

Managers Make the Difference



...a better way to manage

the
happy
manager

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HOW TO BE A BETTER MANAGER

Managers Make the Difference

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How to be a Better Manager...

Managers Make the Difference is one of a series of practical, thought-provoking guides, designed to help you deal with a wide range of management ideas, activities and situations. Whether you are a new manager, or one who wants to hone or develop existing skills, we're sure you'll find something valuable in any of these guides.

This series of e-guides is published by Apex Leadership Ltd. The guides have been developed by a team of professional managers, consultants and educators. The full range of titles is available from [Apex Leadership Ltd](#), or from [the Happy Manager.com](#). Use these guides to benefit from our wealth of management expertise. Let us help you find: **a better way to manage...**"

Phil Higson & Anthony Sturgess
Directors, Apex Leadership Ltd

Using the guides

Each guide contains information, insight and inspiration on essential management topics. The best way to use the guides is to read through each section in turn, ensuring you pause for reflection wherever you see the "Consider..." points. Be sure to answer any questions posed, wherever they appear - they are there for a reason!

Consider ...

Tools ...

After you've worked through the guide, work through the tools. These have been designed to help you use and develop the advice given in the guide.

- Click on the tool buttons where they appear for an in-text hyperlink to the actual tool.
- At the end of each tool you can simply click on the "return" link to get back to your place in the guide.

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What do Great Managers Do Differently?

Evidence suggests that good managers can and do make a significant difference to performance. This applies to the performance of individuals, teams and entire organisations.

It may be relatively easy to summarise what makes a good manager, but what makes a great manager? There is no shortage of discussion on this topic but perhaps the better question to ask is "what do great managers do differently"?

This guide brings together some thought-provoking views on this challenging question.

Consider...

"Make a list of all the things done to you that you abhorred. Don't do them to others - ever.

Make another list of things done to you that you loved. Do them to others - always."

Tom Peters quoting Dee Hock

This guide will help you to:

- Develop your thoughts about your own approach to management.
- Review your approach to how you manage people.
- Evaluate an evidenced-based approach to management.
- Plan to improve your management approach.

To help answer the questions "What do great managers do differently?" we'll investigate 6 themes:

Great managers.....

- ... Adopt a balanced approach, using head, heart and hand.
- ... Create the right conditions.
- ... Learn from the best, and keep learning.
- ... Combine success and effectiveness.
- ... Do the simple, the mundane and the obvious.
- ... Ask the right questions.

But first we will start with some of the thinking about what managers do, before exploring the way they do things differently.

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Great managers..... create the right conditions

Think about this statement from Peter Drucker.

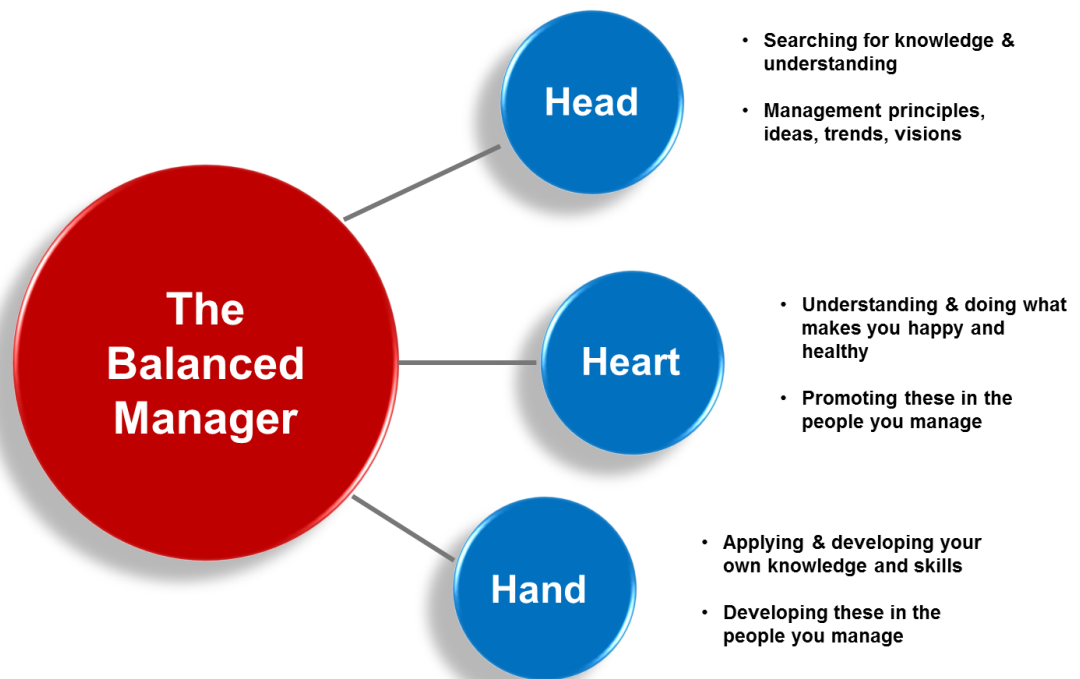
A manager is: "the dynamic life-giving element in every business."

From your own experience of managing and being managed, how often do you think you would agree with the statement? Whatever your answer, Drucker's sentiment is exactly what managers should be doing. Organisations are nothing without people. And people won't move from being individuals to groups, to teams without managers to organise, focus and inspire.

Management is clearly a pivotal role in any organisation. Great managers see that role as a privilege. Success in management is when:

- Those you manage succeed and;
- The organisation you work for succeeds.

This builds on the idea of stewardship – leaving the organisation in a better condition than when you found it. The key to this is to create the right conditions for everyone you manage to benefit from the head, heart and hands approach.



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Great managers....learn from the best and keep learning

Think for a moment about your own management training. Was it based largely on a formal course or qualification, or have you mainly picked up things as you went along?

However you may have started, keeping up to date is crucial - whether through more courses, by on-the-job-training, or by your own personal development. In this section we discuss the importance of on-going management learning, plus some ways to learn from the best.

Techniques and tools may build solid foundations, but it's intellectual skills and insight that will really help managers to build their careers and develop to be great managers.

Leadership and management knowledge is not static. For example:

- It must be dynamic if it's to help us respond to the constantly changing environment in which our organisations and businesses operate.
- Some ideas may well have a timeless quality about them.
- Some ideas may have had their time and have a diminishing relevance for the future.

Therefore, what we know about management should be under regular review. Use tool 2 to ask yourself some crucial questions about what management thinking and ideas you need to equip yourself with, to be future-focused in your organisation.

[Tool 2](#)

There is a tendency to rely on what we have previously learned from courses, management training or what we have learned intuitively on-the-job. Whilst all of these means of learning are helpful, even essential, in themselves they are not sufficient to enable us to thrive in a changing organisational and management context.

There is a constant need to renew, refresh and re-charge your management knowledge. Think about how you can bring together:

- Ideas that stretch, challenge and stimulate.
- Ideas that provide a springboard to new practices and insights.
- Ideas that lead to positive impact.

To help with this, below we have synthesized 6 ways to learn - from your work, and from research and writing on management development.

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Tool 2: Assess your learning so you are future-focused

This tool will help you think about the learning needed to stay up-to-date and future-focused. Ask yourself and your colleagues the following questions, then use the comments column to note your answers.

Question	Comments
How do you and other managers in your organisation keep up to date?	
How do you find informed, stimulating, challenging, management and leadership development resources?	
What do your best managers and leaders know? (Find time to talk with managers you respect and trust, and whose knowledge you value).	
What do your managers and leaders need to be good at?	
Which ideas can help with the challenging questions your business is currently facing?	
What insights might help you realize possible opportunities in your organization?	

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Join the community: subscribe to the Happy Manager Newsletter for regular updates and advice on better ways to manage.

Join the conversation: bookmark the Happy Manager blog. (www.the-happy-manager/blog) Leave any comments, suggestions or examples of your own experiences for the benefit of other readers.

Titles available:

How to be a Happy Manager
Have a Good Workday
How to Build a Happy Workplace
Workstyle, Lifestyle

Build a Better Team
Team Building Exercises
Team Health Check
The Problems with Teams
Why is Teamwork Important?

Leadership Essentials
Defining Leadership
Leading with Style and Focus
Leading Insights

Transformational Change
Sustaining Change
Making Change Personal

It's All About Performance
15 Performance Management Tips
Managing Performance and Potential
Performance Management Skills
Performance Management Toolkit
Conducting a Performance Review
Manage Your Own Performance
Motivating Performance

Managing for Strength to Strength
Managers Make the Difference
Re-defining Middle Management
Do More with Less
Managing Time and Priority
Extreme Thinking: Unlocking Creativity
SMART Goals, SHARP Goals
Making Better Decisions
What's the Problem?

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