Sample Manager Point of View

As a manager your role is to implement and manage the company's vision by getting results from your team within our culture. When you become a manager you effectively put yourself in the middle. If you look at our organizational chart you are literally in the middle of the position you report to and the positions that you manage. It can be a tricky position to navigate, especially if you haven't been there before. It's easy to feel as if you're getting pulled by both sides or that you're fighting between two sides that you are supposed to pull together. **The good news is it doesn't have to be that way.** Management can be a much easier and productive position if you have the right mindset.

How you approach management makes all the difference. It starts and ends with you. It's important to note that a manager isn't necessarily a leader. You might manage a department, but you only become its leader IF you build the right type of rapport. Being a manager and a leader requires that you have a manager's point of view.

What is a manager's point of view?

Every company has their own point of view of what makes an impactful manager. The culture and vision of the business play a huge role in defining how a manager should think within our company. Following are the points of view we believe are important for a manager to adapt within our business.

Take on the Business's Point of View: As a manager you're always going to be in the middle, but you have an anchor. With every decision, every question you have to answer, and action you take, you should always be thinking about the business's point of view. The one guiding question you should always use to refocus yourself, and to avoid taking sides is very simply, "What does the business need to reach its vision?" By bringing everything back to this simple question, you don't have to pick "sides" or feel like you're unsure what "side" you are on within the business. There is only one side, which is the business's side. As a manager you should always believe in the vision for this business and be committed to doing what you can to reach that vision.

Thinking from the business's point of view will give you clarity, but you must also communicate from the business's point of view. Communicating from the business's point of view will help you take emotion out of conversations. It also helps ensure there isn't an "us" versus "them" attitude with your team which can be very destructive.

Start at the End: As a manager you should always look to the end result. The result is your solution. Once you have your solution then you need to work backwards to move past any barriers. There are always several different ways to get the end result. There will be times when things go awry, but if you're focused on the result you can lead your team in the right direction even if you don't have the exact answer. Focusing on the end result frees you up and gives you the flexibility to adapt to anything that detracts you from the path. To start at the end, always ask yourself how a decision, issue, or any action you have to take will impact the end result. This will ensure that you're always headed in the right direction.

Barriers are Never Excuses: As mentioned, there will always be barriers that have the potential to stop you from reaching the desired result. A manager's position is to anticipate the barriers that are approaching, but to find a way to the end result regardless. If you let the barriers stop you, then you'll never get very far.

As a manager you have to be aware of your own barriers, but are also responsible for helping your team identify and move past their own barriers. There will also be barriers that come from the top of the company. These are sometimes harder to deal with because you might feel like it's not your job to solve these. You may believe that you don't have the right tools and resources to do the job you're being asked to do. And you might be right. Some barriers are 100% true. They might also be outside of your control. Yet, they still have to be dealt with in order for you to be effective and move forward.

You should always be moving forward and focus on the solution, regardless of where the barrier starts. Remember that there are always several ways to reach the same solution. As a manager you have to be:

- *Informed* - If you don't have a good handle on your department and projects you'll never know when a barrier is coming until it's too late. You want to be ahead of the game. Think of the Titanic. It's much better to have the information you need to make informed decisions than to react to an emergency.
- *A Creative Problem Solver* - Some obstacles need to be pushed through and solved, but sometimes you simply have to find a new path to the end result. That takes work on your part. You don't always have to be the one to "solve" it, but you do need to think creatively about the issue at hand. As a manager you also need to know how to get your team thinking creatively about issues and solutions.
- *Willing to Get Help* - As a manager you don't have to have all the answers, but it's your job to find a way to get the help you need. That help might come from your

team, upper management, or other resources within the company. Your role as manager is about the ability to pull people together and ensure that the business's assets including experience, knowledge, etc. are pulled together.

- *Willing to Speak Up and Challenge* - We cover challenging in the next section, but it's important to note it here as well. If a barrier is outside of your control or if something from above is stopping you from succeeding, then you need to have a conversation with your manager. How you approach that conversation is key. It absolutely has to remove blame. This isn't the time to discuss whose fault it is, but to focus on what the business needs and the end result. Be willing and ready to address these issues. If it's stopping you from being impactful then it is absolutely your concern. A manager does not wait for things to come from top down. Instead, they focus on influencing the company from the middle which can be top-down, bottom-up, or even side to side.

Be Willing to Challenge - As a manager, you are in the middle. You're in the middle of the upper management and your team. It's not always the most fun place to be, but it is exactly why you have to be willing to challenge. Those challenges might be regarding policies and procedures. They might be regarding mindsets or emotions. They might be challenging upper management and they might be challenging your team. Your position as a manager is to always look at the vision and figure out how to implement that vision regardless of where obstacles start. A couple things to remember:

- *Take the business point of view.* Your "side" isn't about what you want or think is right. It's not always what upper management wants or the team wants. It is always, "What does the business need to reach the vision?"
- *There are different ways to challenge different people.* As a manager you have to know how to pull the most out of people and in many ways you are the negotiator. You're the person that has to get the best out of upper management and your team. This means you might have to take different tactics with different people based on their position and personality.
- *You must be prepared to listen and take criticism of your challenge.* The moment you challenge something you also open yourself and your ideas up to criticism. If you take it personally the role of being a manager can be very difficult. Instead you must be willing to listen. If upper management or even your team has issues with your challenge then it's an opportunity to make it better. It doesn't mean it wasn't a good challenge or idea. It doesn't mean that it's not going to change. It just means there is more work to be done.
- *Sometimes you lose a challenge.* You're not going to win them all. The key is in how you accept a loss. As a manager you can't play both sides. If the business

makes a decision you have to look for ways to implement it. You can, and should, always challenge ideas you don't agree with, but that should be done with your manager, not with your team. Remember that agreeing is easy, but disagreeing takes more skill.

- *Don't fall in love with ideas.* Often times, true progress is stopped because someone is closely tied to exactly how something needs to be done. They fall in love with the idea of something and lose sight of the end result. As a manager things may not always be done exactly the way you would make decisions or exactly as you would complete the task. If the systems are being followed. If the result is being met. If it's moving you closer to the vision, then sometimes you need to be flexible. Let your own ideas change and encourage flexibility to reach the needed result.

Understand Human Emotions. While we always strive to have a productive environment, emotions are not always logical. As a manager you will have to deal with your own emotions, those emotions of upper management and your team. It's important to be open and honest and discuss your own feelings. It's important to allow others to voice their feelings as well. Not expressing them can lead to conversations that get nowhere or passive aggressive behavior because the true reason someone is holding back isn't about the logic, but the emotion.

It's also important to ensure that the emotion isn't taken personally and doesn't influence the end result. The emotion has to be put aside and the decision must be made from the point of view of the business, but sometimes that can't be done until the underlying emotions have been addressed. Ensure that the emotion is put aside by all parties before moving ahead.

Believe You can Influence Change. As a manager you will be working with all types of personalities. In addition, sometimes you will be in a position of authority and sometimes you won't. Either way, you have to influence change and that means getting people at different levels in the organization to go along with change.

You don't have to change "them" or their flaws, but you do have to know how to mobilize a team of people headed in the same direction. Be very in touch with your thoughts. If you feel like you are stuck or cannot influence change, you are not managing. Examine the relationships where you feel you can't influence change. Do not focus on changing them, they won't change unless you change the way that you interact with them.

As a manager, you have to be a bit of a chameleon. You have to suspend judgement and focus on the end result. Often times, by changing the way you interact and communicate with others you can influence the change that you need. Don't expect anyone to adapt to your style. They might, but you'll be waiting a while. Instead, be proactive and always look for how you can influence people to move in the right direction by adapting to their style.

Manage Systems Not People - You will always have to deal with personalities as discussed above, but one thing that makes it much easier to manage is to have well documented systems. If you try to manage without systems you may feel as if you are herding cats. It's not recommended. Systems will not solve all of the emotions or personality issues, but they do make those issues a lot easier to solve.

Systems focus everyone on the end result. If you're focused on the end result then you're focused on ensuring that the business gets what it needs. In addition, systems clear up any miscommunications and provide much needed clarity to employees. As a manager you have to be an advocate for systems. If you don't use them, if you don't bring people back to the systems, then your team will not use them. It is up to you to create a culture where your team's first reaction is to look at the systems.

Ownership/Accountability - As a manager it is vital that you not only have ownership of your results, but also create a culture of ownership in your team. The above sections will help greatly in establishing the foundation for ownership. If you struggle with ownership then this document can help you take control of your tasks. It will also provide a way for you to work with your team to take ownership. To take ownership you need to:

- *Be organized.* You can't have ownership of a task or your department if you're dropping the ball. Organization for a manager means that you know what projects you are working on, the priority of those projects, the status of each project, and the next action steps to move each of them forward. As a manager, the action steps will be yours, those of your team, and things that you are waiting on from vendors or even top management. Documentation is key. There is absolutely no way you will be able to remember everything without dropping the ball somewhere.
- *Have control of your time.* You will be pulled in many directions. Until you have systems defined and in use you'll be putting out fires and working on strategic areas of the business. It's a lot to handle, which is why time management skills are needed. You should be blocking out time. You should be planning your week

ahead of time. Time management is never perfect. There will always be fires to put out, distractions, and setbacks, but you won't ever have control of your time unless you're more intentional about how you spend it.

- *The ability to delegate.* Delegation is a foundational skill that you will need as a manager. Every result in your department is your responsibility. If you are not able to delegate well there will be issues. Delegation is not an art. It is a skill. If your team isn't doing well with a task you've assigned, then you need to look at how you delegated and your systems, before you think of it as a people problem. Remember, manage the systems.

- *Remove blame.* Being a manager requires you to think about problems from solutions based thinking. If you think in terms of blame or fault, you will get stuck. As manager you must act, and when there is a pattern of things that are not working you need to take strategic action. You need to go back to your systems. Removing blame doesn't mean to let things slide, but it means to remove that as an excuse. Focus on your systems. Focus on making sure the business has what it needs. If your systems are spot-on you'll have fewer people problems. The team members you do have problems with should be easy to deal with based on your human resource systems.