



# Effectively Manage Employees at Any Stage of Your Career

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# Effectively Manage Employees at Any Stage of Your Career

Throughout the course of your career, it is likely that you will have the responsibility of managing other employees at some point. Different situations call for different managerial styles, so it is important to understand the distinctions. Here, we'll discuss several different scenarios, the unique challenges of each, and tips for managing those situations.

## Generational Differences

This is one of the most common areas where managers run into complications. Older generations have a vastly different approach to work and life than their younger counterparts, so there is often a disconnect when managers have to deal with employees from other generations. We'll break this down into two categories: managing younger employees and managing older employees.

### Managing Younger Employees



Image Credit: [Ewan Klein](#)

### The Scenario

You've been with the company for a while and are managing your department. All of your company's new hires are significantly younger than you are.

## **The Challenges**

Younger employees are typically just getting started in their careers, so they often need frequent instruction and monitoring. They may be worried about not having enough education or experience, so they may not take initiative or speak up in meetings. They may also feel undervalued or that their work is not significant.

## **The Solution**

Be prepared to spend a fair bit of time teaching and mentoring younger employees. Many of them are thirsty for knowledge and want to get ahead in their careers. They are likely to be enthusiastic about learning new skills and taking on greater responsibilities. However, it is important to remember that your job is to manage them, not hold their hands through each assignment. Share your expertise often, but give your younger team members a chance to figure things out on their own too. It will help them to learn and grow in their positions, build their confidence, and set them up for future successes.

If your large staff meetings tend to be conducted mostly by the older employees while the younger ones just sit and listen, make a point of asking questions specifically to your younger staffers. Ask them for their opinion on the topic you are discussing or for their thoughts on the direction your business is taking in general. Make sure that they feel comfortable expressing their opinions honestly. Allow time for individual meetings as well. Ask them about their favorite and least favorite aspects of their jobs. It may surprise you to learn that your younger employees may not quite grasp the significance of what they are doing. Take a little time to explain to them where their job fits into the big picture of your organization. Once they understand this, they are likely to find more value in their work, and thus, more motivation to continue to work hard.

## **Managing Older Employees**

### **The Scenario**

You've taken over the management of your department, but many of your employees are much older than you are.

### **The Challenges**

Older employees have a lot of experience, but may be set in their ways. They may be wary of someone younger and more inexperienced taking the reins of the department. Sometimes, they may feel a bit resentful if they were overlooked for the position.

### **The Solution**

In this situation, it is crucial that you show respect to your older team members. They have years or decades of experience both in the work force and in your organization. Use that to your advantage. Ask your older employees for their input, and even if you don't always utilize it, definitely take it under serious consideration. Their past experiences can help you avoid potential problems that you might not be aware of. By asking them for their advice or expertise, you show them that you value them as employees and that you respect their experience and knowledge. Taking the time to learn from them

will garner their respect, as they will see that you're willing to collaborate for the betterment of the company.

That being said, it is important that you still maintain authority. Many young managers often make the mistake of letting mistakes slide with older employees because they are timid about confrontation. If an older employee misses a deadline, treat it the same way as you would with a younger employee. If you don't take a stand with team members of older generations, they may see you as a pushover and will lose respect for you, which will undermine your abilities as a manager.

Lastly, if you are dealing with an older staff member who feels slighted that you got the position, try not to take it personally. The best way that you can respond to this type of attitude is to show, not tell, why you got the job in the first place. You were hired for the position for a reason, so stay on task and get the job done. Over time, the resentment will fade as your team sees you emerge as a strong leader.

## Moving to a New Industry or Department



Image Credit: [Nguyen Hung Vu](#)

### The Scenario

You have been a manager before, but now you have moved to a new company in a different industry, or your current organization moved you to a new department.

### The Challenges

Just because you have management experience does not mean that what worked in your previous job will work in your new one. There will be a learning curve as you get more comfortable in your new position.

## **The Solution**

Before you start working in your new role, take the time to do some research into your new industry or department. What are the current and future trends for your industry? What are the standard practices in this department? Gather as much background information as you can.

Once you have a solid grasp on the information, reach out to your employees for their input. Ask any questions that arose during your research that you were unable to answer. Find out how things have been done in the past and which of those methods worked and didn't work. Let your employees know that you will need a bit of their assistance until you get up to speed. They will respect your honesty and will most likely be more than happy to share their experience and expertise.

Don't be afraid to draw on your past managerial experiences, as much of that will still be useful. In the early stages of your new management role, focus on your strengths as a manager while you are still learning the finer details of your new position. The general framework for managing is relatively similar across many industries: setting departmental or organizational goals, working out the steps to be taken to achieve those goals, determining realistic time frames to complete those steps, and implementing a method of measuring progress and project success. You can pick up much of the industry-specific knowledge as you go along, which will contribute to your continued success on future projects.

## **Managing Former Coworkers**

### **The Scenario**

You have recently been promoted to a management position, and your former coworkers are now your employees.

### **The Challenges**

It can be difficult to transition from being your team members' friend to being their boss. It often takes time to build up your status as a person of authority.

### **The Solution**

Even though you already know your team members personally, take some time to sit down with each of them individually to discuss their professional responsibilities and future goals. Find out what they are currently working on and what they would like to work on in the future. Not only will this help you understand the current working dynamics of your department on a deeper level, but it will also help to inform future decisions that change the direction of the team.

In making decisions that change the current order of operations, start small. Don't try to do a complete overhaul of your department overnight. Consult with your team members about the changes they would like to see, and take those under advisement. Each member of your team has his or her own strengths, so use them wisely. As you learn how to operate in your new role, your team members will be invaluable resources in helping to fill in the gaps in areas where you have less experience.

The most challenging aspect of this scenario is the change to your interpersonal relationships around the office. Now that you are the manager, you'll have to distance yourself a bit from your former peers. It can be difficult at first to cut your social ties with your friends, but it is a necessity as a manager. Being overly familiar with your employees can prevent them from seeing you as an authority figure.

Even if you still maintain your friendships outside of work, it is important that you establish boundaries while at work. If you don't, then the employees who are your friends may try to take advantage of that fact in order to get away with things they wouldn't otherwise, like showing up late or calling in sick. It is crucial that you establish your authority in this area right away. Do not give special treatment to the employees who were your close friends. It can cause resentment from other employees in the department and undermine your abilities as a manager.

## Temporary Cross-Departmental Teams



Image Credit: [Republic of Korea](#)

### The Scenario

You have been selected as the project manager for an endeavor that requires cooperation from employees across multiple departments, some of them holding a higher position in the company than you do. This is for a specific project, not an ongoing situation.

### The Challenges

Working with employees from a variety of departments can result in scheduling difficulties if their project duties conflict with their regular job duties. In this situation, you are not your team members' regular boss, but you are the boss for this specific project. Each team member has his or her own area of expertise.

## **The Solution**

When you first begin the project, take the time to sit down with each member of the team to discuss their current job duties and availability, as they will still be fulfilling their current roles in addition to working on the project. You may want to meet with their managers as well to assist with scheduling and resource allocation. In developing the project plan, it is important to take into consideration your team members' other responsibilities so that working on the project does not interfere with other aspects of the business. Remember that your team members still have to report to their department managers while working on the project.

Because your team members come from a variety of departments, they will come into the project with unique skill sets and areas of expertise. This is why they were selected for the project in the first place. Assign team members tasks that best use their abilities, and don't be afraid to ask for their advice in areas that you are not as familiar with. Just because you are the project manager does not mean that you are expected to have all the answers. Work with your team members to come up with a collaborative approach that lets everyone contribute in the areas best suited to their knowledge and skills.

## **Conclusion**

While the tips outlined here are designed to help you in specific situations, it is important to note that even within these scenarios, each individual office or team is different. It is important to tailor your approach to the specific goals of your business and its unique organizational culture. Play around with different management techniques and styles until you find the one that works best for you.

Some employees respond better to managers who give very specific directions, while others have more success with managers who take a more relaxed approach, letting their employees have a bit of freedom in how they approach their assigned tasks. Similarly, some managers prefer to keep their employees at a distance, only checking in when necessary, while others are constantly checking in with their employees to monitor their progress. Once you find your managerial style, as long as you are confident in your abilities as a manager, your employees will respect your authority and gladly do the work assigned to them.

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*note from editor:*

*Same note, if you would like this as requested in the 3rd person, please return for revisions. Thanks you!*

