Management Boot Camp

Essential skills for successful new Leaders

ExMaC CONSULTING

Hold the vision, Trust the Process, Watch the Magic

You have been promoted...congratulations!

Once the thrill and excitement of that new promotion wear off, doubts may start to creep in. How do you earn the respect and trust of your team? How do you create and maintain a high-performing team to get the results you need? Chances are the team existed long before you were tasked to lead them. What should you be doing from your first day to set the tone for your leadership?

Employees who are promoted may not be given specific training on developing leadership skills. Like you, they performed exceptionally well and were rewarded by advancing to roles with greater responsibility, including team oversight and supervision. While your technical skills may make you a great contributor to your organization, succeeding in a management role requires developing interpersonal and leadership skills.

Gone are the days of "carrot and stick" management – research shows that while rewards and punishments may motivate people to some degree, they certainly do not foster high performing teams.   Empowering and transformational leadership consists of four elements: **Purpose and Vision**, **Personal Brand and Presence**, **Social Intelligence** and **Team development**.

This workbook is designed to provoke thought and help you develop these key elements in your management style. Whether you are new at managing staff or want to upgrade your style, this workbook supports your learning in deciding how you want to manage and lead your team. Work at your own pace – there are no wrong answers!

Are you ready to do the foundational work to serve your team well?

Let's get started!

Purpose and Vision

Great Leaders work to enhance the motivation and engagement of the team by directing behavior toward a shared vision. They inspire others to transcend their self-interests and work for the good of the organization. They articulate WHY we are doing what we do. Most of us are quite familiar with what and how of our daily tasks but how much thought is put into why we do it?

Why does the organization exist? Who do we serve? What value do we bring to our customers? If you are leading a support area, like Finance or Information Systems, who are your customers? What need are you meeting in your customer with your product or service?

As a manager, you will be setting the tone for your team. Making sure you are crystal clear on the answers to those questions is crucial to effectively leading a team.

Example: Sheila is an IT Programmer working with a major bank. She recently was promoted to lead the team developing the company's online employee information system, which includes access to pay information, training resources, and other vital information. She is excited to begin working to finish the project but has discovered that the team has several differing opinions on design and function. She knows she needs to get them focused on a single vision and set the direction but is unsure how to start.

1. Why does this team exist? To create an easy to use employee portal to support access to information.

2. Who are their customers? All employees of the company that will be using the portal. Executive management that created the team to perform this task.

3. What is important to their customers? The site must be easy to use for employees. The site must be easy to maintain and edit as employees need for information changes over time. The site must be scalable for growth as they company grows.

4. What is the end goal of our team? To create a simple, maintainable and scalable employee portal that serves the information needs of all employees that is delivered on time and on budget.

As you work through the following questions, try to expand your answers beyond your direct customers and look at the bigger picture of where your team fits within the organization.

1. **Why does my team exist?**

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2. **Who are our customers, who do we serve?**

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3. What is important to our customers?

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4. What is the end goal of our team? What does success look like and how will we know we have achieved it?

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Personal Brand and Presence

"If your presence doesn't make an impact, your absence won't make a difference." –Author Trey Smith.

To be an effective leader requires self-awareness. Knowing what is important to you, what your core values are, creates consistency in your decisions and behavior that fosters trust. What do you want to be known for? Here are some examples that may resonate for you.

Dependable	Honest	Fair	Empathetic
Punctual	Loyal	Committed	Creative
Optimistic	Innovative	Open Minded	Flexible

What are your top 5 core values that are so important to you that all your actions will be measured against them? Why are they important to you?

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My core values are:

Honesty – I will be honest and forthright in my thoughts and words

Integrity – I will always act in accordance to my moral compass

Empathy – I will seek to understand the feelings of others

Reliable – I will always meet or exceed expectations of me

Presence is the capacity to show up and be there for others without inserting a personal agenda. This means letting our guard down so we can let the other person in. Being present means your focus and thoughts are only on the conversation – you are not thinking about solutions, or you are not wondering when the next meeting starts. You are fully engaged in the conversation, actively listening and responding where your total focus is in that moment.

Presence can be a challenging but necessary skill for successful relationships. Studies have found that being present with others fosters trust, as the other person feels truly heard. Try these tips to be more present with your team.

1. Listen without judgment or expectation. Active listening, focusing on what they are saying with the intent of understanding their point of view.

2. Make eye contact. Making eye contact while talking with another also ensures that you're not off in your own world thinking about something else, that you're not looking around getting distracted, and that you're not doing things while people are talking to you. It's a simple trick but very powerful.

3. Paraphrase what they are saying – paraphrasing what they just said condenses the information and demonstrates your understanding of what was said. It is a way to have others hear your interpretation and to ensure understanding.

4. Ask clarifying questions to ensure understanding. Ask open ended questions such as "What do you see our top three challenges are?" or "If money and time were not a constraint, how would you go about solving this?" Sometimes the answers lie with them, and they only need support in focusing to gain insight or solutions.

Social Intelligence

Social intelligence can be described as the ability to successfully build relationships and navigate social environments. – D. Goleman

Let's face it – your success as a leader depends on the trust, understanding and goodwill of your team. Being aware of your own perspectives, biases and triggers allows you to better choose actions that align with your core values. Being authentic is simply living your own core values in a way that others can easily see what you stand for. The more you know about yourself the more authentic you will be which will allow for stronger foundations of trust and respect in your relationships.

Building trust takes time. Think of trust link a bank account. Each time you are consistent in your actions, follow through on commitments, or demonstrate your focus is on shared team goals as opposed to personal rewards, you are making "trust" deposits the account. Each time you jump to a conclusion without fact checking, make excuses, do not take responsibility, or even send mixed signals (when your actions don't match your words) you are withdrawing trust from the account. The idea is to consistently make deposits so that when you make a mistake, and you will, there is a foundation of trust to maintain the relationship you have built.

Awareness of others' perspectives and emotional reactions is key in long-term relationships.   Respecting their opinions, especially when you disagree, demonstrates that you value their input and fosters trust. Active listening, listening to learn about their perspective, is critical in building your social intelligence.

Harnessing harmful behavior in others is one of the most challenging functions of management. How you approach your staff when they are not performing to expectations? Do you avoid these conversations and hope they will improve? Do you correct their behavior in a way that leaves them feeling defeated, unwilling to try to improve? Harnessing is a skill to use under these two conditions:
1. We are in a position of authority to the recipient.
2. The individual's behavior is out of line or harmful to themselves or others.

Harnessing follows these guidelines:
1) You must have established clear performance and personal conduct expectations.
2) Make sure that you are aware of your organization's discipline policy and procedures and you follow documentation guidelines for problems and concerns.
3) Be clear with yourself about your authority. You must be willing to exercise leadership in confronting behavior that may be easier to ignore.

4) Your enforcement of expectations must be:
- Consistent
- Immediate
- Without hostility
- Without guilt

5) Let the person take responsibility by making the commitment to improve.
6) Be aware of the consequences and follow up steps if the person refuses to change or if the behavior does not improve.

The process would look like this:
- State directly and specifically what you see happening
- State the consequences and your concerns about what you see happening
- Invite and listen to comments
- If necessary, review your expectations regarding the behavior and/or provide needed information and training
- Ask for a commitment to improve the behavior.
- Acknowledge the commitment and let them know you appreciate it.

Another format to follow is using these three elements"

When you (state the behavior)

It creates (state the consequences and concerns)

And results in (state the unwanted outcome of the behavior)

For example: When you came in late three days this week, it created a situation where your co-workers needed to cover your shift in your absence.   It is happening often enough that we are not able to rely on you to be here to relieve your teammates and they must stay late and delay their after-work plans. Is there any reason you cannot be here on time that I may not be aware of?

Then listen to their response, ask for a commitment to be consistently on time, and let them know you appreciate their commitment. Following this without judgment and leaving your assumptions behind will support positive relationships with your team.

Team Development

One of your most important responsibilities as a leader is to continually look for ways to develop skills and knowledge within your team. A strong leader looks at training not as an event but as a continual process of personalized support to everyone on the team. You've likely heard the quote "We rise by lifting others" by Robert Ingersoll, a popular orator during the late 1800's.   This is very true in the world of leadership.

Development can come in many forms. Formal training can be useful for specific skills or expertise. Coaching your team allows you to work with them to guide their progress in a one-on-one format. Most learning, however, will be informal. Foster informal learning within your team by having them mentor each other with specific tasks. Teach what you have learned to the team through hands on demonstrations, anecdotal information or through sharing experiences in brainstorming sessions.

What are some ways specifically you can share knowledge and skills within your team? Identify individuals' strengths and areas to develop below. This will help you map out how you can create opportunities for your team to share their knowledge and skills with each other.

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Leading with purpose and vision, identifying your personal brand and being present, increasing your social intelligence and committing to developing others on your team set the foundation for your success as a leader. I believe leadership is a skill you are never "finished" developing; as we understand more about the human side of workplaces, and the complexity of workplace demands increase, additional leadership skills will be required. The workplace today is ever evolving, through changes in economic realities to struggling with the impacts of a global pandemic, and requires ever evolving leadership strategies.

To be a truly impactful and inspirational leader requires an intimate self-awareness that most people choose not to pursue. Understanding where your core beliefs came from, analyzing if they continue to serve you, re-evaluating your behavior to ensure you remain authentic takes a commitment to ongoing and continual growth. As human beings, I believe we should always be learning, growing and reaching for goals, whether in career, relationships, health or personal improvement. To be a great leader is to understand that you do not have all the answers and continue to seek others to learn from.

Leadership is not a position or a title, it is action and example. It is a way of thinking, acting and communicating that inspires others to strive for improvement. True leadership seeks not to create followers but rather to create more leaders. It is empowering and supportive.

In the words of Ronald Reagan "The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets people to do the greatest things."

ExMaC Consulting Inc. offers the "High Performance Leadership Program" and the "High Performing Team Program" for individuals and group training. Find our more at www.exmac.net or by contacting our team at khudson@exmac.net.