



TODAY'S MANAGERS WORK IN A FAST-PACED WORLD OF E-MAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND REMOTE EMPLOYEES.

ACT AS A COACH, TEACHER, AND CHEERLEADER TOWARD YOUR EMPLOYEES. YOUR JOB IS TO HELP THEM MOVE THEIR CAREERS FORWARD WHILE AIDING THE COMPANY.



KEEP YOUR FINGER ON THE PULSE OF YOUR TEAM TO DETECT ANY POSSIBLE CONFLICTS. IT'S ALWAYS EASIER TO RESOLVE THESE EARLY ON.

CLEAR COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL TO MANAGERIAL SUCCESS—WHETHER VERBAL OR WRITTEN.

MANAGEMENT

FROM **HIRING AND FIRING** TO **IMPARTING NEW SKILLS**, AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO **MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

101

A
CRASH COURSE
IN
**MANAGING
PEOPLE**



INTERVIEWING POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES IS A KEY MANAGERIAL FUNCTION. LEARN THE BEST QUESTIONS TO ASK AND WHAT THE RESPONSES TELL YOU ABOUT THE CANDIDATE.

STEPHEN SOUNDERING

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Management 101

**From Hiring and Firing to Imparting New Skills, an
Essential Guide to Management Strategies**

Stephen Soundering



Avon, Massachusetts

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Introduction

Like everything else in the workplace today, the concept of what it means to be a manager is changing. And it's not getting any easier. The workplace has become a complex environment that includes faster and faster communication, swiftly changing economic circumstances, remote workers (sometimes on another continent), and data spitting in all directions. The workforce has changed: It's younger, more technologically savvy, and more diverse in every way. Under these circumstances it's easy for managers to feel overwhelmed. How can anyone "manage" all of this?

Management 101 breaks it down for you in a series of simple, clear entries. Whether you're a new manager or an old hand with plenty of experience, here you'll find useful tips for getting the most out of your employees and yourself.

A manager is responsible for directing a group of employees or a project. This sounds pretty simple, but it's really not. The *Wall Street Journal* cites management guru, the late Peter Drucker, to this effect: A manager sets objectives; organizes; motivates and communicates; measures; and develops people. "While other management experts may use different words and focus on different aspects of these responsibilities," says the *Journal's* writer, "Mr. Drucker's basic description of the manager's job still holds."

At its heart, good management is all about teamwork. As a manager, your role is to lead other people to accomplish goals that will further the larger goals the company has set. You'll be judged as a manager, to a great extent, by how your team functions and the outcome of your project.

This book will show you how to communicate clearly and effectively, plan for success, execute those plans with precision, and more. Above all, it will help you learn how to manage people and projects to achieve desired results. Great managers know how to inspire their employees, mentor the best of them, and help them move up their career ladders. They know how to tell when a system isn't functioning properly and distinguish that from problems with the people who comprise the system. They know how to resolve conflicts and find the right places for the right team members.

Great management skills are not something you are born with; you have to learn them. *Management 101* will teach you the basics of management—offering examples, both good and bad. These lessons will range from how to recruit and retain great people for your team to turning around counterproductive behavior and conducting effective performance reviews.

It's all here in *Management 101*. So let's get going.

What Is Management?

The Flavors of Organization

Look up the word *manager* on the Internet or in any reference book and you will find many different definitions. They range from the coach of a sporting team to an individual hired to manage a celebrity's business or personal affairs to a computer server that provides the communication link between the systems administrator and affiliated devices on a network. But the most common definition is of someone responsible for directing or organizing a group of employees or a project. In other words, someone like you.

Managers of various organizations and companies come in many “flavors”—they can be directors, group or section leaders, various vice presidents, chief operating officers, even heads of boards of directors. In the truest sense, even the president of the United States is a manager.

According to management expert Bill Warner, despite their varying responsibilities all managers have several things in common: They are leaders, project managers, and coaches who use department resources—both people and equipment—to get the job done. They develop strategies, organize the department, set priorities and make decisions, place and ensure the training of their workers, delegate responsibilities, find solutions, make sure employees have adequate resources to do the job, communicate

with department and outside sources, and represent (both internally and externally) and help determine company policy.

Managers also have a number of “soft” duties: establishing and solidifying relationships within and outside of the company; creating and nurturing a positive work environment so people can support each other within the team; and coaching—working with individuals such that they have a clear idea of how they can contribute and thus improve their performance so that they may put forward their best efforts. Managers also serve as mentors, encouraging new talent and advising their employees on their career paths. In addition, they act as a conduit to higher-level management as they report on the progress of their department and other issues that can affect corporate decision-making.

When it comes down to it, managers are responsible for everything in their arena. No matter what you manage or how many people you manage, when it comes to your area of responsibility, the buck stops with you.

The Function of Management: The 80:20 Rule

Vast amounts of information exist outlining what a manager should and should not do. In fact, there is so much information that it is very difficult to know where to start. And even when you know where to look, no one can learn everything. The principal objective must therefore be to identify those ideas that will produce the bulk of the results—and that is an application of the 80:20 rule.

The 80:20 rule states that you will often find an (approximately) 80:20 ratio between related factors. For example:

- 80 percent of the sales revenue derives from 20 percent of the customers.
- 80 percent of the problems are caused by 20 percent of the people.
- 80 percent of the results come from 20 percent of the activities.

With this in mind, you can begin to understand the importance of focusing on the 20 percent that needs to be attended to at any given moment. Focusing on the 20 percent allows managers to prioritize how they spend their time. Because new managers often lack experience, they typically find that their schedule fills up quickly because they try to do everything. Prioritizing enables the manager to have an impact without spending sixty hours a week in the office.

The 80:20 rule enables you to weed out the problems and concentrate on the areas that need improvement. It will also help you identify strengths within your organization, as well as benchmark high achievers.

From “Being Managed” to Manager

In a sense, becoming a manager is like having a child. Before your promotion, you were only responsible for one person: yourself. Now you’ve got other people to look out for: your employees and team members. The decisions you make will affect them—and their careers.

So how do you make the transition from a good worker who produced solid results—resulting in your promotion—to managing others and achieving the same (or greater) level of success?

The first step is *managing yourself*. This includes obvious areas like staying in shape, eating and sleeping well; being accountable

for your actions; doing your best; being a good listener; and other concepts discussed in this book. As a manager, you'll be leading by example, and you will set the tone for your entire department. Your responsibilities include motivating your team members to do the best work possible and shaping the team into a cohesive unit that gets the job done.

So you'll want to set a standard for personal excellence, whether it be through taking additional training (and encouraging your team to do so); learning new skills, such as public speaking (even if you have stage fright); and being positive. The latter is especially important in obtaining cooperation from employees, who must feel that you are loyal and that they can trust you. They also need to be comfortable coming to you with their ideas and sense that you will act upon their feedback and suggestions.

“In most cases being a good boss means hiring talented people and then getting out of their way.”

—Tina Fey, *Bossypants*

Employees will do their best when working for someone who they believe in and can turn to. They also expect you to be more than competent in, if not on the cutting edge of, your area of expertise. That said, you also need to recognize your weaknesses and theirs, as well as to define areas of improvement and growth.

Understanding the Corporate Culture

How Things Are Done

Corporate culture is often defined as “how we do things around here,” and it reflects the organization’s personality, attitudes, experiences, beliefs, and values. A company is like a living, breathing organism, as individual as a snowflake. If you’re going to be a successful manager, it’s essential that you understand the culture of your workplace and act according to it rather than against it.

Simple things can often trip up a new manager who is not “schooled” in the cultural norms of the organization. Hazards include who to copy or not to copy on e-mail, when and if to skip links in the chain of command, how to act when you are directly engaged by your boss’s boss, the tone to take in written communications and meetings (direct versus political), and how to act at social functions (to drink or not to drink, who to sit with, etc.). These are just a few areas a new manager must understand.

Theories abound that explain corporate culture. Among the most insightful and commonly used is a model from MIT professor Ed Schein, who describes it as existing on three cognitive levels. At the first or “surface” level are the attributes that can be seen by the outside observer—physical layout, dress code, how employees interact with each other, the company’s policies and procedures, and organizational structure. The next “middle” level consists of the professed culture of the company: its mission statements, slogans,

and stated values. At the third and deepest level are the organization's tacit assumptions, the "unspoken rules" that are rarely consciously acknowledged even by the employees. Here you'll find taboo and sometimes contradictory elements of company culture.

Not only must managers understand all three levels of a culture, but they must also know how to navigate the complex and often-conflicting third level, a task that requires the utmost tact and sensitivity. It is in this third level that managers face their greatest challenge. To ignore or bypass the company's unspoken rules and taboos is to invite trouble and resistance among the ranks and from other managers. The best way to prevent inadvertent slip-ups is to find a peer or manager who can help you understand the more subtle nuances of accepted practices. It also helps to be observant and, especially at first, to become an active listener when offering opinions.

The Four Cultures

It's useful to understand which type of corporate culture you're dealing with. Terrence Deal and Allan Kennedy, in their book *Corporate Cultures*, describe four different kinds of culture:

- Work-hard, play-hard culture (rapid feedback/reward and low risk—restaurants and software companies).
- Tough-guy macho culture (rapid feedback/reward and high risk—police, surgical units, sports).
- Process culture (slow feedback/reward and low risk—banks, insurance companies).

- Bet-the-company culture (slow feedback/reward and high risk—aircraft manufacturers, Internet ventures).

As a manager, you should wholeheartedly support your company's culture, even if you don't agree with parts of it. Change is more easily effected if it's perceived as friendly and coming from within the organization, rather than from an external, potentially hostile force, such as a corporate takeover or outside consultant.

Defining Your Role—Get Clear on What You Need to Do

Unlike its culture, a company's mission statement is clear-cut. It conveys to the world what the company is about and what it hopes to accomplish. As a manager, you may want to create your own mission statement, even if it's concerning a project or department that you've inherited from someone else. If it's a new venture, then you're faced with the challenge of coming up with something from scratch. First and foremost the mission statement for your organization should reflect and reinforce the mission of the company. Regardless, you might want to work in conjunction with your staff or team to develop the statement so that it reflects the group's ideals.

An effective mission statement should cover the following:

- The department's purpose and objectives
- Its basic philosophy
- How it plans to serve customers, and the community at large