



Leadership And Managing People

3 Ways to Grow Your Influence in a New Job

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Summary. Building relationships and learning how to influence downward, sideways, and upward is pivotal to your career success. When you land a new role or have just been promoted, it's easy to focus on achieving a quick win at the expense of building relationships with... [more](#)



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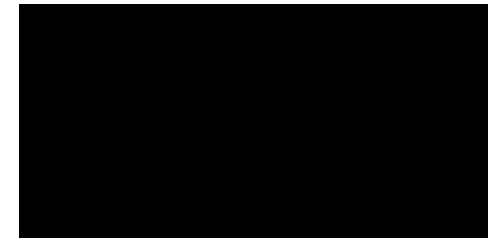
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When landing a leadership role at a new company or getting promoted into management, many of us wonder: How can I hit the ground running, add value, and be recognized?

The first order of business is often to show your capabilities by securing a quick, early win. You want to prove yourself, deliver results, and show your employer that they made the right choice by investing in your growth.

However, while [relentlessly pursuing success](#), it's easy to become overly focused on the outcome and forget about building important relationships with your team and colleagues. This can have negative [consequences on you as a leader](#), resulting in burned bridges, overworked people, and poor morale. In addition, failing to build strong relationships with your peers, direct reports, and upper management can diminish your ability to influence them, which is critical to doing your new job well.

One of the first lessons of becoming a leader or manager is realizing that you are now part of something bigger. The majority of your successes will be through the successes of others. Your job is to make sure your



colleagues are inspired enough to work towards your vision and do their jobs well under your leadership. But in order to accomplish this, you need to have influence, or the power to sway or motivate people to follow your lead, support your ideas, and prioritize the projects you care about and are responsible for.

Throughout our careers as executive coaches, we've seen that it is possible to focus on both results and relationships — in fact, the best leaders manage to do both. Here's how.

Start with building trust.

Before you can lead people, you need to form connections with them. This starts with building a foundation of trust. The fact that you've been selected for a leadership position is proof of the trust the company has in your capabilities as a professional who can get things done.

But in a management role, you are less of a doer, and more of an enabler pushing others to succeed. As such, you need to exercise a different type of leadership. Your direct reports, peers, and seniors need to trust your authenticity, your ability to empower them, and your empathy as someone who cares about them, their growth, and the company's growth. Only then, will those you lead be open to your influence. Only then will other leaders in the company equally trust your vision.

What you can do

As a new leader, you should prioritize meeting one on one with each of your direct reports and peers. Use this time to get to know them and ask questions like: What does success look like for you? What do you want to

be known as? How do you measure progress? Their answers will help you better understand their motivations, aspirations, and goals.

During these meetings, you should also be clear on your own goals and expectations so that your direct reports understand what success in their roles looks like. How do they fit into the larger company goals? You should provide them a roadmap for this. Also be sure to ask them: Do you have what you need to achieve your goals? How can I help? They need to know that you are looking out for them, respect their contribution, and will recognize them for a job well done.

Similar advice applies to meeting with more senior stakeholders within your organization. Come prepared with an elevator pitch — a succinct vision of what success looks like for the projects or initiatives you are asking other people to participate in. When you are presenting to others, be clear about your plans, as well as what your aspirations are as a manager and people developer. For example, you might say: My vision for this project is simple. We should strive to:

1. Deliver, on-time and within budget, meeting the goals we identified during the kickoff.
2. Be customer centric and establish a new test-and-learn approach that will allow us to pivot as needed.
3. Develop our ability to adapt to the changing landscape.

Be sure to ask these senior executives: What are the biggest risks and opportunities you see? What recommendations or advice do you have for me? Is there anything else I might be missing? Asking for advice and sharing this level of vulnerability will help you earn their respect. They need to know you value their expert opinion, are looking out for their

interests, and will share the success. With this shift, their level of trust increases, and so does your influence as a leader.

Be open to being influenced.

People at all levels want to know that they are relevant. Nothing sends a stronger signal than a person who is open to hearing and learning from the perspectives and opinions of others. In 360 interviews for our coaching clients, for instance, a frequent comment we hear is, “If I work with someone who cares about what I have to say, I will be more willing to express my opinion.” They want to work with a leader who has a growth mindset, a term coined by [author and researcher Carol Dweck](#).

To create an engaged team who wants to share their opinions, you first need to [manage yourself](#). As a leader, your role has shifted from problem-solver to influencer. You no longer need to have all the answers, your job is to enable and empower others to solve problems.

What you can do

[Listen more than you talk](#), especially when engaging in potentially difficult conversations. To be more present during meetings, put your phone in silent mode, and focus fully on the person you are speaking with. Ask clarifying questions like: What do you think of this approach? Is there another way to do this? Avoid using statements with “But” (“... but I’m not sure how this impacts xyz”), as this negates what has been said. Instead, formulate your concerns as a question like “Have you considered the impact of xyz?” or “How would you scale up that solution?”

It’s important to also know that you don’t have to have the last word on everything. The pursuit of a quick win might lead you to make many

decisions on your own. However, creating a culture that allows your team to express their ideas and propose suggestions will lead to better solutions. Asking for your team's opinions, being open to other alternatives, and listening to understand and expand your perspective sends the right leadership signal. It allows others to feel valued and engaged, thereby increasing your influence and effectiveness as a leader.



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Adapt your message to your audience.

To persuade and influence people, you need to win both hearts and minds. How you communicate with your team is key to accomplishing both. Most of us have a preferred method of communication that is specific to our style and tends to favor either the heart (like telling a story to make your point) or the mind (like providing lots of evidence to support your point). But you need to craft a message with your audience in mind to address their specific needs and ensure they hear what you are trying to say.

All too often, we've seen people focusing on the content they are sharing rather than on how they are delivering it. The reality is not everyone is motivated by feel-good messages or data alone.

What you can do

When getting to know your new boss, management team, or direct reports, ask them, “What is most important to you?” or “What does good look like to you?” Figure out their communication style, their behaviors, and the values behind those behaviors. You can start by asking: What drives you? What inspires you? What are you most proud of? Once you understand their motivations, you can customize and connect your message to those motivations, and your influence will increase substantially.

For example, if your boss has a reputation of a storyteller and big-idea thinker, they may want to hear first about innovative ideas and approaches that haven’t been done before. You should craft your message as a story that highlights out-of-the-box solutions and the overarching strategic impact it will have on the business. You should still cover updates on the financial impact and tactical execution of the project you are pitching to give them confidence everything is on track. But put yourself in your boss’ shoes and ask yourself: Is there a new creative way to tackle this problem? What is the big idea or story behind this process?

The pressure to make an impact and a great first impression by delivering results and quick wins will not disappear. However, the approach you set out to achieve these wins should shift to the people you work with. Building relationships and learning how to influence downward, sideways, and upward is pivotal to your career success. It will put you on a path of sustainable performance, while those who interact with you will feel trusted, included, connected, and engaged.



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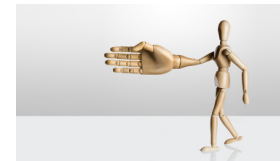
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