

Ten Steps to Become an Effective Manager

For many individuals who are promoted to the role of manager, the transition can be daunting as they often lack the necessary preparation. Moving from being an individual contributor to leading a team can be challenging and many managers must learn through trial and error to be effective in their new role. To assist with this transition, we have developed a comprehensive guide detailing ten key steps that you can take to enhance your effectiveness as a manager. These tips will enable you to translate your current understanding of management principles and policies into practical daily practices on the job. If you aspire to be an effective manager, answering the following questions will help you identify areas where you can improve your management skills and foster a culture of success within your team.

1. What are the organization's goals? Are your team members aware of their roles?

It is not uncommon for employees in various companies to lack a comprehensive understanding of the overall purpose, function, or objectives of the company, department, or unit in which they are employed. This knowledge deficit can undermine their ability to fully commit to their work, hindering their motivation. One effective strategy for fostering commitment to company goals and objectives is to involve employees in the goal-setting process. In the absence of such participation, it is incumbent upon managers and supervisors to ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the department's direction and strategies to achieve its goals.

2. What is your involvement in achieving these goals and objectives? Clarify team roles and responsibilities once department goals are established.

Employees must understand their duties and responsibilities in relation to department goals. Job descriptions are commonly used to define these tasks, but many are too long and focus on methods instead of objectives. Additionally, outdated descriptions may not indicate the importance or priorities of responsibilities.

To test an employee's job description, ask them to list their top three or four duties and responsibilities and rank them by importance. Compare their list to the manager's list. If there are differences, it indicates a problem area that needs attention. If an employee's job is not viewed similarly by their manager, it can reduce productivity and efficiency in the organization.

Job descriptions can be simplified by classifying duties and responsibilities into three or four categories. This eliminates unnecessary information and focuses on the reasons why. Tasks can be grouped under headings and ranked according to organizational goals. Understanding how tasks relate to goals can encourage creativity and initiative. To make job descriptions concise, consolidate duties and responsibilities into four categories. Tasks can easily fall under phrases like quality, cost, service, and timeliness. These are significant duties that differentiate one role from another. Tasks can be ranked by importance once they are classified.

3. What tools or resources will you have to work with in order to fulfill your role?

For effective planning, a manager must have knowledge of the resources available, including budgets, schedules, timetables, money, materials, machinery, equipment, personnel, space, and time.

To know how to use assets and resources effectively, managers need to be involved in the planning process. This includes allocating resources, establishing budgets, and setting up timetables and schedules. Nowadays, companies involve managers at all levels in this process. If a manager is responsible for assets and resources, they should know exactly what they are. This is important for them to assume full responsibility for their effective utilization and to be evaluated on their ability to do this.

4. What procedures and rules will you have to follow?

In order to achieve a goal efficiently, it is important to understand the guidelines and regulations. These establish boundaries and reduce the need for constant oversight. As organizations expand, self-regulation becomes more prevalent than external regulation.

Employee participation in establishing, reviewing, and modifying job rules enhances understanding and commitment, aligning with department goals and objectives.

5. How much authority do you have? How much do your team members have?

One common challenge faced by managers is disagreement with employees regarding their level of authority in carrying out their job responsibilities. Employees often feel that their manager restricts their decision-making ability and does not allow them to act independently. Conversely, some managers feel that their employees rely too heavily on them for guidance and support. This disconnect can result in wasted talent and effort. To address this issue, it is helpful for both parties to establish clear guidelines regarding the level of authority the employee has for each respective duty or responsibility. Many organizations use a simple code, such as A, AA, or SR, to indicate the employee's authority level. Additionally, discussing an employee's level of authority can serve as an opportunity to provide feedback on their job performance and growth. While duties and responsibilities may stay consistent, the level of authority assigned can reflect an employee's increasing knowledge, skill, and competence.

6. What are your relationships inside and outside of your department or organization?

Organization charts and diagrams only show one aspect of working relationships in a company. To fully understand your position in the network of relationships, look beyond your reporting relationships. Interact and coordinate with all the people you must deal with, including those in the informal organization and various "publics". Clarify relationships in advance to improve your effectiveness as a team member or manager.

7. What criteria will be used to measure your performance?

It is vital for employees to understand the performance standards by which they will be assessed, as failure to do so can result in unexpected termination. Performance standards are prognostications of conditions that indicate satisfactory job performance based on quantifiable measures such as quantity, quality, cost, and timeliness. As such, it is increasingly common for companies to communicate these expectations to employees prior to job commencement and, in some cases, involve them in determining these standards.

Prior to beginning work, companies provide employees with information on their duties, responsibilities, and performance standards. Employees may contribute to the development of these standards, promoting a sense of equity and influence. Familiarity with the measurement system enables employees to monitor their advancement without relying solely on managerial input.

When there are changes in goals, responsibilities, or conditions, it may be necessary to establish new standards of performance. It is important for the manager and employees to be aware of any changes and know how their performance will be evaluated to effectively keep track of progress.

8. Will you receive feedback on how you are doing? Where, when, and how?

Numerous organizations utilize formal performance appraisal systems to offer regular feedback on employee job performance. However, these evaluations are frequently limited to once-a-year events, such as the conclusion of a calendar year or an employee's work anniversary, necessitating the completion of formal documentation and significant paper processing.

Regular feedback on one's performance is advantageous in both athletic and professional environments as it permits individuals to make appropriate modifications and enhance their abilities.

After completing the initial job-related questionnaire, it is advisable to pause and assess your advancement towards your goals. Receiving frequent feedback is crucial instead of solely depending on an annual performance review.

9. Where and from whom can you or your team members receive help and support when it is needed?

Valuable resources for any manager are the advice, counsel, assistance, and support from his or her own manager and from others with whom he or she works, both inside and outside the organization. Too often, however, such resources are not tapped. The manager is not viewed as a coach or counselor; staff groups are seen as threats or obstacles that get in the manager's way. How can managers solve this particular problem with their own employees? If you want to change this image so that your employees begin to look to you for coaching and counseling, periodically ask them this question: "What can I do more of, do less of, or do differently to be of help to you?" In addition, define the roles and availability of others in the organization who could also help them. After a while, your employees will begin to realize that your primary role is to do whatever you can to make each and every one of them successful.

10. What rewards or recognition will you receive?

When considering the effectiveness of one's work, it is important to ask if it is worth it. The potential rewards and recognition sought by employees today may include continuity of employment and the possibility of a wage increase, among others. Employees desire to have access to their work outcomes, increased accountability, a heightened sense of accomplishment, opportunities for further education and training, and information about potential career advancements.

Several companies have revised their compensation policies to align with employee achievements and contributions instead of factors like time or effort. A number of these organizations have implemented bonuses for meeting certain goals within a designated period. A trend of transparency in salary and wage systems has emerged, providing employees with greater clarity on their position and future opportunities. In addition, It has become increasingly common for companies to publicly advertise opportunities for career growth and relocation.

Successfully answering all ten questions indicates improvement in managerial skills, as understanding both management theories and job expectations are crucial for effective goal attainment.