

Introduction

Strange thing, management. It's something few of us set out in life to do, yet most of us find ourselves doing at some point.

Career adviser: What would you like to do when you finish school?

16-year-old: I want to be a manager.

Did this happen to you? No, me neither. But here you are anyway.

As a manager you are expected to be a lot of things. A tower of strength, a leader and innovator, a magician (conjuring up pay raises, resources, and extra staff at the drop of a hat), a kindly uncle/aunt, a shoulder to cry on, a dynamic motivator, a stern but fair judge, a diplomat, a politician, a financial wizard (no, this is quite different from being a magician), a protector, a savior and a saint.

You are responsible for a whole group of people who you probably didn't pick, may not like, might have nothing in common with, and who perhaps won't like you much. You have to coax out of them a decent day's work. You are also responsible for their physical, emotional, and mental safety and care. You have to make sure they don't hurt themselves—or each other. You have to ensure they can carry out their jobs according to whatever guidelines your industry warrants. You have to know your rights, their rights, the company's rights, the union's rights.

And on top of all this, you're expected to do your job as well.

Oh yes, and you have to remain cool and calm—you can't shout, throw things, or have favorites. This management business is a tall order....

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you can’t smack them* (or possibly even fire them). At other times they will behave like petulant teenagers—sleeping in late, not showing up, refusing to do any real work if they do show up, skipping out early—that sort of thing.

Like you, I’ve managed teams (in my case, up to a hundred people at a time). People whose names I was expected to know, and all their little foibles—ah, Heather can’t work late on Tuesday because her daughter has to be picked up from play group. Trevor is colorblind, so we can’t use him at the trade show. Mandy sulks

* Yes, yes, I know you can’t smack children either. I was just making a point. Please don’t write in.

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if left to answer the phones at lunchtime and loses us customers. Chris is great in a team but can't motivate herself to do anything solo. Ray drinks and shouldn't be allowed to drive himself anywhere.

As a manager, you are also expected to be a buffer zone between higher management and your staff. Nonsense may come down from on high, but you have to a) sell it to your team, b) not groan loudly or laugh, and c) get your team to work with it even if it is nonsense.

You also have to justify the “no pay raises this year” mentality even if it has just completely demotivated your team. You will have to keep secret any knowledge you have of takeovers, mergers, acquisitions, secret deals, senior management buyouts, and the like, despite the fact that rumors are flying and you are being constantly asked questions by your team.

You are responsible not only for people but also for budgets, discipline, communications, efficiency, legal matters, union matters, health and safety matters, personnel matters, pensions, sick pay, maternity leave, paternity leave, holidays, time off, time out, time sheets, charity collections, schedules, industry standards, fire

drills, first aid, fresh air, heating, plumbing, parking spaces, lighting, stationery, resources, and coffee. And that's not to mention the small matter of customers.

And you will have to fight with other departments, other teams, clients, senior bosses, senior management, the board, shareholders, and the accounting department (unless, of course, you are the manager of the accounting department).

You are also expected to set standards. This means you are going to have to be an on-time, up-front, smartly dressed, hard-working, industrious, late-staying, early-rising, detached, responsible, caring, knowledgeable, above-reproach juggler. Tall order.

You also need to accept that as a manager you may be ridiculed, derided as a manipulative obstructionist pen pusher and possibly even judged by your staff, shareholders, and/or the public to be ineffective and even superfluous to the carrying out of the actual job at hand.*

And all you wanted to do was your job Luckily there are a few hints and tips that will have you sailing through it looking cool, earning points, and coming out smelling like roses. These are *The Rules of Management*—the unwritten, unspoken, unacknowledged Rules. Keep them to yourself if you want to stay one step ahead of the game.

Management is an art and a science. There are textbooks of thousands of pages devoted to how to do it. There are countless training courses. (You've probably been in a few.) However, what

* If this all makes you feel a bit down about being a manager—don't be. Managers are the stuff that runs the world. We get to lead, to inspire, to motivate, to guide, to shape the future. We get to make a difference to the business and to people's lives. We get to make a real and positive contribution to the state of the world. We get, not only, to be part of the solution, but to provide the solution itself. We are the sheriff and the marshal and the ranger all rolled into one. We are the engine and the captain. It's a great role, and we should relish it—it's just not always an easy role.

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no textbook contains and no training course includes are the various “unwritten” rules that make you a good, effective, and decent manager. *The Rules of Management*. Whether you are responsible for only one or two people or thousands—it doesn’t matter. The Rules are the same.

You won’t find anything here you probably didn’t already know. Or if you didn’t know it, then you will read it and say, “But that’s really obvious.” Yes, it is all really obvious, if you think hard enough about it. But in the fast-paced, frantic, just-about-coping kind of life we lead, you may not have thought about it lately. And what isn’t so obvious is whether or not you do it.

It’s just fine to say “But I know that already.” Yes, as a smart person you probably do, but ask yourself honestly for each rule: Do you put it into practice, carry it out, work with it as standard? Are you sure?

I’ve arranged these Rules for you into two sections:

- Managing your team
- Managing you

I think that should be fairly simple. The Rules aren’t arranged in any particular order of importance—the first ones aren’t more important than later ones or vice versa. Read them all and then start to put them into practice, adopting the ones that seem easiest to you first. A lot of them will flow together so that you can begin to carry them out simultaneously, unconsciously. Soon we’ll have you looking cool and relaxed, confident and assertive, in charge,

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in control, on top of things, and managing marvelously. Not bad considering it wasn't too long ago you were shoulder to the wheel, nose to the grindstone, ear to the ground, and back to the wall. Well done, you.

Before we begin, it might be worth taking a moment or two to determine what exactly we all mean by “management.” And that isn't as easy as it sounds. For my money we are all managers—parents,* the self-employed, the entrepreneur, the employed, even the ones who inherited wealth. We all have to “manage.” It might only be ourselves, but we still have to cope, to make the best use of resources available, motivate, plan, process, facilitate,

* If you don't believe parents have to be managers too, then read Ros Jay's *Kids & Co: Winning Business Tactics for Every Family*, White Ladder Press, 2003.

monitor, measure success, set standards, budget, execute, and work. It's just that some of us have to do all that with bigger teams. But the fundamental stuff doesn't change.

The Harvard Business School defines a manager as someone who “gets results through other people.” The great management consultant Peter Drucker says a manager is someone who has the responsibility to plan, execute, and monitor; while the Australian Institute of Management definition of a manager is a person who “plans, leads, organizes, delegates, controls, evaluates, and budgets in order to achieve an outcome.” I can go along with that.

It can get very wordy and complex:

A manager is an employee who forms part of the organization's management team and is accountable for exercising delegated authority over human, financial, and material management to accomplish the objectives of the organization. Managers are responsible for managing human resources, communicating, practicing and promoting the corporate values, ethics, and culture of the organization, and for leading and managing change within the organization. (The Leadership Network, California)

Fine, whatever. We are all managers in whatever form or shape we think and we all have to get to with the job of managing. Anything that makes our life simpler is a bonus. Here are the simple *Rules of Management*. They aren't devious or underhanded. Actually they are all pretty obvious. But if you think about each carefully and implement each without fail, you'll be amazed what a difference it will make to your work and your life.

You may *know* everything in this book, but do you *do* it? This book will help motivate you into doing what you already know.

Let's get started