

A few pearls of wisdom for managers



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How are your managerial skills? Does there seem to be a gap like the Grand Canyon between you and your employees? Let's see how we can change that.

If you gathered 100 experienced managers together and asked for their advice, it would probably sound like a massive roar until you got them talking in an orderly way. But there's one thing for sure – they wouldn't be saying much about “temporal rhythms,” or “competing values models.” Instead, this is probably what you'd hear...

“Don't be afraid of the phrase, ‘I don't know.’” If you don't know the answer to an employee or board member's question, don't try to bluff your way through. If you're at fault, take the blame. If you're wrong, apologise. If you don't have the answer at your fingertips then, promise to get back to the person with the answer within a specific timeframe.

“Never gossip.” If someone wants to gossip with you, politely say you're not interested. The corporate adage, when someone gossips two careers are hurt – the person talked about and the person talking.

“No task is beneath you.” Don't think that as a manager you're above anything. Be the good example and pitch in, especially if the job is one that nobody wants to do.

“Share the credit whenever possible.” A manager who spreads credit around looks much stronger than those who take all the credit themselves.

“Ask for help.” If you think you're in over your head – then you are! Ask for some help and you'll find most people enjoy giving a hand. Besides saving yourself from embarrassment, you'll make a friend and an ally.

“Keep your financial remuneration from the business to yourself.” Discussing how much you're making is a no-win proposition. Either you'll be upset because someone is doing better than you, or someone will be upset with you.

“When you don't like someone, don't let it show.” This is especially true if you outrank them. Never burn bridges or offend others as you move ahead. Don't upset people on the way up as you may meet them again on the way down!

“Let it go!” What shouldn't happen often does. You weren't given the project you wanted, you were passed over for the promotion you deserved. Be gracious and diplomatic... and move on. Harboring a grudge won't advance your career.

“When you're right, don't gloat.” The only time you should ever use the phrase, “I told you so” is if someone says to you: “You were right. I really could succeed at that project.”

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Another aid to increase your art of management involves asking questions. If you really want to learn what the "scuttlebutt" within the troops is, ask questions as you travel throughout your organisation.

Here are 10 questions that should get you all you want to know:

1. What made you mad today?
2. What took too long?
3. What caused complaints today?
4. What was misunderstood today?
5. What cost too much?
6. What was wasted?
7. What was too complicated?
8. What was just plain silly?
9. What job involved too many people?
10. What job involved too many actions?

Prepared with the above list as you travel through the ranks, you should get a pretty accurate reading of your business or organisation. It will also get you the feedback from the customers that complained to your employees. What better way to know how your business is functioning, and where it needs tweaking?

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