HELP! I'VE BEEN PROMOTED!

6 TIPS FOR YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED MANAGERS

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Preface

Managers, especially young, inexperienced BYUI students, need easy resources to help lift their teams rather than becoming managers who contribute to the problem. I was promoted to general manager at 19 years old and was ill-prepared for hiring, firing, and correcting employees. Overall, I think I did pretty well, but I know that if that's how well I did, there had to be other managers faring much worse. I know that, especially in this college town, the food industry is run mainly by students under 25 years old. The inexperience and lack of training for managers can make an ‘easy’ part-time job very stressful for their employees.

Young managers are being promoted without the proper qualifications and may not have an effective mentor to teach them. With this guide, "Help! I've been promoted!" and accompanying short video clips, I want to do a small part to try and educate those in Rexburg who might need better guidance in their new manager position. . I will also post myself teaching lessons from the guide on various platforms to hopefully reach a broader audience.

Newly established managers in temporary roles are unlikely to buy a Harvard Business book to educate themselves on ideal managerial traits. However, if they come across something very short and simple on social media, they are much more likely to read it and hopefully learn from it. Many of my generation, including myself, prefer TikTok and YouTube University to learn something quickly rather than read a book.

One 'bad' manager can completely change the employee’s entire outlook and seriously impact operations. Many employees could quit or significantly decrease their productivity if they don't like their new manager. Conversely, a good manager can uplift the team's morale and inspire them to perform at their best. A global analytics and advising company, Gallup, found that, “Managers -- more than any other factor -- influence team engagement and performance. That's not an exaggeration: 70% of the variance in team engagement is determined solely by the manager.” This is a significant statistic that underscores the power of a manager. Let’s use our

power for good, kindness, success, and efficiency. Let's strive to be great managers because great managers are a big deal. If no action is taken, then the same cycle of flailing managers and unhappy employees will continue.

With a bit of education, young managers can gain more confidence in their roles and inspire their teams to excel. This guide and accompanying videos help reach those who are young and struggling in a new position, providing greater productivity, increased morale, and decreased stress. Managers, especially young, inexperienced BYUI students, need easy resources to help better and lift their teams rather than worsen the problem.

1. Respect the Role

When I first started work at Pick Me Up Drinks, I had a manager who I didn't get along with, and I couldn't figure out why! As soon as she was promoted, my life was severely impacted. In the blink of an eye, I had gone from loving my job with all my heart, having so much fun with all my coworkers, growing, learning, and excelling, to seriously considering quitting.

This manager, an 18-year-old who had graduated high school early, had chosen her favorite employees, and I was not one of them. After two weeks, my hours had been cut down to one shift a week, just Friday closing, even though I had completely open availability. I knew immediately when she scheduled me for a two-hour closing shift on Thursday because one of her favorites "needed to go to bed" that I was probably much closer to her least favorite. Nothing about my performance had changed. The only difference was that my manager had. At this moment, I realized how important having a fair manager was, how big of an impact they have, and how much I had taken my previous leaders for granted. Being a manager is a privilege, and I think some people forget how much power you hold over an individual's life. It is so important to remember that the people you manage are people too, that should be respected and considered.

One way that I tried to be a fair manager, or, in other words, show respect for my employees, was through the schedule. I would distribute weekend shifts evenly. Of course, this varied based on availability and conversations with employees. However, the typical employee did not want to work on both a Friday or Saturday night, so I noted who I scheduled week to week and did not schedule anyone for both nights, especially not back-to-back weekends.

Power Can Corrupt

Have you ever heard the saying “power can corrupt”? Well, it’s true. *Interpersonal Conflict*, a McGraw-Hill textbook, supports the idea that power corrupts.

> “The major difficulty with having a higher power than someone else is that it may corrupt you. Corruption is more than a word that describes a crooked politician. Corruption means moral rottenness, and inability to maintain the integrity of the self. A constant high level of power may "eat into" one's view of self and others, forming a perceptual distortion that may take on monstrous proportions. Higher-power persons, organizations, or nations may develop altered views of themselves and other parties. Constant feelings of higher power can result in these consequences:
>
> 1. A "taste for power" and the restless pursuit of more power as an end in itself.
>
> 2. The temptation to use institutional resources illegally as a means of self-enrichment.
>
> 3. False feedback concerning self-worth and the development of new values designed to protect power.
>
> 4. The devaluing of the less powerful and the avoidance of close social contact with them (Kipnis 1976, 178).”

Most people don’t want to be seen as dictators or as unfair, but still, it happens so often. Those in high-power positions tend to see themselves in a distorted, positive light when their actions might betray this “perfect” idea of themselves as the boss. As the manager, you are responsible for using your power for good. Implementing habits of assessing self-awareness is a great way to prevent high-power corruption, a topic that we will cover later.

Communication Barriers

One characteristic of having more power than your employees is that even though they may act like your best friend, the situation isn't always straightforward. Because you were in a higher position of power, many people may act one way around you and then a completely different way around coworkers. Dalmer Fisher, in his book *Communicating in Organizations*, calls this phenomenon a communication barrier, particularly a barrier that stops the flow of upward communication.

Fisher suggests several ways to improve the flow of upward communication: strengthening relationships, developing sensitive, objective listening skills, and ensuring all employees, not just the outspoken ones, are listened to. He also suggests that superiors respond to messages to build trust that they are being heard.

Power imbalances are a common way that barriers to communication arise. Most employees don't feel as comfortable bringing up problems to a manager because of how that may reflect on them. On the other side, managers may not feel comfortable bringing up problems with employees because they don't want to be seen negatively. It is good to be aware of this and try to combat it.

2. Qualities of Good Managers

Authenticity

The book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, teaches us that people are very perceptive to how you feel about them. In the chapter "Be Genuinely Interested in Others," Carnegie tells us that genuine interest in people's lives and accomplishments is crucial for building rapport. But what is genuineness?

Another well-known book, *Leadership and Self-deception*, also covers this topic, explaining the concept through the metaphor of being in and out of the box. "In the Box" can be defined as: A state where individuals resist others and see their own actions as always right, leading to blame and justification instead of focusing on results. "Out of the Box" is conversely defined as: A state of being where individuals recognize the needs and perspectives of others, viewing people as people. The authors emphasize that people can almost always tell when you

are ‘in the box’ towards them. But how can we escape this negative mindset of justification of actions and a lack of care for others? We learn that a mindset change is needed.

Actions we take and things we can say, however good they might seem, can all be disingenuous, depending on our mindset towards the person. The thing that matters is our mindset towards that person, and that we are seeing them as a person, giving them the respect that they deserve. Seeing others as people with needs and not as objects is how you can foster empathy, collaboration, and mutual respect. Great managers give respect to their employees, even the ones who might not have “earned” respect. Everyone is worthy of respect just for being human. We all have inherent worth and potential.

Adaptability

Adaptability is the next soft skill I would try to work on as a manager. Managers are often placed in situations that are always changing, and they have a duty to the company to lead and adapt quickly to those changes Adaptable managers can handle uncertainty better. They can make quick, informed decisions to keep their teams on track. There is often not the luxury of having a lot of time to make decisions, so the skill of ‘rolling with the punches’ is very valuable.

A flexible manager is also more open to encouraging innovation from employees. This flexibility can lead to more creativity and problem-solving from employees and better engagement if employees know that their leader is open to change.

Change, as hard as it is, is a gift. Having an open mindset to change can help you adapt more quickly and have an advantage over your peers and competitors. In the Strategic Organizational Communication class at BYU Idaho, something called ‘The Change Response Cycle’ is taught. This explains the common feelings in a process that happens to us when changes are made. The faster and more efficiently we go through this cycle, the faster we can reap the benefits of the change.

The Change Response Cycle:

Stage 1: Feelings of Disorintation. Like you’re caught between familiar and unknown

Stage 2: Disruption and Strong Emotions. Anger and fear are commonly felt emotions

Stage 3: Exploration and Acceptance. You begin to regain balance and accept potential possibilities.
Stage 4: Rebuilding and Commitment. Actions are being taken, confidence is growing and you are gaining clarity.

3. Assessing Self-awareness

Overrating abilities Most people tend to overrate their abilities. This is called the Dunning-Kruger effect, a cognitive bias where they overestimate their abilities and knowledge, particularly in areas where they have limited expertise. The American Psychology Association explains one reason people overestimate their confidence as a lack of accurate and high-quality feedback. People don't like giving negative feedback and so much of the time managers might not give feedback at all or make it very ambiguous or general.

Just because you're good at your job does not mean you're a good manager. Leadership skills are much different from those you use day-to-day at work. It is vital to understand that there is always room to grow and ways to improve your leadership. Keep an open mind to the fact that there is always more and much to learn as a manager.
Becoming more self-aware can help you reach your goals. By taking the time to think about your thinking, you can better identify obstacles that might stop you from reaching your goals.

Recognizing flaws One of the keys to recognizing flaws is learning to take criticism seriously, while this might not be everyone's tendency. My natural response is to deny all claims that I could be wrong and get defensive. However, if you have the tendency to be defensive, when others give you feedback, they are going to be less likely to do so the next time. If you tell your employees that you want to get better and ask them things that you can do to get better, but then when they tell you you Give excuses or shift the blame, how are they going to trust you to get feedback next time? The

answer is they won't. They will simply not give you any feedback or come to you with any concerns that they have. Make it clear that you want honest feedback, which will help you grow.

Then listen and take action to help their concerns. Employing real self-assessment and self-work will make it so much less likely that the employee will continue to be honest with you. Of course, no one likes to be questioned, but if you work on how you respond you can grow and be a better leader for your team. Work on it!

4. Catching the Vision

Starting with WHY In his most famous TED Talk given in 2009, Simon Sinek spoke about " How great leaders inspire action." In his speech, he tells us how important it is to start with the WHY. I remember my high school student council advisor, Curtis Vickery, teaching us this same principle. Before that year of school, we were able to participate in a student council retreat where we discussed our goals and commitments for the year. Because we had started with clarity and had flushed out our purpose, we were able to work better as a council.

Great teams are able to share a why and a purpose. This takes time and discussion to nail down. But when you can identify what is driving the team and what the passion is, the difference is stark. If there's no passion or WHY, there's no vision. One of the most important things that you can do at the very start of your role or a new project that you want to implement is for both you and your team to put effort into discovering the WHY. This could be as simple as explaining why a policy needs to be changed or as in-depth as discussing what kind of a team the whole wants to be and why that is.

Motivations

Every member of a team is going to bring different strengths and weaknesses to the team, along with different interests that motivate them. Understanding that everyone's personal WHY and motivations are different can help you tailor your message toward them. Maybe instead of offering a promotion or reward, you offer PTO, a title change, more responsibilities, or more flexible hours. These are great things to do in particular if you don't have the power or option to

promote your employees. Finding other creative ways for them to win and feel good about their work is a win-win for all.

5. How to Interview

Many managers are expected to hire employees, especially those managing small businesses, but so many are never trained on how to do this and also don't give much thought to the process. While many get away with just 'winging it', results and outcomes for all parties can be greatly enhanced with just a little preparation. In addition, you can eliminate the worry of being sued! I've come up with three key ideas to think about before starting any interview process:

1. Be Legal
2. Be Smart
3. Be Kind

Be Legal

Title Seven of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it unlawful for employers to make employment decisions based on an applicant's color, sex, race, national origin, or religion. Depending on your state, protected classes can also include disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, marital status, and age.

Asking questions that prompt interviewees to disclose information about these protected classes is something to stay away from. If an interviewee can prove that they were discriminated against because of their answer to a question, you and your company could be in very hot water.

Be Smart

Taking the necessary time and effort to find a truly great candidate is the smart move. More risky moves could include hiring a less qualified candidate, but they're a good friend or a friend of a friend, or hiring the first candidate you interview because they 'seemed good enough'

To prepare for an interview, Come up with criteria that you would like the candidate to meet. The mission statement or the company or team goals are all great places to look to make this criterion. Write down the job description if you haven't already. Along with the description,

consider what kinds of soft skills and qualities you are looking for to fit with or strengthen your team. If you are interviewing multiple candidates, write down the questions you plan to use so that you can better compare answers. A smart manager will strive to be as unbiased as possible so that you can hire truly the best candidate. After interviewing candidates, take some time to thoughtfully and thoroughly consider the decision. If you have a partner who can help you make the decision, council with them.

Be Kind

Being interviewed is a scary thing. So much so that not once but twice before interviews, I have gotten so anxious that I've thrown up. Not fun. I just recently went through three rounds of interviews just to be ghosted. How rude! Of course, managers and hiring managers have a lot going on, but being considerate and timely with interviewees is the bare minimum that should always be happening. Treating candidates disrespectfully not only hurts your personal reputation, but it hurts the reputation of the company that you are hiring for.

Maybe you don't have a position available for a candidate open quite yet, but if you keep the résumé on file and look out for when there is a position open for them, they are sure to be very appreciative of your helpfulness and initiative to help them. Finally, be kind just to be kind.

6. Feedback

Tact

Giving feedback can be tricky and uncomfortable for both parties. Feedback can be thought of as criticism or correction, and without the proper forethought and approach, it is so commonly seen as an attack or failure by the receiver.

Acquiring tact is one fix-all, easy way to become a skilled giver of feedback. Just kidding, nothing is ever that easy. But if you can learn to approach tactfully as your first inclination, conversations are sure to go smoother.

So, what is tact? Tact is defined as "a keen sense of what to do or say in order to maintain good relations with others or avoid offense," but my favorite definition is,

“Tact is the ability to tell the truth in a way that considers other people’s feelings and reactions. It allows you to give difficult feedback, communicate sensitive information, and say the right thing to preserve a relationship.” Tact is about the words we say, but it also encompasses many other things like respect, thoughtfulness, compassion, emotional intelligence, subtlety, honesty, diplomacy, and courtesy. It does seem like a good fix-all solution, but how exactly do you practice having tact? The answer is simply to change your mindset. (words and attitude are a part of that).

All this being said you can be a perfectly wonderful communicator, but someone could still get the wrong message. For example, maybe you are doing everything right and working not to offend, but in doing so, the other party feels like you are being condescending or that you have a moral superiority complex because of the difference in your two tones. Knowing your audience and having a relationship with or understanding of who you’re talking to may help with this as well.

<u>One-on-ones</u>

Holding one-on-one meetings is part of your job as a manager. Many managers try to avoid this responsibility because they might not realize the importance of the meeting. However, one-on-ones are crucial; in this meeting, absolute honesty and openness can happen if you are doing it right. Ask your team to prepare four questions before coming to the meeting.

1. What’s going well?
2. Where are you getting stuck?
3. What have you learned?
4. How can I help you?

I decided early on that I wanted to hold one-on-one meetings while I was a manager. During these, I made progress as a manager because my team felt comfortable enough to tell me where they were struggling or what I could do to help them.

It is also in this meeting that could be a good time to give constructive, tactful feedback. It may also be a time that employees are seeking it.

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