

Member's Quarterly

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Perspective

Making the Transition to Manager

Start on the right track

Not everyone starts out being a manager. Most get there by being promoted from a lower echelon. If that's you and you're transitioning from worker to supervisor or manager, congratulations. Your hard work has paid off. Now you have to learn a whole new set of skills and the ability to be able to direct and lead your team while being accountable for your actions to higher management. Here are a few tips to help you succeed in this next phase of your career.

Most who have successfully made this transition find that it's essential to get off on the right track- with your boss and with the people who will be working for you. An early meeting with all of your team gives you the opportunity to reintroduce yourself and to assure your team that you will do everything in your power to support them and that they will have the resources needed to continue their mission with the organization. This can help everyone get over the potential awkwardness of the situation and set your leadership role off on the right track.

Speaking of roles, you will need to talk to your own boss to confirm that you understand your new job's responsibilities, goals and objectives. What are their expectations of you as a new manager? Is there a detailed job description that outlines every aspect of your role? What kind of support and training will you receive? Also, perhaps more importantly (particularly to you), how you will be judged and assessed in this new position?

People who have been through this before will tell you that it is crucial to identify and take advantage of any additional supports that may be available in your organization. Is there a formal mentoring or coaching program that you can access? Mentoring, in particular, can be a valuable asset to any new manager. Having someone who can provide advice and guidance can help not only with your performance, but your confidence as well. Your mentors will have likely been here before and faced similar challenges. Let them be your inspiration and sounding board.

Always keep in mind that managing people is all about relationships. That may make managing some of your existing relationships with your coworkers a bit tricky. You have to remember that your first responsibility is to your employer and that not everyone will like everything you do or have to do as a manager. You don't have to be everyone's friend, but you must respect everyone- even and especially if you don't personally like someone.

Finally, you must change a little to become a good manager, but don't change the essence of who you really are. Be true to yourself and your values. This is a big part of why you were promoted. Then, be the best manager you can be. In fact, be the manager that you want to have as your own manager. Think about the best bosses you've worked for in the past and then work hard to be like them. They are probably kind, generous, fair and willing to give everyone a second chance. You can certainly do the same.



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