

YOU'RE THE BOSS!

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*"It is important to have rules to live by;
it is critical to not always live by the rules"*

"Each day in every way we get better and better"
— Émile Coué

"Goals are dreams with deadlines"
— Diana Scharf Hunt

*"People like to work, and, within reason,
giving them more work gives them more joy"*

*"If you always do what you've always done,
then you'll always get what you've always got"*
— Anthony Robbins

*"Good judgment comes from experience,
experience comes from bad judgment"*
— Will Rogers

*"If you want to stay motivated, look for the
good in other people and tell them about it"*

"Inspiration without implementation leads to frustration"

*"Life is too short to be negative,
surround yourself with positive people"*

"You are the only one who can improve your performance"

"What the mind conceives, the body completes"
— Napoleon Hill

"Attitudes are contagious, are yours worth catching?"

*"People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did, but
people will never forget how you made them feel"* — Maya Angelou

Introduction

*“It is important to have rules to live by;
it is critical to not always live by the rules”*

This book will provide the new supervisor some quick and easy-to-learn tips on how to think about managing people. It is also designed to provide new ways of looking at the art of management for the experienced supervisor, especially one who is looking for ideas beyond the familiar, ideas such as how to measure success, motivate better workers, delegate for real and avoid the problems of hierarchical thinking. These tips come directly from my more than three decades of successfully managing and training people, in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors, and in both union and non-union environments. The goal is to provide advice, much as a personal mentor would in the work place.

Written in simple English with a minimum of jargon, this book is designed to be read in about an hour, a format that limits analysis of each tip topic, but allows room to raise and consider a large number of topics. While no one has a lock on the perfect way to manage, I hope that the reader will be able to use the tips in these pages to help form the foundation of his or her own unique management style. Each chapter is written so that it can stand alone, which allows the reader to skip directly to a chapter of interest; for example, to solve a particular problem that has come up on the job. Also, because each chapter can be read in a few minutes, the book can be read during the normal breaks in a day.

Finally, this book is not meant to provide a complete philosophy behind a certain management style. Its premise is that the reader will review the tips and try to practice the ideas that fit the reader's own style. It should be considered an idea generator, describing proven, successful ways of looking at the challenge of management.

Chapter One — What Does a Manager Do?

“Each day in every way we get better and better”

So you’re a new supervisor — boss or manager — what does that mean? One thing it means is that you are now in a position where what you do and how you do it will have a larger effect on the organization than before you became the supervisor, boss, manager, or leader. In this new position it is critical that your actions become a positive force in the workplace, because that is the way to your success, the success of your employees, and of your boss. In your new position, you have a chance to make a difference in the working lives of the people who work for you and your employer.

First of all — this often comes as a surprise — you should understand that with your new position will come a change in your relationship with your previous work group, your previous peer group and your new peer group. This changing relationship has very little to do with you as a person and everything to do with your new position. So, expect that previous friends will treat you differently, and recognize that there is little that you can do to get back to the former relationship. Even though you haven’t personally changed overnight, you have changed in the eyes of the organization.

A second point: so far we have used the terms *supervisor* and *manager* interchangeably. But are they? I don’t think so. In fact, this book is geared toward you as a manager as opposed to you as a supervisor. What is the difference? In my definition, you as a *supervisor*

oversee the day-to-day aspects of your job — you worry about how many workers are out sick and how you will cover their work, you worry about whether the raw materials are here, how is the production quality going today, you worry about whether the output of the group is satisfactory and about the hundreds of other concerns that arise during the day on a minute-to-minute basis. In contrast, as a *manager* your work is about the longer-term aspects of the job — what is the overall absenteeism of the group, what is the overall quality of the raw materials and is the trend better or worse, is the output quality trend OK. This longer-term work, *management* work, is critical. As a new supervisor you must become good at managing rather than merely supervising. Often people are promoted because they are good at the day-to-day parts of the job. Expertise on the day-to-day work can become a trap for the new supervisor who spends all of his or her time buried in the details. Success as a manager requires a step back, to work on the longer term issues.

So what does a manager do? Your goal is to *get more work done*. That is what you do. You get more work done. That is your job. Sometimes people are uncomfortable with this goal and try to hide it behind a lot of other words and goals, but believe me, your basic job as a manager is to get more work done to support your organization. One of your first tasks is to embrace this goal wholeheartedly. Say to yourself “I’m here to get more work done.” How do you do this? Well, there’s a whole industry of experts who focus their work lives on how to best do this, from consultants to trainers to book writers. Every part of a manager’s job has been pulled apart, analyzed in great detail and written about in even greater detail. But the first thing you need to do is think about what constitutes “more work.” If the goal is to get more work done (and it is) how do you know that you are being successful, or successful enough? Is it by doubling the output or doubling efficiency? Not necessarily. The short term goal in getting more work done should be to concentrate on doing a little better each day - as the quote that

started the chapter says “Each day in every way we get better and better.” Let’s use the field of sports for an example. The recent records for the mile run in women’s sports were:

High School	4 min., 35 seconds (275 seconds)
College	4 min., 29 seconds (269 seconds)
US	4 min., 18 seconds (258 seconds)
World	4 min., 13 seconds (253 seconds)

The differences between these records averages about 7 seconds or approximately 3%. In other words, in order to go from one level of excellence to the next, a woman runner only has to improve her performance by 3%. If you look at your own business that way, as little as a 3% improvement could bring your organization to the next level of success. It sounds do-able; it sounds like a reasonable expectation. Keeping your goals reasonable and attainable is key to successfully communicating them to your work force, which is in turn key to instituting a culture of continuing improvement.

TOP TIPS – WHAT DOES A MANAGER DO?

- Your goal is to get more work done
- Get a little better every day
- A 3% increase can bring you to a new level

Chapter Four — Working with the Work Force

*“If you always do what you’ve always done,
then you’ll always get what you’ve always got”*

We have covered some ideas on how to get to your primary goal of getting more work done. Focus on the non-tool work being done, try for a 3% improvement and think of the work force and the work in horizontal frameworks. But how should you go about working with the workers on a day-to-day basis — what should some of your principles be? You should recognize that your time is your most powerful tool and that spending time with the work force can be the best and easiest way to success. When I was growing up my mother said, “Always treat people the way you want to be treated.” It sounded like good advice, but I can imagine the Marquis de Sade’s and Attila the Hun’s mothers saying the same thing. My experience has shown that a better statement for a manager to follow is “treat people the way they want to be treated.” Recognize that each person is different and has different needs. To be most effective you should modify your management techniques to fit each individual. Wow, that sounds like it will be very time-consuming (and it is), but there are ways to look at the people working for you as a group that will help you minimize the amount of time this will take. After all, not only is your time your most powerful tool, it is also a very limited resource.

Although each of us is unique, my experience shows that the attitudes of people in large groups and, to a certain extent, in small groups, fall into four basic categories:

++	Always Positive	about 10% of the group
+	Usually Positive	about 40% of the group
+/-	Sometimes Positive	about 40% of the group
--	Always Negative	about 10% of the group

The people with the ++ attitudes are the people who always see the silver lining in any cloud, who are always willing to try something new just to see if it will work. The people with + attitudes are the ones who are easily persuaded to try something new and want to have a positive time at work. The people with the +/- attitudes are more difficult to persuade to try something new, and are easily distracted into negative thinking. The people with the -- attitudes are always unhappy or angry about something and almost never agree to try something new, the type of people who would complain about being given a \$100 bill because two \$50's would have been easier to cash. Unfortunately, this last “Always Negative” group is often the group that sets the tone of the work culture. For some reason, people often find it easier to be negative or to be led by a negative person than to be positive. In general it is much easier to tear something down than to build it up, and this is true for a positive work environment — it is easier to tear it down than to build it up.

Creating a positive work culture and environment is one of your most important tasks in reaching your primary goal of getting more work done. Now, remembering that each worker wants and deserves to be treated as he or she wishes to be treated, what is the best way to proceed, recognizing that your time is a limited resource? The key is to spend most of your time working with the people who can make the largest impact on the work culture, and that is the people with the positive attitudes, the ++, + and +/- people. In reality, you can influence about 90% of the work force if you start by focusing your attention on the 40% of the workers who have the +/- attitude. If you win over this group to the way you

want to run the business, then the ++ (10%) and the + (40%) groups will also be automatically won over. So the first step, thinking in a horizontal framework, is to divide the people in the work force into the four categories. Don't worry too much about getting it absolutely right. What you are trying to do is to get a sense of the big picture, to create a list to help you focus your attention on the people who will make the biggest difference in the work culture.

List in the ++ and + categories people who you think bring a positive outlook and attitude to the work place. List in the +/- category people who you think usually have a negative attitude, but can be persuaded to be positive if they are given the chance. List in the -- category people who you think always have a negative attitude and aren't persuadable. So once you have the list, your next step is to start working with the people with the positive attitudes by spending time with them, talking with them and helping them be successful (remembering five praises for each criticism). Your personal time and attention will act as a strong reward for this group and their reward will actually be a reward for you, too, because it's fun to spend time with positive people.

One technique that sounds strange, but works in my experience, is to meet individually with each of the people on the +/- list and informally coach them on how they could improve their performance by being less negative (Chapter 8). In the times that I have personally done this, about half of the group has not only agreed to try to change, but has actually done it. Another quarter has tried to change and has made some progress, while the last quarter has shown no improvement. Since the +/- group is the key group in winning the work force over to your way of running the business, coaching and attention can be a very successful strategy.

What about the group with the negative attitude? Obviously you can't totally ignore this group, especially since you might not be totally accurate when you create the list of who is in which group. Maybe some of the people you think have a -- attitude are really +/-

and can change their behavior to be more positive. But the key with this group with the negative attitude is to recognize that for reasons that often have little or nothing to do with work, they are going to be negative and you will not be able to change them. Fortunately they will represent only about 10 % of the people. Your goal should be to minimize time spent with them. If they are going to change, they will do it on their own terms and in their own time. You will have little influence. You need to treat this group fairly, but do not go beyond what is required by your work rules or your union contract. This will sometimes cause you to treat this part of your group differently from the rest, which some people might highlight as being unfair. But is it fair that the people with the negative attitude get in the way of the goal to get more work done? It has been my experience that the workers know who is performing and who is not and they will recognize that your handling people differently depending on their performance is the right way to do things.

So you should not confuse the goal of treating negative workers *fairly* under work rules or your union contract with treating them *equally*. Part of what you want to reinforce in the work culture is that positive people who get work done are appreciated by the organization. Let me give an example. At a non-profit organization I worked with, we had certain restrictions on vacations during our busiest periods of the year, which happened in the summer. Because of special situations, occasionally a worker would request more weeks of vacation in the summer than would normally be allowed. If the person was one of our workers with a positive attitude, every attempt would be made to agree to the request and to emphasize the fact that we appreciated her good work. If the person was a worker with a negative attitude, we usually refused the request and also told the worker exactly why the request was being denied. By being very clear on why the request was rejected we were reinforcing what we expected in the work place. If this worker complained to the work group about how he was being treated, it often ended up with a

positive effect, because the workers with a positive attitude understood that the management was actually being *fair*.

So, in summary, a key to managing a group of workers is to spend your time with the people with the positive attitudes, the good performers. You can get the best change to the work culture if you focus on the +/- group because winning over this group will result in 90% of the group having a positive attitude. By spending time with the positive people, you reward their good performance and help manage your use of your own time. You treat the group with the negative attitude fairly, but not necessarily just like the rest of the group. The result of this strategy is to minimize the power and effect of the group with the negative attitude and to have the people with the positive attitude set the work culture, which will allow for improved productivity.

TOP TIPS — WORKING WITH THE WORK FORCE

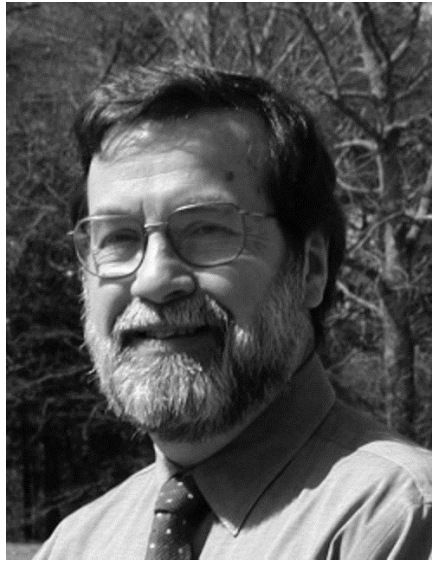
- Spend your time with the positive people
- Focus your attention on the +/- group
- Treat the -- group “by the book”

Appendix — Top Tips

- Your goal is to get more work done
- Get a little better each day
- A 3% increase can bring you to a new level
- Expect excellence from everyone
- Think horizontally — everyone is a *best*
- Five compliments for one criticism
- People like to work
- More work can bring more joy
- Increase the “hands-on-the-wrench” time
- Spend your time with the positive people
- Focus your attention on the +/- group
- Treat the -- group “by the book”
- Spend an hour per day wandering
- Connect with the positive people
- Listen to communicate
- Delegate as much as possible — it gets people engaged
- Really delegate — let it go
- Keep on top of what people are doing
- Never accept Monkeys from subordinates
- Feed Monkeys or release them — never let them starve
- Delegation allows more work to get done

- The good performers should be coached the most
- Use the 3 step process —
state problem/reward, listen, discuss
- Listen, summarize and then action-plan
- Lack of willingness causes most performance problems
- Keep notes on all informal interventions
- Use the 3 step coaching process for interventions
- Mission statements need to be short
- Vision statements include everyone's suggestions
- The right short-term goals can focus a worker's attention
- Workers need to wield influence at work
- Implementing their own suggestions gets people engaged
- Workers need to feel engaged and listened to

About the Author



David Collette wrote this book shortly after retiring from Mount Holyoke College, where he was director of Physical Facilities for fifteen years. During that time he was able to protect the Buildings and Grounds workforce from outsourcing and layoffs, and to create a group dedicated to their motto, “Better, Faster, Cheaper.” Part of the idea of “Better” for David was a workplace in which individuals were given the tools to get the job done; not just the physical tools, but authority, independence, and responsibility to set priorities and to achieve the larger goals of the group. David believed passionately in the principle that people like to work, that work should be a source of happiness and pride, and that a happy workforce was also a productive one. He subscribed, too, to William Morris’ statement that art is the result of people’s joy in their work.

This book explains in simple terms and language the core principles that made David a successful manager, first in industry where he was in charge of Engineering Maintenance for Monsanto Chemical Company in Springfield, MA, and later at Mount Holyoke. His

hope was to write a book that would be useful for those who were newly responsible for overseeing others; his goal for the book was that it would be a useful tool to help them create a team of cooperative colleagues. His lifelong interest in management was centered in a philosophy of empowering the worker.

David passed away suddenly in early 2011, before this book was published. After his unexpected death many people who had worked with him reached out to say that he had been the best boss they had ever had. He believed that being a boss was fun, that it brought him closer to the people who worked with him, and that it offered a chance to make a difference for the better.

Carolyn Collette