

Simple Yet Powerful Management Methods That Work

How to Manage Employees at Varied Levels of Experience

There are far too many texts and systems on management and I do not want to create another. I have close to 1,000 books on business in my library and there is a huge overlap. Here is a simple and effective system I use, distilled down from this large library and 23 years of real-world management practice. This system leverages many of these wonderful systems that can be anywhere from fantastic to disastrous in a particular situation or stage of business development, but selects the method, not based on an overall philosophy of management, so much as on the capability of the individual being managed. In every case some thought must be given to which technique is appropriate for each special circumstance and individual.

**“A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books.”
-- Chinese Proverb**

This simple, yet very effective, model for people-management uses the following combination of well-known management-styles by selecting the appropriate method for each individual. This is an easy model to

understand and implement and adjusts the management-style to each individual's specific abilities and limitations. In general, you are going to work very closely (micromanage) with anyone, when they are first hired to help determine where they are on this scale and then move down the scale until you reach their current ability to perform. Initial micromanagement will also allow the defining of parameters for working together and understanding each other's styles and needs. This generally means at least daily discussions and sometimes even more often. Don't forget, there is always a responsibility to manage your boss as well, and the boss gets to define that style.

Table - Management Methods

Method	Appropriate For
<p>Micromanagement (MM) (Also appropriate for a while for new relationships to get up to speed on each others strengths, weaknesses and style)</p>	<p>Individual Contributors</p>
<p>Management By Objective (MBO)</p>	<p>Experienced Managers <i>(possibly supervisors)</i></p>
<p>Management By Exception (MBE)</p>	<p>Experienced Executives</p>
<p>Leadership</p>	<p>Business Managers, CEOs, GM, Managing Directors</p>

Management By Wandering Around (WBWA)

WBWA should always be done, parallel to any, and all of these methods to transcend management and organizational levels and ensure that you are aware of what is really happening at all levels in the organization. This consists of walking around the organization and maintaining casual relationships with people at all levels. It can also be done through social functions and contact that puts people from different areas, who do not normally interface, together. This allows organizations to be leaner and flatter while lowering the risk that information is not getting all the way up, down and across the organization. It lowers fears of talking to people in other departments etc.

In most companies there is far too much filtering of information between levels due to many factors, including political reasons, self-preservation, avoidance of confrontation (or even manners that are too good) and sometimes simply not caring. This can also happen because people get complacent and think that others do not care or settle for how "things have always been". Constant evolution and improvement is necessary in any organization today. This attitude can create a self-fulfilling prophecy that is damaging to any organization's culture and effectiveness and becomes "the beginning of the end".



Micromanagement

This is constantly looking over someone's shoulder, this can be minute to minute or hour-to-hour, but is typical in situations where employees are new (high turnover), low-skilled or simply not well-motivated. For example, in a telemarketing operation, callers are monitored very closely using physical supervisor presence and/or excessive electronic monitoring to ensure that work is carried out properly and with sufficient effort. I believe it is completely appropriate to micromanage all new employees for some period of time until you understand their abilities and limitations and they understand what to expect from you as well.

**Some resist change ...
and perish.
Some adapt to change ...
and survive.
Some pioneer change ...
and prevail.**

Management by Objective

This means you can lay out goals and trust that the employee has all the necessary skills and experience to perform THAT TASK without outside help or resources. These could be daily, weekly or even monthly goals depending on the industry, task and other factors, but typically any good manager should be able to go a week or more without needing help from his/her superior. This can be easily done with repetitive work, especially when it is event-driven by outside factors. i.e. a car-wash attendant can be managed this way with little training because the cars keep coming and the job is relatively simple.

Management By Exception

This is when not only can you trust the employee to carry out the task, but you can also trust him/her to understand when he/she is outside his/her own abilities and experience and comes back to you for additional help and resources. This really must be earned and is rare without lots of management experience, high confidence and ability. There is also the supposition here that the person has the experience and skills to identify opportunities that might come out, which were outside the scope of his/her objective. In other words this employee will seek out and find new opportunities to help the company, which were not part of his/her objectives. In this "mode of management" you may be meeting with the employee once a month to review progress. Only 5% of people will ever achieve this level of expertise and these people are the most valuable in your organization because they have leverage and can cause resources to be used in such a way as to generate profits.

**“Confidence is
courage at ease.”
-- Daniel Maher**

Leadership

This is the next level where a person is ready to successfully start and/or run an entire business and does not need to be managed at all. By this I, of course, do not mean running a simple sub-shop or dry-cleaning service, but a complex organization where multiple departments, levels and/or disciplines must be used to deliver value to customers. This means a large set of skills, which could fill a book, and most people will jump in before they are ready, but that is how we learn too.

“Business design experience is like yeast, you don't need a lot of it, but without that pinch the bread just won't rise.”

-- Bob Norton

Unfortunately, it is easy to find people who consider themselves executives, but are not able to perform at this level for many reasons. Reasons might include a poor history of managers, simple jobs with support systems, which never required good performance, or even corporate structures (which, you and they may not have in a new position).

Today, many organizations have frozen growth because they have people without the correct level of ability in positions of responsibility. Often this is even the owner, board of directors or CEO, who cannot begin to let go and delegate to more senior people who can be trusted with key tasks. As organizations grow, it is easy to have key positions filled by people who limit growth. Therefore, replacement of some people is inevitable, as an organization grows, it must shed some skin because few people can keep up with a fast growing organization completely. It can take decades to develop all these skills and a company can go through fast growth spurts. Some larger organizations spend a fortune on organizational development (OD) to ensure this does not happen. This is valuable, but often not necessary, until a company

**“A ship in a harbour is
safe, but that is not what
a ship is built for.”
-- William Shedd**

is very large to reach optimum performance. Any company under \$1 billion in revenue should be able to have its CEO select, develop and replace the senior staff appropriately. If this is done right then, that senior staff will be able to do it on the next level down and so on.

For more on this and details on expectations of employees at these various levels of experience and development read, “A Simple Framework For Employee Development”.