

What does it take to be a great manager?

-Jennifer Potter



We've all had or at least have been around that one manager who is at best 'bearable'. The one who yells, demands and never helps. That guy who takes credit for all the work, but never the blame. That woman who belittles as she leads, barking orders without explanation.

"You can build a throne with bayonets, but you can't sit on it for long" -Boris Yeltsin

Leadership and team management is all about being able to direct a team to do the best it can do. Not by yelling, arguing and dictating. Let's take a look at some of the characteristics which **will** make a great manager.

Exhibit Leadership Maturity

A common mistake is the failure to realize that when you are a manager, you are a representative of the company, and therefore you lose your ability to gripe. It may seem at first like you are "one of the team" when you go along with the griping, but it actually causes your team to see you as someone who can't help so why would they trust you? Have a positive, uplifting attitude.

Treat everyone equally. It's instinct to like the people who are more like ourselves so be careful that you aren't inadvertently showing favoritism. Treat people how you want your boss to treat *you*. Keep your emotions in check, don't overreact, and never lose your temper.

Get down in the trenches with your team especially if there is something that seems not to be working as well as what you've experienced. Put in the work and show them how to be successful and get around obstacles. Having a meeting is good, outlining steps in an article is better, but leading by example is best. I've seen the President of the company set up in an office and work with them for a week to show his own process for success.

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."-John Maxwell

Acknowledge Your Team

We've all heard the adage "There's no I in 'team'." This is an old adage for a reason! A great saying I've recently come across is: Be good to your team, without them you don't have one! This includes being trustworthy, straightforward, and respecting them. (Respect! It's huge! More on that later.) Acknowledge them, as a team as well as separately. Take the group to lunch once a month, pizza once a month, donuts every Friday, but purposefully schedule taking individuals out to lunch to chat with them about both their life and their job.

"Happy people are productive people." -Alexander Kjerulf

Compliment them both personally and to the higher ups. Never correct them in front of others. Redirect is ok, but it's very demeaning to be corrected in the presence of your colleagues. Congratulate a job well done. Words are wonderful but you can be creative with this also. A gift certificate, a \$10 trophy, a mug that says "You're Awesome." All these small ways are a great way to acknowledge your team member and show them they are doing a great job.

Listen to them- their likes, their issues and try to help. If there is conflict within your team, always step in. Never tell them to work it out themselves, and don't ignore it. When you actively face an issue head-on you inspire accountability and decision making. Employees want a leader who will stand up for them. Someone who makes it easier to do their job.

Always Respect Your Team

R-E-S-P-E-C-T!! Aretha sang about this tirelessly! Respect your employees. Their talent, their time and their lives. This is the most important trait can you have and that you can share. If you respect your team, everything else should really fall into place. Hold yourself to the highest standards, and set your ego aside. Be harder on yourself than you are on your team members. Always assume responsibility for your team's mistakes. This creates a culture where it's ok to make mistakes. Nothing stunts creativity or thinking outside the box like fear. You want to create an environment where your team gains confidence to stretch to greater roles and responsibility. And if the mistake is really yours, then own it and verbalize this to your team.

In the same vein, don't take credit for your team's successes. Definitely not a good motivator. I once had a boss once who told a client that a piece of work I completed was her own from concept to completion, *right in front of me!* "Yes, I worked hard on this -

I'm glad you love it!" (Wait -*What??!*) Believe me, it did NOT inspire me to work harder going forward! But more detrimental was that I lost respect for her.

Provide direction without negatively affecting the performance of the team. Frequently checking in with your team can be a bit focused on the negative. Give a direction and then step back to allow them to do it. Allow your team to think of solutions, they might even come up with a better way that you or the C-Executives! No micro-managing. I worked as a roulette dealer at a casino in my youth (oh so long ago...no,hold on! Not THAT long!) and my floor person ('manager') would insist that my nails were too long to accurately gauge the stacks of chips. She would check daily (but the stacks were always right! 😊) Let your team do their thing!

So in the end, being a good example while respecting and leading others to success will motivate your team to bring about its very best. You'll be thought of as 'one of the good ones'!

"Always treat your employees exactly as you want them to treat your best client."

-Stephen Covey