

# Vitality!

EFAP Newsletter for Human  
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Leaders understand  
that people are  
their greatest asset,  
and a vital role of  
any great boss is to  
understand the people  
that they lead.

## Being a Great Boss: The Fundamentals of Effective Management

THE ESSENTIALS OF ORGANIZING, COMMUNICATING, PLANNING,  
AND MOTIVATING AS A LEADER

In every organization there are leaders. These are the people that keep things running smoothly. In some organizations, these leaders are supervisors, managers, or referred to as people leaders or 'bosses'. These people leaders are responsible for managing people so that the organization's goals are accomplished. Not only must they manage, but they must do so effectively. Effective management is about getting work done through people.

Good managers get the job done — meet goals and deadlines, and get some productivity from their team. However, a *great* manager can do the same, but is also excellent at motivating people, learning from previous mistakes, and gaining respect from their team. Every manager should strive to be a 'great boss'. They form an understanding of the workplace and its goals, know the employees that are part of their team, and learn how to keep people engaged. But before that, being a great boss and effective management requires self-

awareness. Managers should be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, triggers, communication style, and how they are perceived by their employees. Having this awareness is vital to success. Great bosses understand both themselves, their teams, and can pull talent from everyone together.

Success in management requires an understanding of the factors that shape behaviours and attitudes. People and organizations are very different, so generally speaking, there are no absolute rules to follow. There is no magic formula for success in management, but there are some things that can be done that can help people leaders manage people effectively. Effective managers and great bosses know how to organize, plan, communicate, lead, and motivate.

## Organizing and allocating resources

Whether a company is large or small, organizing and allocating resources well is a vital part of managing efficiently. Organizing can consist of a broad set of activities, and is often considered one of the major functions of management. It can be viewed as the activities to collect and configure resources in order to implement plans in a highly effective and efficient fashion.

A manager may ask themselves 'what are my resources?' 'Do I have adequate resources to meet my goals and the goals of the organization?' 'What are the strengths and weaknesses of my team?'

Part of organizing resources is team-building and knowing which resources are available. Building teams of employees that complement each other goes a long way towards meeting organizational goals. Every employee has different strengths that allow them to contribute to the team. Building teams from ground zero is ideal, but in most cases, managers will need to lead existing teams or re-organize them in order to meet certain goals or accomplish tasks in a better way. But to organize and allocate resources effectively, a manager or people leader has to get to know their team.

### Know the team

As a manager or people leader, it's important to get to know each member of the team individually — what their strengths are, each individual personality, and what tasks keep them engaged. An engaged employee is a productive employee. Consistent communication is the most important trait of a successful group and is a good way to get to know each group member. As a leader, remember to be in constant contact with your employees. This could

mean having one-on-one conversations, or weekly group meetings. Regular meetings will give employees more of an opportunity to provide feedback on what they like, don't like, and what they would like to do more of. A great boss will know his or her team well, and having this knowledge will allow them to organize and allocate resources effectively in order to complete projects and meet organizational goals. Knowing the team is important, but to know the team, a great boss has to be a good communicator.

## Being a good communicator

For effective management, the importance of good communication cannot be understated. Being a good communicator means much more than talking — it also means being a good listener. As a manager or people leader, opening the lines of communication will make employees feel more comfortable.

Great bosses provide clear instructions to employees to complete the work, listen to the ideas of their teams, define the work to be done, and specify the boundaries of freedom to make autonomous decisions. Great bosses indicate the areas or reasons where they should be consulted, explain the goals and targets to be met, and offer their help and support in attaining not only the prescribed goals, but the individual goals of the employees that make up their team(s).

Essential for good communication is a positive frame of mind. Great bosses and effective managers are good at: developing positive qualities and confidence in their team and motivating them to put in their best efforts at work; ensuring that employees get rewards, recognition, favourable workers compensation and incentives for their good work; evaluating team members based on their performance and ability to work in a team; and knowing that praises should be done in public while criticisms should always be kept private.

It is important to understand that the role of some people leaders is to be a mentor — helping employees grow and develop to be the best that they can be.

## Planning and selecting priorities

One of the most common sets of activities in the management of people is planning. Very simply put, planning is setting the direction for a goal and then guiding a system to follow the direction. There are many kinds of planning in organizations. For instance, planning can be done to achieve an organization's over-arching strategic goals, or to define the projects of a team of

individuals. When planning, a people leader's goals and objectives should be S.M.A.R.T.E.R\* — an acronym, meaning:

- **Specific.** For example, it is difficult to know what someone should be doing if they are to pursue the goal of "increase sales". It's easier to recognize "increase sales by 30% through direct marketing and strategic responses to client demands."
- **Measurable.** It's difficult to know what the scope of an action is, if it cannot be measured. It is easier to appreciate the effort made if the goal is measurable. For instance, in order to increase sales by 30%, "making new contacts" is an ambiguous statement. A clearer objective would be to "attend four networking events each month and try to connect with one person at each." It's a simple, measurable, concrete goal.
- **Acceptable.** If employees are to take responsibility for pursuit of a goal, the goal should be acceptable to them. For example, they are not likely to follow the directions of someone telling them to 'increase sales by 30%', when they are already working over capacity. Instead, involve them in goal setting, help to change their commitments or modify the goal. This way they will be much more likely to accept pursuit of the goal as well.
- **Realistic.** Even if employees do accept the pursuit of a goal that is specific and measurable, the goal won't be useful if it is unrealistic. For example, an unrealistic goal would be "increase sales by 30% in the next ten business days".
- **Time frame.** Realistic time frames are important, but rather than asking employees to complete a project by a certain date, help them pace themselves. For instance, instead of asking them to increase sales by 30% over the next 90 days, ask them to focus on specific sales targets per month, that will add up to the target of a 30% increase.
- **Extending.** The goal should stretch employee capabilities. For example, an employee might be more interested in increasing sales by 30% if sales prospects are larger, well known or developing sales materials challenges or extends their design, writing, or presentation capabilities.
- **Rewarding.** Simply put, employees are more engaged when their efforts are rewarded. An employee who meets the prescribed goals or objectives should be rewarded. Even the smallest reward will provide an incentive to meet future objectives.

## Being a leader and establishing direction

Many people believe that leadership is simply being the

first, biggest or most powerful. Leadership in organizations has a different and more meaningful definition. Being a leader is about setting direction and ensuring that direction is followed. Leading can apply to leading oneself, other individuals, groups, organizations and societies. The nature of how leading is done depends on the context of the situation, on perspective, and on the nature and needs of those involved.

Very simply put, a leader is interpreted as someone who sets direction in an effort and influences people to follow direction. How they set that direction and influence people depends on a variety of factors, including: whether that person is leading one other individual, a group or a large organization; the extent of leadership skills that person already has; that person's basic nature and values; and the particular culture (or values and associated behaviours) of those being led.

Great bosses are great leaders. They give clear instructions and are firm on their decisions. They lead by example by coming to work on time, doing the job well and not letting their personal problems affect their performance at work.

## Self-awareness

For managers, self-awareness is extremely important. A manager who is self-aware is conscious of their own strengths and weaknesses and it is difficult for a manager to be a leader without having a firm grasp on what they themselves excel at. Having this information helps when making decisions related to team-building, planning, and allocating resources. Having good self-awareness will allow a manager to build teams of individuals that complement their own strengths and skills, and this is essential to building a winning team.

## Motivating the team

It is a costly mistake to get lost in the false theory that more money equals happy employees. Cash will always be a major factor in motivating people and a solid compensation plan is critical to attracting and keeping key personnel, however it is important to understand that additional compensation is not always the only, or even the best answer.

With that said, if solid compensation is in place, below are five ways to motivate if you are a manager or people leader.

1. **Recognition/Attention.** When employees accomplish something, they have achieved something. Recognition from their manager is appreciation for that achievement.

2. **One-on-One Coaching.** Coaching is employee development, and giving an employee some coaching shows that they are cared for. Whenever the emphasis is on positive feedback, this coaching can be done in “public”. Recognizing and encouraging people in “public” acts as a natural stimulant for others who are close enough to see or hear what’s taking place.
3. **Training.** Schedule “tune- up” training sessions. These should be led by you or by a supervisor with help from specific employees who show a particular strength in the skills taught. These types of training sessions will continually enhance the performance of your people and the productivity of your business.
4. **Career Path.** Your employees need to know what is potentially ahead for them, what opportunities there are for growth. This issue is a sometimes forgotten ingredient as to the importance it plays in the overall motivation of people. Be creative as you think of possibilities for titles. Have your staff come up with ideas giving them input into the titles. Bottom line, you are dealing with pride, and pride enhances a positive attitude. Positive attitude is the foundation for continuing success.
5. **Leadership Roles.** Give your people leadership roles to reward their performance and also to help you identify future promotable people. Most people are stimulated by leadership roles even in spot appearances. For example, when visitors come to your workplace use this opportunity to allow an employee to take the role of visitors guide.

In the end, being a great boss or effective manager takes a certain amount of understanding and patience. A position that deals with people in any capacity has no real absolute formula for success, but there are differences between being a good boss, and being a great one. Great ones have a sharpened set of skills that allow them to successfully reach organizational goals, while understanding the needs and goals of individual people, as well as themselves.

\*Some information contained in this document was originally published by The Free Management Library: An Integrated Online Library for Personal, Professional and Organizational Development.

## Coming Soon: Mental Health Week!

This May, The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) presents Mental Health Week. CMHA’s Mental Health Week is an annual national event that encourages people from all walks of life to learn, talk, reflect and engage with others on all issues relating to mental health. This year’s Mental Health Week theme is “Mental Health for All.”

**Homewood Human Solutions™ is a proud supporter of Mental Health Week, and will be distributing a mental health resource kit to customers in May.**

Want to know more about these new developments?  
Contact your Homewood Human Solutions™ Customer Relations Manager.

## About Vitality!

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## Comments

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