

# What do managers do?



Welcome to managing people! You might be new to managing employees and people management is a big job. Although every team will have their own best practices around management, here's a general set of guidelines about managing people and what's expected of that role (including some required things!):

## Key Manager Responsibilities:

In general, as a people manager you are charged with the following:

### 1. Building an Exceptional Team

In order to deliver exceptional results, you'll need to build a high-performing team. That means that when you're filling roles, you'd work with HR/Recruiting to:

- Attract, identify, and hire great people, and build a solid talent bench

- Retain high-performing staff members (which includes everything from ensuring that great employees have meaningful roles with real responsibility, to creating an environment that great people want to work in, to making retention a priority).
- Give clear and actionable feedback that helps people get better and better at what they do (including meaningful praise and candid discussion of what they could do better).
- Address performance issues forthrightly and work with HR to transition out staff members who aren't performing at a high level.

## 2. Setting Vision and Goals

To deliver exceptional results, we need everyone aligned about what success looks like and how we'll know it when we see it. That means that you should:

- Establish, with your staff, clear outcome-based goals capturing what success looks like for your team and for individual staff members, and ensure that plans are in place for meeting those goals.
- Draw clear lines from the work of your team and individual staff members to the big priorities of the company.
- Ensure that these goals drive the day-to-day work and prioritization of your team.

## 3. Managing Execution

In order to ensure that goals are translated into action and lead to results, you'll need strong day-today management practices. That means you should:

- Monitor progress against goals on an ongoing basis, ensuring that course corrections are made as needed.
- In assigning specific pieces of work, get aligned with staff members up-front about what you want achieved.
- Stay engaged over the course of the work: Check in, review interim work, and see how work is progressing (before it's too late).
- Debrief work once it's done in order to draw lessons and hold staff members accountable for results.
- Provide clear and actionable feedback, not just about what they are doing but how they do it. This doesn't mean you should micromanage the process, but remember to hold your reports accountable to the company and department goals and values.

## 4. Being an Organizational Leader

As a manager at your organization, people on your team are likely to see you as an organizational leader (particularly if you are a senior level member of the organization). That means that you should:

- Proactively raise issues and questions to leadership (and bring solutions to the table when you can).
- Make decisions with openness and fairness, seeking staff input where appropriate, often across teams.
- Keep staff members informed about the organization (and bring staff into organization-wide decision-making).
- Stand behind the organization's decisions and work ardently toward their realization, even if you would have chosen a different direction.
- Operate and advocate from the perspective of what makes sense for the organization, rather than just for your own team.

## 5. Evaluate and Course Correct Performance

- Managers are required to complete performance evaluations with each of your direct reports. The review process typically offers an opportunity to review feedback from the direct report's peers, then evaluate them against what they did in the last year, how they did that work, and what their path forward might look like. The evaluation informs your recommendations for compensation increases, promotions or other shifts to your direct report's position.
- Nothing should come as a surprise to your direct report during their annual review! This serves as an annual reflection and an opportunity to discuss their performance overall - but be sure to be giving regular feedback and check in on progress against goals throughout the year.

## 6. Mitigating risk

Sometimes, it isn't a guideline, it's a rule. Managers are at the front line of raising issues that must be dealt with by HR, Finance, or Legal teams.

- If any employee is accused of doing anything unethical or illegal, corrective action must be taken right away. Raise the issue immediately to HR to make sure they are aware of the issue and can sign off on how to proceed.

- A grievous or sensitive violation is raised to you, eg. sexual harassment or discrimination. Consult with HR first before determining action here.
- Attending State or Federally mandated trainings about anti-harassment.
- Reviewing and approving timesheets where appropriate to ensure accuracy.
- Reviewing and approving expenses when you are a budget holder.
- Managing your budget appropriately and checking in with Finance to reconcile any issues.

## Other parts of managing to help you become a great manager!

### Setting PTO standards for your team

Managers typically approve PTO requests for each of their reports. Regardless of your company's PTO policy, managers usually play a role in ensuring the person taking time off has a clear out of office plan in place. (And of course if a person isn't taking any PTO, encourage them to take time off!) As a manager, setting examples of taking time off can help your team feel comfortable doing the same!

### Coaching and Staff Development

Developing and coaching your reports goes a long way to retaining high performers and being a skilled manager. This often looks like:

- Supporting them in developing their career goals
- Using any resources you can to help them reach their professional goals
- Setting clear goals and work-plans regularly with your directs and updating/monitoring them throughout the year

### Supporting Team Clarity and Communication

As your team's manager, we need you to make sure your whole team can communicate efficiently and effectively to get its work done. In particular:

- Directs should feel comfortable raising red flags, giving you feedback, and managing up. They shouldn't fear coming to you about challenges they face at work.

- Team communication should be efficient and clear: your team should know who to talk to about various issues or questions, and have clarity about what they should be doing, how to course correct and troubleshoot, etc.
- If clear lines of accountability/decision-making don't already exist at the company for what you're trying to do, you work to set them up for your own team.
- Clearly delegate work to your members on your team.

## Embracing Equity and Inclusion

Leading a more inclusive team often means that you:

- Support your team in being open to different perspectives, so that all voices feel included.
- Adapt your management style to different personality types and experiences.
- Are mindful of the management styles that will best motivate your team members.
- Prioritize an inclusive pool of candidates and consider equity when making hiring decisions.
- Advocate for equity within your

## Collaborative Planning

People like feeling part of the whole. Collaborative planning looks like:

- Getting input and feedback from your team regularly.
- Resisting "coercive" styles of management except in extreme, do-or-die circumstances.

## Regular Check Ins

We believe strongly that managing a good team should feel like driving down a straight road, not a mountain pass. Constant communication and feedback allows you to keep your hands on the wheel with only slight nudges to stay on track. To do this, managers often:

- Schedule recommend weekly check ins. They instill a culture where a manager and direct have sacred time to talk about whatever the direct cares about.
- Have a clear agenda for the check ins that are driven by the direct report.