

SINK OR SWIM | THE MANAGEMENT SURVIVAL GUIDE

Promoted into your first management job and feel out of your depth? New ILM research, *The Leadership and Management Talent Pipeline*, identifies the core skills you'll need throughout your leadership career. Here's what new and aspiring managers will need to know

THREE ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Our research shows that these skills are indispensable, whatever your leadership level. These crucial skills will help see you through your management career, from team leader to CEO

PLANNING

When it comes to management, planning is one of the first and most important tasks you need to learn. Here are a few simple things you can do to get your planning up to par



DEFINE YOUR GOALS

Whether you're planning for a short project or where you want your team to be in two years, you'll need to build a strategy. Be specific about where you want to end up, then establish milestones to mark your progress along the way

GET TRACKING

Monitor your success by setting a regular review schedule for yourself and team members. Assess your team's performance against that plan and your goals, and set new targets accordingly

HAVE A CONTINGENCY

Plans do tend to change, so there's no point being completely wedded to one way of thinking if the situation shifts. Consider things that could go wrong, and ensure you have a back-up plan

KEEP ON GOING

Recognise that planning is a process, not a definitive and fixed blueprint. It's the regular use, review and revision of your plans that makes them successful and relevant, so be prepared to alter your plans as you go

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

You can't succeed as a manager without getting the best out of your people. Here's how to delegate tasks to your team, an important part of people management



DON'T GIVE ORDERS

When you give an order, you don't allow the other person any space to think about what to do or how to do it. Orders don't allow the person to figure out the best way to do the task, which means they don't learn anything new

USE INSTRUCTIONS INSTEAD

Tell staff what needs to be achieved and give them the freedom to come up with the best way of getting that task done. You may have to do some monitoring and guiding, but it means people might come up with something better than what you planned. You are also more likely to get buy-in and support in this way – if employees have made the decision about the best way to accomplish a task, they are more likely to believe it is correct and valuable

CLARITY COUNTS

When you give instructions instead of orders, you need to be just as clear about the results you expect. Instead of saying, "I'd like you to review the past month's data and get back to me on it", be more precise. For example: "Please review the past month's data. By Monday morning, I expect your recommendation of the best course and a couple of alternatives for ways to close more sales."

COMMUNICATION

Speaking to staff and superiors means finding the right tone, being clear and concise, and knowing exactly what you want to say. Use these top tips to develop more effective dialogue



FIND THE RIGHT LEVEL

Assess the level of knowledge of the person you're talking to and tailor your approach accordingly. Someone with deeper subject knowledge can be taught using industry language, but someone without that knowledge will need to be taught at a more basic level

MAKE IT RELEVANT

Show them how the issue relates to them by comparing the new process or information to any similar knowledge they have and connecting it to things they already know or do

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Before getting into the minutiae, be clear about the underlying concept. Start with the basics; for example, what the process is for, who is involved, and why it is done

MAKE IT MANAGEABLE

The best way to get information across is to break it down into small, manageable chunks. Divide the task up, check each 'chunk' of information has been understood, and then recap it all at the end

SEE, HEAR AND DO

People absorb information in three ways – visually, aurally and kinaesthetically (through the body). For the best response, use all three – show them how something is done, explain how to do it and get them to practice the task themselves

BE CLEAR

Be as clear as possible in your descriptions and explanations. Try not to overuse pronouns like 'it' or 'they' – instead refer to things you explain directly, like 'the database' or 'customer services', even if it sounds repetitive

INVITE QUESTIONS

Encourage questions at every stage of the process. If you know there are areas that can be cause confusion, take your time over them and ensure you explain with extra clarity

THREE SKILLS TO MAKE YOU STAND OUT

Our research identified three further skills which employers consider the hardest to find in managers at all levels. Develop this essential part of the 21st century management toolkit for a career boost

ENTERPRISE

The ability to think like an entrepreneur is a useful skill for managers who want to get ahead. Edge asked successful entrepreneurs to share their top tips for thinking like them



“ Have a good business plan, surround yourself with the right advice, a good business mentor or two, and see it all through with passion. ”

Levi Roots, Reggae Reggae Sauce

“ Focus on the element of the business you find the least interesting. I really enjoy marketing and branding, and find it easy to spend hours on these and neglect other areas. Accounting and bookkeeping are the least enjoyable – although probably one of the most important elements in running a business. You can't just neglect an area because you don't like it. ”

James Vestbirk, Inspire Business Ltd

“ Use your contact network. It's amazing how people are willing to help you simply by being asked. Everybody likes the flattery of being asked but also, more than that, people like to be involved in a project early on and be able to watch and help its growth. ”

James Sleater and Ian Meiers, Cad & The Dandy

“ Believe in what you are doing. You have to be able to stick out the tough days and know that you will succeed. Preparation, preparation, preparation. Make sure you have everything in place and that you have done your homework. Stay on top of any paperwork from the first day as it makes your life much easier as things get busier. ”

Alexander Neumuller and Yolanda Hinchliffe, Suka Sport

“ Firstly, don't take no for an answer – keep going and have persistence. Also, be prepared to work, because it's not easy. The other thing is to take responsibility. Whether you're working for someone else or yourself, people always find blame and are full of excuses. The only common factor between everything you do is ultimately yourself. ”

James and Michael Eder, StudentBeans.com

INSPIRATION

Inspire your staff to greatness with drive, passion and openness



MR MOTIVATOR

Motivation and inspiration energise people, not by pushing them in a particular direction, but by satisfying some basic human needs. These include the need for personal achievement, recognition, self-esteem, some control over our own lives and the chance to be part of something admirable

HAVE A VISION

Probably the most important element of this is the vision – if people feel they are working towards achieving something great, they will contribute their full effort. Think hard about your vision for the future – it's not just about strategy, but aspiration and the feeling success will bring

EMBODY YOUR VALUES

Demonstrate the values you want your team to display, whether that's passion for your work, commitment to the team or a positive outlook

SHARE YOUR VISION

The correct vision acts as the best possible motivational tool for everyone involved. And the best leaders ensure that everyone in the organisation, from the top managers to the receptionists, knows that they play a vital part in achieving the fulfilment of that vision. Get everyone involved in shaping your vision, make it a collaborative process, and encourage participation

DON'T FORGET TO CELEBRATE

One of the most important ways to increase levels of motivation is remembering to say 'thank you'. The single biggest drain on motivation is the feeling that you've done your best but have had no recognition for it. Try it for a week, and ask your managers to do the same – two simple words can make a world of difference

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

While many managers are good at practical skills, some are lacking in EI. Here's how to bring out your sensitive side



- Become emotionally literate. Label your feelings, rather than labelling people or situations
- Distinguish between thoughts and feelings
- Take more responsibility for your feelings
- Use your feelings to help your team make decisions
- Show respect for other people's feelings
- Feel energised, not angry
- Validate other people's feelings
- Practice getting a positive value from emotions
- Don't advise, command, control, criticise, judge or lecture others
- Avoid people who invalidate you

To find out more about the the ILM research, *The Leadership and Management Talent Pipeline*, you can visit www.i-l-m.com/research

