

SUCCEEDING AT MANAGING A TEAM IN 14 STEPS



Summary: Use these 14 tips to make yourself a great team leader who helps everyone succeed towards a better career.

The balance of leading and managing a team is like a puzzle. Every person is unique and will have their own skills and quirks that they bring to the team. Figuring out how to use their skills and respect their individuality takes a great deal of planning and adaptability.

- Understand what motivates them.

Some people are motivated by monetary rewards, others by praise. Learn what will excite the members of your team so that you will know how to get them invested in the work and rewards. For example, offering up a free coffee from Starbucks will leave some members indifferent. They may not like Starbucks, coffee, or are on a diet, etc. There are so many things that drive people so you will have to take time with each one to learn what they like.

- Know their individual learning styles.

Employees will learn differently so it is your job that ensure you are meeting their needs. It can be difficult to vary teaching methods when most is done through online portals but making sure that each employee is gathering what they need from the learning environment will let you know if more work needs to be done. Putting in this effort to make sure they are learning all they need shows that you are committed to their professional development and want them to improve their knowledge.

- Balance your goals with their needs.

A team leader will have their own preferences and plans for their team. A leader that does not consider their team's preferences and goals will not be successful. This means learning when to pick battles and when to push your team to reach their full potential.

- Lead from the front.

A leader does not sit in the sidelines, spitting out demands. They lead from the front of the team, gaining the same technical knowledge and skills. Managers should know everything that they expect their team to know. This also means getting down and putting in the same work and being held to the same standards. Doing so will show you can be trusted.

- Be a real human with feelings.

A little sense of humor and humility can go a long way with your team. If you show that you have feelings as well and care about others, your team will treat you with greater respect.

- Develop a joint purpose.

Sit down with your team to discuss and make it clear with the main objective is. Certain environments have very clear goals but others may have a common goal that needs defining. Once it is clear what everyone is working towards together, work efficiency will improve.

- Recognize their achievements.

Even if an employee says they do not need recognition for their achievements, they will appreciate the recognition every so often. Employees work hard so recognizing that work shows you notice what they are doing and appreciate it.

- Give specific and timely feedback.

In order for your employees to make achievements, they likely need to be told what areas they need to improve upon. Give feedback regularly to your employees that can help them improve. Waiting to give feedback on something months or even weeks after prevents them from growing and holds back your team's success.

- Encourage growth and development.

Becoming invested in helping your employees succeed shows them that you want to see them grow and even move on to bigger and better opportunities. Having employees that acquire new skills can help your team advance as a whole as well.

- Stick to your values.

Don't compromise on your values just to please someone. There will be employees that challenge you and your standards but tossing them aside easily just shows your employees you are a pushover and not firm in your stance.

- Set clear expectations.

Be clear in what you expect from your employees. They should know from day one what is expected of them. If things change along the way, have the changes to your expectations in writing so your employees can review them whenever they need to.

- Make time to grow as a team.

The stronger a team is with each other, the better they will work together. Organize and participate in team building activities that range in types so as to appeal to all members of the team at some point. These activities can range from a simple game during a weekly meeting to bigger retreats.

- Discuss performance often.

Hold annual reviews but be open to semi-annual reviews if it is something your employees want to take advantage of. Your team members will not know where they stand in the eyes of the company unless they are being told on a regular basis how they are doing.

- Consider culture fit when hiring.

Every workplace, every team has its own culture. When adding new members to your team, you need to consider what works and what doesn't in terms of personality, work ethic, attitude, etc. Disrupting how your team works together is only possible if the added member molds nicely with team, adding to its unity instead of breaking in and breaking down the relationships.

Do you think team leaders should stick to a strict role of leading or can a leader gain respect with a relaxed style? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

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