different areas of a manager's duties. When the manager misses deadlines, it can cause conflict among several of the team or office members, causing a 'domino effect'. If one deadline is missed, it causes another employee to meet their deadline with incomplete data or even skip it altogether. It is important to recognize when a missed deadline is just a random mistake and when it has become a consistent habit.

### **Monitoring for missed deadlines:**

- Is the pattern consistent?
- Does this happen on certain projects?

- Has the manager sought help to meet their deadlines?
- Have you already spoken to them about missing deadline?

## TEAM TURNOVER

When a manager has become difficult to work with, for various reasons, they often have a high team turnover, meaning employees are quitting or getting fired. This, in turn, requires the manager to hire or bring in a new group to work with, which usually means starting from scratch to get anything done. When a manager has a high staff turnover, it is a good indicator that they are having trouble managing their staff and are unable to function within the group. Pull the manager aside and have a private meeting about what is happening and offer assistance if needed. Monitor them for signs of improvement, before the company hires a new batch of employees.

### **Common types of managers that cause high staff turnovers:**

- Constant Critics – Often over criticize employees
- The ‘Prosecutor’ – Tends to only focus on the negative
- Helicopter Managers – try to micromanage employees and ‘hover’ over their work.

## LOSING CUSTOMERS

Whether your business is done in person, over the phone, or even by email, a client or customer can sense the connection between the

manager and their team. They gauge how fast information is retrieved and how well they work together to get their project done. If you notice a loss in customers, consider what impression you or your manager is portraying to them. If possible, follow up with these lost clients and see what made them take away their business. Was the work inadequate? Is the manager making unnecessary comments? Are demands not being met? If the answer has something to do with how the manager acted or handled the account, speak with the manager right away to correct the situation and prevent the same kind of behavior in the future.

## **LITTLE OR NO GROWTH**

As a manager starts out, their growth, or progress is generally slow and steady since this is the time they take to learn the ropes and get to know the office. However, after a period of time on the job, the manager should show signs of larger growth and expansion. Their skills and job areas should have areas of progression and statistics that have increased in numbers. If a manager is in the same spot they were from the day they started, they are not showing growth on the job and are not helping the company move along. If this is the case, speak with the manager privately and have their latest data report showing the lack of movement to demonstrate what you are concerned about. Offer assistance and find what areas should be focused on. Emphasize growth and let them know how important it is for them to show some progress soon.

### **Signs of little or no growth:**

- Low numbers or statistics
- No acquirement of new skills
- Lack of job promotion
- Disgruntled subordinate employees

### **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Nancy is reviewing one of her manager's recent reviews. She noticed that his performance stats have not improved in several months and that he has not learned in new skills in his department. She has replaced several of his team members recently, due to some quitting and some requesting a transfer. Nancy finally decided to call Peter into her office after he missed his report deadline for the third time this month. When she met with Peter, she reviewed her recent finding with him and told him she thought he was not growing with the department. Peter offered several reasons why things had not worked out or how his time was mismanaged. Nancy did not want to fire Peter, so she outlined a new performance plan that will help him increase his performance, learn some new skills, and even help him with his personnel skills. She told him he had six weeks to improve these areas, in which she would meet with him again to decide what to do next.

*Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the policy you've decided upon is being carried out.*

RONALD REAGAN



# TRUST YOUR TEAM OF MANAGERS

Sometimes we forget that it can take an entire team to run a project or office. But when you have a team of managers, it is important to remember their unique traits and qualities that made them part of the team. Know that they made it onto your team for a reason, and that they were taught everything they needed to know to start out. Trust that you have taught them well and rely on them to do a good job.

### DO NOT MICRO MANAGE

Assuring that your managers do a good job without crossing the line into micromanaging can be hard for anyone. It can be hard to navigate through the office without wanting to constantly check in on them or offer your input randomly. One of the best ways to remedy this is to; first of all, trust your managers and their job abilities. Once you can do that, you can let the manager seek accountability for their actions and own their responsibilities. When they feel in charge of their position and themselves, managers will perform better and not feel as though you are breathing down their neck to do so.

### **Tips to help stop micro managing:**

- Make your employees accountable
- Hire the right people from the start
- Clearly outline your expectations of your employees

### **PROMOTE OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATION**

One thing that can hinder a relationship among managers is poor communication. It's easy to believe that your managers will always be forward with you and will have no trouble approaching you with problems; but this isn't necessarily true for some groups. To ensure your employees feel comfortable with you and with each other, promote communication that is open and honest with each other. Allow everyone to give their input and to not hold back on their wants and needs. Be responsive to them and support feedback from others. Having this type of communication builds respect among the group and helps build trust along the way.

#### **Tips:**

- Have an open door policy
- Ask questions frequently
- Give everyone a chance to speak

### **REWARD INITIATIVE**

Managing your team and helping them grow can be a challenging experience. As a leader, it is important to encourage initiative among your

managers and motivate them to do better. One way to accomplish this is to by rewarding the initiative that managers take on the job. Whether they reached out to help other employees or took on a new task by themselves, managers are always showing us how they are taking on more initiative.

In return, upper management should reward these actions and can do so in various ways. Some rewards include simple recognitions, gifts, or even promotions. When the manager feels rewarded for the hard work they've embarked on, they are more willing to take pride in their work and continue doing a good job. It is important to recognize the initiative itself, and not just the outcome.

## **TRUST, BUT VERIFY**

“Trust, but verify” is a common tool used by many leaders today in helping manage their group of employees. We can't always assume the job is done right; sometimes the work needs to be verified or reviewed. It doesn't involve micromanaging, but it involves periodic steps of checking in or verifying an employee's work. Common methods include asking an employee to send an email when they are finished with certain phases or setting reminders to speak with the manager in person to check on progress. Managers often make the mistake that previous information is automatically absorbed and understood and overlook the need for verification. But taking a few minutes to look over any project periodically can save everyone a lot of time and man hours in the event that something needs to be corrected.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Michael has just formed a new team of managers that will help him complete the year end project on time. He does not want to have to micro manage them throughout the projects, so he holds a meeting where he assigns each one their own assignment and explained what they are supposed to do. He has also asked that when they complete each step, they send him a brief email letting him know of their progress. Michael encourages each one to feel free to come to him with any questions or problems they may have while working on the project. At the end of the meeting, he lets them all know he will check in with them periodically and looks forward to a great result.

*The quality of our lives  
depends not on whether or  
not we have conflicts, but  
on how we respond to them*

THOMAS CRUM



# WHEN AN EMPLOYEE COMPLAINS ABOUT THEIR MANAGER

Employee complaints are bound to happen and are normal in any company. While they can be troublesome or even annoying, effectively handling a complaint and resolving the issue can not only boost employee morale, but it can provide everyone with constructive feedback that can aid in a solution. Do not discourage your employees from bringing forth their complaints. Allow them an open place to come too and welcome the chance for improvement.

### KEEP THE INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL

Before an employee feels comfortable enough to bring forth their manager complaints, they have to feel that their information will only be given to those that need to be involved. They don't want to feel as though their complaint or problem will be shared with the rest of the office, or that they will be singled out as 'causing trouble'. The same can go for managers – they don't want their mistakes flaunted in front of others. Ensure your employees that they can come to you and their information and complaints will be kept confidential. If employees are still not comfortable enough to speak in person, offer another outlet that doesn't require direct contact

with management, such as a human resource agent or an anonymous complaint line.

## **GATHER INFORMATION FROM BOTH SIDES**

When approached by an employee regarding a manager, it can be easy to jump to conclusions based on what this person is telling you. But remember that there are always two sides to every story. After speaking with the employee, let them know you will look into the matter and get back to them. Then have a private meeting with the manager in question and let them tell their side of problem. Once you have both sides, if possible, have a joint meeting in which you can ask about both sides of the problem together. This may not always be an option if the employee wishes to remain anonymous, so be prepared to take notes on each statement and go from there alone.

### **Tips:**

- Take time to hear both side of the situation
- Hold private, individual meetings before meeting together
- Be objective – avoid picking sides or becoming bias

## **COACH OR DELEGATE THE SOLUTION**

Once you have handled the situation and have come up with a way to resolve the problem, it is important to decide who will carry out the plan and how. If you are able to help implement a solution, offer yourself as a coach for support and advice. Sometimes managers or employees aren't

sure where to go after a complaint has been resolved, so be there to help them get back on track and back to work. However, there may be complaints that you are not able to help carry out, in which case you may designate another manager or employee to help the parties resolve their problem. Since you will not directly be involved in instances such as this, ensure that everyone knows what they are supposed to do and who they can come back to if they have future problems.

## **FOLLOW-UP WITH THE MANAGER OR EMPLOYEE**

After the complaint or problem has been investigated and eventually resolved, make time to follow up with the employee and or the manager. Is there tension between the parties involved? Are working conditions any better? This can be done in a variety of ways, including quick check-ins on the floor or holding meetings to speak with the person privately. See if the issue has been resolved or if they still need help finding a better solution. Again, offer your personal help, if possible, or offer another resource the employee or manager can try, such as human resources.

### **Common methods used to follow up:**

- Individual meetings
- Observation on the floor or office
- Phone calls
- Stop by the employee's desk to check in

## PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Nicole has been approached by one of her employees, Samuel, who says he wants to make a complaint about his manager, Erica. Nicole allows him to speak privately in her office and asks what the problem is. He explains that he has gone to Erica with concerns and complaints about the new system and how it isn't working properly, but he feels as if he is being ignored. He also explains that he would like to remain anonymous in the matter. Nicole assures him he will speak with Erica and follow up with him at a later date.

After he leaves, Nicole speaks privately with Erica and asks about the new system and how she has received some employee complaints about it. Erica says she has gotten them too, but just figured they were unhappy about learning the new skills and blew it off. Nicole told her that the complaints are not to be ignored and that she should have investigated them sooner. She assigned Erica to contact with human resources and speak with someone who can help her learn how to handle employee complaints properly. She told her she would check back with her to see what she had learned. When they were finished, Nicole spoke with Samuel again and let him know that the issue had been resolved and that she would have someone assist employees that are having trouble with the new program.

*Again and again,  
the impossible problem  
is solved when we see that  
the problem is only a  
tough decision waiting  
to be made.*

ROBERT H. SCHULLER



# WHEN DO YOU STEP IN?

While it is the general rule that we have to let our employees make their own mistakes and let them stumble a bit since experience is often the best teacher. A good leader or supervisor will step back and resist the urge to swoop in every time we see our new manager or employee encounter a problem. But if the employee's behavior begins to harm other employees or poses a threat to the company, it is time to intervene before matters progress any further.

### UNSAFE OR DANGEROUS EVENTS

When a manager or employee is doing something that can cause harm or pose a threat to them or their co-workers, higher management must step in. Unsafe or dangerous situations are not the time or place where an employee can 'learn from their mistakes'. When you step in, provide advice and coaching that can lead them to the correct solution. Don't tell them the answer or solution flat out – allow the employee to choose the best solution from the options given. When everyone is safe and out of harm's way, speak with the employee and ensure that they understand why their actions or behavior is inappropriate. Follow with appropriate consequences based on company policy.

## LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS

An employee that commits actions that are illegal needs to be approached right away. Illegal behavior and actions should never be permitted and should be stopped once they are detected. Whether the employee's actions were intentional or accidental due to ignorance, the employee must know that it is unacceptable. This type of behavior is not only harmful to the employee, but to the other employees and the company as a whole. The employee will need extra coaching or meetings to work out an alternate plan of action and explain why their behavior was a poor choice for them.

### **Tips:**

- Provide additional coaching and meetings
- Reference company policies that support your actions
- Follow with appropriate consequences

## SEVERE FINANCIAL COSTS

Any mistake made by an employee can cost the company money, which is why they are strongly avoided when possible. While you can't stop an employee from making a mistake in hopes that it will save the company some money, a significant drop or negative effect on company costs needs to be investigated. You have an obligation to the company to protect its finances and assets, therefore when this type of behavior is noticed or even expected, it is important to intercede. Offer coaching and

support for the employee to help them reach a solution and correct the negative behavior. Then explain why it was necessary that you stepped in when you did.

**Tips:**

- Review proper procedures and policies on company finances
- Explain why you had to step in – ensure that you are here to help
- Follow up frequently for a period of time afterwards

**REPEATED FAILURES AFTER COACHING HAS OCCURRED**

You expect your employees to make mistakes and fumble the ball at times. Sometimes a professional reminder can get them back on track and further actions aren't needed. However, when an employee repeats several negative behaviors or continues to fail after you've coached and guided them, this is a sign that they are not learning the correct behavior. If the employee continues to choose actions and behaviors that are causing negative effects in the office, additional coaching and counseling is needed. Focus on the fact that the current behavior is not producing the desired results and work together to form a different plan of action.

**PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Justin is a supervisor of a medical record department in a hospital. He notices that several patient files have been accessed longer than they should be and are left open for long periods of time. He narrows them down to one agent, Betty. He approaches Betty and questions why she

has the records open. She tells him that she keeps them open in case she has to come back to them or in case she gets one of their relatives profile in, then she can cross examine them. Justin immediately explains to her how this process is unsafe for the patient's information and is illegal if she 'compares' the patient records. He explained to her why he had to come down right away and warned that if she does not fix the problem that she could be fired. Betty expressed that she understood and would not do it again.

*Quality is never  
an accident; it is always  
the results of high  
intention, sincere effort,  
intelligent direction and  
skillful execution.*

WILLIAM A. FOSTER



# REMEMBER THESE BASIC QUALITIES

Now that your managers are out on their own, don't forget why they are in your department in the first place. Remember the abilities and characteristics you admired in them and the skills they are taking with them on the job. You can still support them in their journey and offer assistance as needed. Share in their success and know that you can take some of that credit too.

### EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITIES

Don't be afraid to let your employees know that you have confidence in them and their abilities on the job. After all, you trained them and noticed something in them above the rest of the employees. Giving them that extra boost can make all the difference when they are out on the floor by themselves. Offer an occasional "good job" or praise the positive outcomes you get from them. The manager will feel good knowing that they are doing the good job you desire while gaining confidence.

#### **Tips to boost your manager's confidence:**

- Praise good work
- Communicate your confidence in them and their abilities

- Offer more responsibilities or job expansions

## **PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH**

Don't forget that you serve as a role model to your managers and other employees. You deliver motivational talks and teach them valuable skills, but the most valuable tool you can use to help them is to lead by example and 'practice what you preach'. Pay attention to your behaviors and what signals you may be putting out there, positive or negative. Since you set the tone for how things are done and followed in the office, your employees will soon follow suit and continue to follow your guidance. Just make sure you are leading them in the right direction and down the same path that you walk upon.

## **HAVE AN OPEN DOOR**

Open door policies are a great way to let your employees know that your door is always 'open' to them and they are free to approach you with any problems or concerns. These types of policies usually ensure that employees are free from repercussions when they approach someone in management. When employees feel at ease about approaching you or other management, it encourages more open communication and allows for valuable feedback to be received. Establish your ground rules, such as office hours or best method of contact, and share this information with all of your employees. Answer any questions they may have and let them to know to follow up with you if needed.

**Tips:**

- Establish what members of management are in the open door policy
- Decide if there are any guidelines to follow (office hours, contact procedure)
- Ensure all employees are aware of the policy

**THEIR SUCCESS IS YOUR SUCCESS**

Management is only as successful as the employees that report to them. Because of this, managers and supervisors will train their employees the best way they can and ensure they have the proper skills and tools to do a great job. When an employee succeeds, it not only reflects well on them, but it reflects on their management and the team that trained them. That is why management strives to develop great skills and attributes in their employees and help them be the best that they can be. While you may not bask in their glory or try to steal their limelight, you can take pride in knowing that you too can share in your employee's successes.

**Tips:**

- Continue coaching and advising as needed.
- Offer additional resources and materials.
- Be available to your employees.
- Congratulate their success and praise good work.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Martin is a supervisor in the company mail room. His manager, Tina, has been doing a great job and has earned the department great recognition in customer service. Administration has commended Tina as well as Martin for their great work in forming a new and efficient mail room. One day Tina approached Martin and said she wanted to expand the department and add new assignments for her employees. Martin told her it would be a big job and it would take a lot of work. Tina smiled and told him she understood, but knew it would be best for the department. Martin agreed and told her he would get her the materials she needed to get started. He knew if anyone could pull it off, it was Tina.

*Determine that the thing  
can and shall be done, and  
then we shall find the way.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

# CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Lee Iacocca:** Management is nothing more than motivating other people.
- **Abraham Maslow:** I have learned the novice can often see things that the expert overlooks. All that is necessary is not to be afraid of making mistakes, or appearing naïve.
- **Anne Morrow Lindbergh:** Good communication is just as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.
- **Charles Schwab:** I have yet to find a man, however exalted his station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than under a spirit of criticism.



**Rick Chisholm** made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



**Tala Chisholm** is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.

.....

Phone: +61 2 8007 2907  
E-mail: [admin@innovestsmc.com.au](mailto:admin@innovestsmc.com.au)  
Website: [www.innovestsmc.com.au](http://www.innovestsmc.com.au)