

THE
ROMNEY
CENTRE

How To Be A Better Boss

A guide for new managers
or supervisors



A guide for new managers or supervisors

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Introduction

If you are reading this e-book I guess I can fairly safely assume a few things to begin with...

Firstly your Company or Organisation have faith in you as a manager or a supervisor, since they have given you the position. You probably have a great deal of experience, knowledge and knowhow specific to your sector, and this gives you foresight when it comes to any problems that may occur, and the possible solutions you may need to apply.

You inevitably have a positive mental attitude to your work and your organisation, you have after all put in enough effort to succeed this far in your career. With all this in your favour it should be easy to build on these foundations, and be a successful and effective Boss. Managing others can be a rewarding experience, but it can also be less than easy to deal with the difficulties and frustrations of dealing with other people. This book is all about helping you to avoid or work through any trying times.

The following pages are full of proven concepts, solutions and ideas that are practical, concise, and can be put into practice immediately.



Chapter One - You and the organisation

As a manager or supervisor you are responsible not just for yourself but for the activities and performance of others as well. Your time is at a premium, and you may feel that there aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done. It would be easy to end up taking work home with you, and not just the paperwork, but the problems of the day as well. You may well have already discovered that you need to be a buffer between your Boss, and the people who report into you. Both sides have their own goals, your job is to keep them both reasonably happy and satisfied, while keeping yourself happy and satisfied as well. Sounds like a big job eh, but its easier than you might think, and worth the effort it might take.

What ever level of management you have attained there are of course predictable benefits to enjoy. More respect, more money, possibly better fringe benefits. Your first priority is to get along with **your** Boss! This is the one person who can make your life either very difficult, or really easy. So

Don't take up too much of their time, just enough to get the information and guidance you need.

Don't be afraid of the Boss. The Boss needs you just as much as you need them, probably more!

Your Boss has their little quirks just like everyone else, it will be to your advantage to know what they are, and remember them.

Never embarrass the Boss, even by accident.

Every Company has an underground - the informal employee power structure. Made up of respected members of staff, who are experienced, knowledgeable, and well connected. They are the ones that control the rhythm of the jungle drums. Handle them well, or they will handle you. They can make or break you. You need to be fair and upfront with everyone, paying specific attention to the informal leaders (identifying them should be easy enough even if you have come in from outside). Just treat them right, and let them know what's going on, informally of course. Then they will spread the truth about you and the organisation, rather than circulating false rumours and innuendos. Be fair, and you will fare well.

Morale can be fragile, positively or negatively affected by things that seem quite insignificant to you. Happy staff will work more and better than an unhappy one. Rumours and unfairness can wreck morale overnight. If one member of staff is treated in what is perceived as an unfair way, everyone may feel they might be next. As long as you know what is going on in your department, you can straighten out any misunderstandings before they can adversely affect morale.

Good morale is your ultimate goal. Esprit de corps is what you are after, employees pride in their work, and in the organisation. Outside recognition will lead to excellent esprit de corps. Seek out any awards you can for your people, whether from the media, other organisations, professional associations, or your own organisation, and strive for the .

excellence to obtain them. Let them know what you are trying to do for them, not for you but for them, because they deserve it. Everyday encourage them to do their collective best to perform as a team, the best team, in the business. They will feel better about themselves, and work better for you, and the organisation.

Internal conflict could be an issue, so stay in your own domain. You will have enough to do with your own job. Don't be tempted to try and meddle in another departments affairs unless your lack of action will adversely affect the performance of your own department.

Resolve any conflicts with your opposite number. If you can't resolve things informally then you are justified in going over their head. Choose your battles carefully, not many fights are worth the resulting bad feelings or long term problems that will result even if you win. You get paid for your judgement, use it wisely.

Competition from your peers is a related issue. The organisational structure is a pyramid and it gets narrower at the top. When several people vie for the next highest level in the pyramid, there can be very stiff competition. Protect yourself at all times! Don't get pushed around, but don't look for trouble either. In the heat of any competition don't fall into the trap of losing your integrity. It could cost you dear in the long run. Your best overall strategy is to be loyal, mind your own business, and do your job to the best of your ability. You will come out a true winner in the long run.

Chapter Two - You as a manager or supervisor

Set an example. Show up on time; or preferably early. Dress in an appropriate way for your business, don't do personal business on company time. Don't spend an hour checking your Facebook account, drinking coffee, or chatting on the phone. Get right on with your job. Gossip, sour grapes, complaining and laziness have no place in a manager's office. Your conduct, appearance, attitudes and work habits will set the tone for your staff. In short, be a model employee and others will pattern themselves after you.

Be technically proficient, know your job. You probably have a lot of experience in the business, but make sure you keep up to date, attend any courses and seminars to both hone your skills, and add to your CV.

Make a decision, the worst decision is no decision. In order for a decision to be worthwhile, it must not only be sound, but timely. The people above you have faith in your ability to make good decisions, or you would not have been given the job, remember that.

However, not all decisions can be good decisions, but if they are based on a solid process, they should never be bad decisions.

When a decision is made;

- Gather all the facts you need to understand the situation.*
- Review those facts objectively*
- Formulate possible strategies, and consider the consequences of each*
- Choose the best one, and implement it.*

Some decisions may take only seconds, some take days and some take months, however they are all made in the same way. If you can't make a decision, or keep making the wrong one, perhaps this job is not for you, and another career path would be more appropriate.

Take responsibility for your actions, don't try and pass the buck, it stops at your desk. If you have made a decision based on the process we have just discussed, then stand by that decision, and site the reasons you made that decision. If your Boss says your decision was wrong and must be changed, then it is no longer your decision. It is their decision and they must take responsibility for it. Chances are you will seldom if ever be called wrong by a good line manager. Usually they will let your decision stand, and if it wasn't the best alternative, then they will give you a chance to modify your decision, but not necessarily change it. Keep in mind that your Boss understands the decision making process and has to rely on you now. There is no expectation that you will be perfect every time. If you were your Boss couldn't afford you!



Seldom will success or failure depend on one simple decision. If you are right, or nearly right, most of the time, you will be considered successful. Nobody is perfect, however, by knowing your own strengths and challenges, you can maximise your strengths and minimise your challenges. Once you know and understand yourself, the business of knowing and understanding others will be much easier.

Your success and the success of your employees will both depend on your attitude. If it is a positive attitude towards your work and the organisation's goals, then your words and actions will convey that. If you convey a negative attitude, then your staff will pick up on your negativity. If you are to maintain a healthy and productive atmosphere in the workplace, you must have a healthy and productive attitude toward your work and your organisation.

Is being a Manager or Supervisor stressful? YES...

Is that stress harmful to you? Not necessarily! It's all in how you handle it. Be concerned and conscientious, but don't be a worrywart. The organisation was here before you, and will no doubt be here long after you have gone! Do the best you can to improve it, but don't constantly fret over every little thing or you will burn yourself out and be of no value to anyone.

Give orders properly, many managers fail miserably in this area. In routine matters "Could you.....", "Would you...". "As soon as you get a chance.....," etc. will suffice. In an emergency or in high priority situations, direct orders are appropriate "Do.....," "Go.....," "Handle this immediately.....," etc. Naturally, a simple "Please" followed by "Thank you" is nearly always appropriate.

Don't expect too much. Ensure the quantity and quality of the work you expect is reasonable. If people are pushed beyond their limits for an extended period of time, they will burn out and productivity will decrease just when you need it. By setting reasonable standards, you can be sure that will have employees who on and will work harder to meet an unexpected problem or deadline.

Maintain your sense of humour. When things go wrong as they sometimes will; and everything seems like an uphill struggle, your sense of humour will carry you through. A sense of humour failure could end your career fast if you allow your frustration to build to breaking point without relief.



Chapter 3 - Gaining Respect

It is quite difficult to define respect, its easier to define those people we do respect, and those we don't. I do know however that once we have lost the respect of others, its almost impossible to get it back.

Be business-like, always be professional in every way. Look like you know what you are doing. Be together, not rumpled or ruffled in any way. Don't engage in horseplay or practical jokes. Don't use bad language, its demeaning to you.

Rumours, sexism, racism, ethnic jokes, obscenities, practical jokes, sarcasm and gossip have no place in a good working environment. if you want to be respected, be a professional. Maintain a good personal appearance, be well groomed, wear appropriate business attire for your industry.

Maintain discipline, don't tolerate disrespect or laziness. Make sure all your staff know the rules, they understand the quality and quantity of the work that is required, and the standard of conduct you expect. Then enforce the rules fairly and equally. Maintaining a high but not unreasonable level of discipline, will save you lots of grief. The ultimate compliment for a manager is to be thought of as "firm but fair". Demonstrate your personal integrity, no favours, no lies, nothing misleading. Remember your employees observe you and your conduct every day, they know more about your business than you think they do. If they are to have respect for you, your personal integrity must be above reproach.

Handle friendships with subordinates very carefully. As a new manager you are in a very different position than you were before. People worth having as friends will understand the difference between on duty, and off duty and will respect it. Others may well try to use off duty familiarity to gain some advantage when on duty to gain advantage...One cardinal rule that you must never break is that Romance has no place in the workplace.

Take personal responsibility for things that go wrong. If your staff perform well, then you have done well, if they do not perform well then you have not performed well. Don't try to place the blame on others. You are ultimately responsible. If a mistake occurs sort it, and take steps to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Be patient and calm, use self control at all times. If things go wrong its up to you to find a sound and rational solution, you can only do that if you are thinking clearly. Your staff will look to you for guidance, if you are not in control of yourself, you become part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Be consistent, don't enforce rules today, and ignore them tomorrow. People are content in knowing what is expected of them, they adjust to rules even when the rules are strict. Don't be erratic, any inconsistency will translate into an uneasy feeling throughout your department, and may even cause disciplinary problems.

Expect good conduct, don't tolerate dangerous horseplay or demeaning practical jokes. A bit of good clean fun is often good for morale, but take care its not overdone. Employees will learn the limits, and conform to them. Failure to maintain this standard can result in unwelcome consequences for you.

Expect good work, if it isn't done right, tell the employee what's wrong with it, the right way to do it, and have them do it correctly. Keep at it until its done right. Maintain your standards at all times. Your staff will get to know what you expect and perform to that standard accordingly. Acknowledge good work with praise. Don't praise just to praise, but let your employees know you noticed and you care.

The thought that a person works for money alone has been disproved by innumerable researchers. The most satisfying reason for anyone to work is that it makes them feel worthwhile, that they are making a contribution. Recognition of a workers efforts will pay massive dividends to you and the organisation.

My tip is to praise in public, but chastise in private. Anything said in public becomes public. There is no need to embarrass an employee in front of their peers, or even other managers. However if an employee has performed in an excellent manner, you can make them proud by praising their efforts in front of their co-workers.

Avoid unnecessary activity, don't make work. If goals are set and employees work hard to finish early, don't ruin it by making them do extra stuff which isn't really important. Keep paperwork to a minimum, very few people like doing it, and if they think it's redundant, they will resent it. You can plan in advance for slow periods so as to avoid having to keep your staff "busy".

Know what's going on, don't sit in your office all day. You won't learn anything except what someone wants you to know. Practice MBWA ... Management By Walking Around. Get out and talk to your people. They will tell you what's really happening, either directly or by dropping hints. You can gauge morale, prevent potential problems, and develop good relationships with people by spending time with them.

Be impartial, treat everyone equally, don't play favourites, set any personal prejudices aside. It's part of your job to resolve internal conflicts, in order to do this effectively, with the support of all parties, you must be seen as an impartial judge of the facts.



Chapter 4 - Winning Confidence

If your people don't have confidence in you, they will isolate you from their problems and ignore you when they need a solution. Ultimately you will have no idea what is going on and no control over what ever it is.

You need to appear confident, look like you know what you are doing (even when you have doubts). The best way to appear confident is to have faith in yourself and your capabilities. The best way to have faith in your abilities is to be knowledgeable, experienced and be able to systematically work through any problem in a calm and efficient manner.

You must be available, make time for your people, they are your most valuable resource. Communication is an art with many flaws. Even though you try to make things perfectly clear through oral and written orders, there are times when employees need a decision or an answer to a simple question to properly complete the task they have been given. If you are not available then the project might not continue in the right direction. If it goes off track you may have wasted a lot of time, effort, and money, all for the want of a quick consultation.

If your employees don't talk to you, they will talk to each other and leave you in the dark.

If you know about a problem you can handle it. If you don't know, then it may only get worse and you will have no control over it. Be prepared to listen to new idea's, consider them, and implement any that can benefit the staff, the department or the organisation. However give credit for idea's. It makes people feel good and builds up morale to now that they had some input to a decision or product. If you pitch their idea's without giving them credit it will be noticed. They will never come up with an idea again, at least not one you will hear about!

Remember that there are very few necessary secrets in most organisations. Keeping your staff informed about what is going on gets rid of unfounded rumours, and lets them understand the bigger picture. If you keep them accurately informed, they will learn to come to you for the facts, and learn to trust you in the process.

Insist on honesty, don't put up with lies or deceitful conduct. Investigate the facts and directly confront anyone who is deceitful or who lies to cover up a problem. The word will quickly spread that you don't tolerate dishonestly among your employees. Being up front in this way will help you handle any problem situations, and ultimately benefit the organisation as well.

Keep your promises or don't make them. You can promise to try, but don't promise what you can't guarantee. Keep any promises you do make in a timely way. Your staff will learn to trust you, have confidence in you, your word, and your ability to get things done.

Don't criticise your superiors, if you can't say something good, say nothing at all. Just as you have to make your decisions, they have to make theirs. Even if you don't agree with it it's your job to get on with it. Criticising your supervisors decisions in front of your people serves no purpose. The fact that you were critical will get back to them, and they will know that you cannot rely on you to support them. Your days with the organisation could well be numbered!

Never gossip, if an employee tells you something in confidence, keep it confidential. If word gets out that you violated someone's trust, then communication between you and your staff is dead forever.



Chapter 5 - Winning Loyalty

Be nice, treat others the way you would like to be treated. Being pleasant is easy and it doesn't cost you anything. Keep the work environment comfortable for everyone, they will want to come to work and enjoy it more when they are there. This will translate into better productivity. Your people are your most valuable asset, remember that they are unique individuals. Get to know them, their interests and hobbies. Ask about their families, their health, their holidays. Let them know that you care about them as people.

As you get closer to them you will learn their strengths and their challenges. You can then steer them in the right direction to maximise their potential. If you give them work that allows them to use their talents and abilities without pushing them past their capabilities, you will develop loyal, satisfied employees.

Training is important, your staff can't do a good job unless they know how. Show them the proper way to do the work you give them, tell them what you expect in terms of productivity. Take time with them until they know what they are doing. Encourage them to learn new skills, either on or off the job. Make sure they are aware of any opportunities to learn. Acquiring new skills will keep them from becoming stagnant.

Talk to your staff about their futures, give them the benefit of your experience, and advise them on how to get on in their careers. Develop any talents they show, add responsibility gradually. Build up their confidence and ability. The time you spend with them will pay dividends in their increased performance, now and in the future.

Protect your people from unreasonable rules or poor decisions which might adversely affect them. Help them get time off when they need it for personal stuff. If mistakes are made, help them to minimise the effects and consequences they may face. Support them through any disciplinary action etc. If you watch out for your people, they will watch out for you.

Protecting your people also means maintaining safety standards, keep all equipment in good working order, make sure people know how to use it properly. Enforce the safety rules rigidly. The manager that forges ahead to meet targets at the expense of the safety of their staff clearly show that they are not cared for as people. If you don't care about them, can you expect them to give a damn about you?

Be understanding, listen to your staff. You are not just the boss, you are the symbol of something stronger and, they feel wiser than they are. Therefore they will value your opinion in all matters.

Assist them whenever you can by listening/coaching/counselling. They will often solve their own problems, answer their own questions and make their own decisions, sometime without your having to say a word.

The dedication of your employees can be critical to your future success in the business. Never forget that as you go up the pyramid, some of your best staff may also go higher. The loyalties you built up in the past may serve you very well in the future.



Chapter 6 - Problem Management

Every problem can be handled, no matter how difficult it may appear to be. Your ability to foresee, prevent and handle problems can be a true test of your ability as a boss. Check on everything from time to time. You can be assured that the one area you don't check will be the source of the next problem. Don't always take another's word for things, get out there occasionally and double check. It's nice to trust, but you have to be sure that your trust is well placed.

Ensure that the goals are understood. Tell your staff what you want, then have them tell you what you want. Follow up with written orders, then check to see that they understand the written orders. Check the progress being made on the project periodically to be sure its being done properly. Make all communication as clear as possible to enhance performance and minimise errors.

Try and anticipate problem area's;- new employees, poor training, poor quality materials, too much, too fast..... You cant see into the future, but you can project the ramifications of some factors o the success of a project. Correct as many deficiencies as possible before they cause a problem.

Do something, don't ignore problems, don't try to hide them, handle them. Sort it out, and take steps to ensure it doesn't become a problem again in the future. A lot of new managers fail in this area. The buck stops with you. Many problems which could have been solved with a small amount of supervisory input have been ignored until they escalated into a serious problem for employees, managers and the organisation, don't let it happen to you.

Investigate problems quickly, get all the facts, identify the factors leading up to it. Interview the staff affected or involved, get their ideas on what happened, why it happened, and how it could have been prevented. Back up the interviews with physical evidence whenever possible, check every source of information you can think of.

Once you gather all the facts, and look at the whole picture, you can take sound and logical steps to correct the problem and prevent a repetition. Do your homework, and after you have investigated the cause of the problem you can look at possible solutions. Take the time to project the effects of possible solutions. Once you can see things more logically and clearly, you will have more answers for your boss!

Be creative, turn adversity into opportunity. When problems arise, the most important job for a manager is to get it sorted quickly, so that normal service can be resumed. But don't stop there, stand back, take stock, see what can be learned from the situation. Looked at objectively there could be some mileage in it.

Document your actions, put on paper how the problem came to your attention, what investigations you did, what was the cause of the problem, what steps you took to solve it, what have you done to prevent recurrence. Take the time to write it down and keep it on file. It may prove invaluable, weeks or even months down the line. There may be disciplinary hearings, employee ratings or even lawsuits hidden in the future.

Keep your boss informed, nothing could be more embarrassing than your supervisors supervisor asking about the status of a particular problem, when your supervisor has no idea that any problem exists. Periodically keep your boss informed of the status of your investigation into the problem, and any preliminary findings. When the investigation is completed, the problem corrected, and any future recommendations formulated, contact your boss again. They will appreciate a follow up and will know there is no need for any further action on their part.



Chapter 7 - Admin

This is the chapter when hand on heart I can say “You teach best what you most need to learn”. There follow a few tips in administration survival!

Write it down - you now have way too many things on your mind to rely solely on your memory. If you don't write things down, you are going to forget to be somewhere, or do something, and that will reflect adversely on you, and cause problems for others. I carry a small hard back notebook small enough to fit into my pocket, so that even when I am out and about without my bag, my diary etc I have somewhere to put the things that pop up. I long ago switched to a hardback book when slip's of paper covered in various notes, telephone numbers and idea's ended up in the washing machine!

Get organised - When you can't find the latest sales figures, holiday rota, training schedule or anything else in less than five minutes you are in trouble. Very soon you won't need to find anything at all, at least not in that job. Computers help of course, but even they defeat me on occasion. Take the time to get organised, don't develop an OCD, but with a little thought, planning and self discipline, you can make effective use of a whole host of things designed to make your job easier. Consider time spent getting organised, and staying organised, as job insurance.

Manage resources effectively - You are responsible for the effective use of the resources at your disposal. This includes materials, equipment, and the most valuable resource of all your staff. Make sure you always have enough resources to get the job done. Prevent the waste of valuable resources, this includes time. Remember the 5 'p's Proper planning prevents poor performance.

Keep good records - production records, overtime usage, attendance, performance, supply orders, there are inevitably loads of records that you are now required to keep. Accept the fact that they must be kept, and that you must keep them as accurately as possible. Many managers fail in this area because they put record keeping low on their list of priorities, then the task builds up into an overwhelming, time consuming task. Keeping good records daily, a little at a time will make your job much easier.

Delegate - you can't do everything yourself, you have to pass some tasks to other competent people, not just the small stuff either, you will need to delegate more meaningful jobs as well. Once you are sure that the person you choose is up to the job, give them the assignment and the authority to carry it out, and trust. However you must remember the cardinal rule of delegation, you can delegate authority, but not responsibility.

Develop personal contacts - just as people can create a myriad of problems, other people can solve a myriad of problems. Knowing the right person to call to get an answer or solve a problem can make your life much easier. Take the time to get to know people in key positions. You will find that they will want to know you, and will be happy to help when you call. Networking in your organisation is time well invested.



Manage your time - with increased responsibility we should get increased time, but we don't. You have 3 choices. 1. Use what time you have to its maximum efficiency, balancing admin, management, and time to develop your people. Difficult, but then it goes with the title you have earned. 2. Constantly be behind, not knowing what is going on, become a nervous wreck, and probably lose your job. 3. Work longer, take work home with you, risk your home life, your health and your sanity. Obviously you prefer option 1, but even then there may be times when you have to put in longer hours, or take work home, but if you plan your time well, these occasions should be few and far between.

If you have learned even one new idea from this e-book, you are closer to success as a boss. However you must recognise that there is a great deal more to management than the information in these few pages. As you progress through your career, experience will be your best teacher, but the experience need not be entirely your own. Your supervisor, a mentor, a coach can share their experience too. I believe the key to success is attitude, so before I close I want to share with you the four things that will carry you on towards a satisfying career.

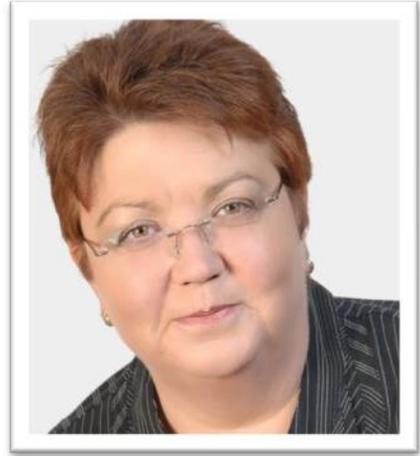
- Management is what you make of it**
- Your people are your most valuable asset**
- All problems can be handled**
- People have faith in your abilities, or you wouldn't have the job**

Have faith in yourself, develop a can do attitude
I wish you well.

Gloria Hammett

Meet **Gloria Hammett**

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Gloria Hammett is a Senior Partner with The Romney Centre in Southampton, Chair of The British Society of Corporate Coaching & Mentoring, and lead Tutor for the Wessex College of Hypnotherapy and NLP. In addition to her work as a Counseling Psychotherapist, Gloria has qualifications in Adult Education, Mediation, Coaching, Mentoring, Hypnotherapy and NLP.

Gloria facilitates or co-facilitates a range of different courses including our Coaching and Mentoring Programs, which are mainly aimed at internal Coaching and Mentoring Banks for large Organisations, Supervision, Motivational Interviewing, NLP Practitioner/ Master Practitioner, Clinical Hypnotherapy Foundation/Practitioner/Post Grad certificate, Psychological Sales Techniques, Business Skills for Coaches and Therapists, and the Leadership Development Courses.



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