

Why We Still Need One-Minute Managers

How to reshape modern management, empower humanity, and unlock the hidden potential of the one-minute manager



Fabio Matricardi

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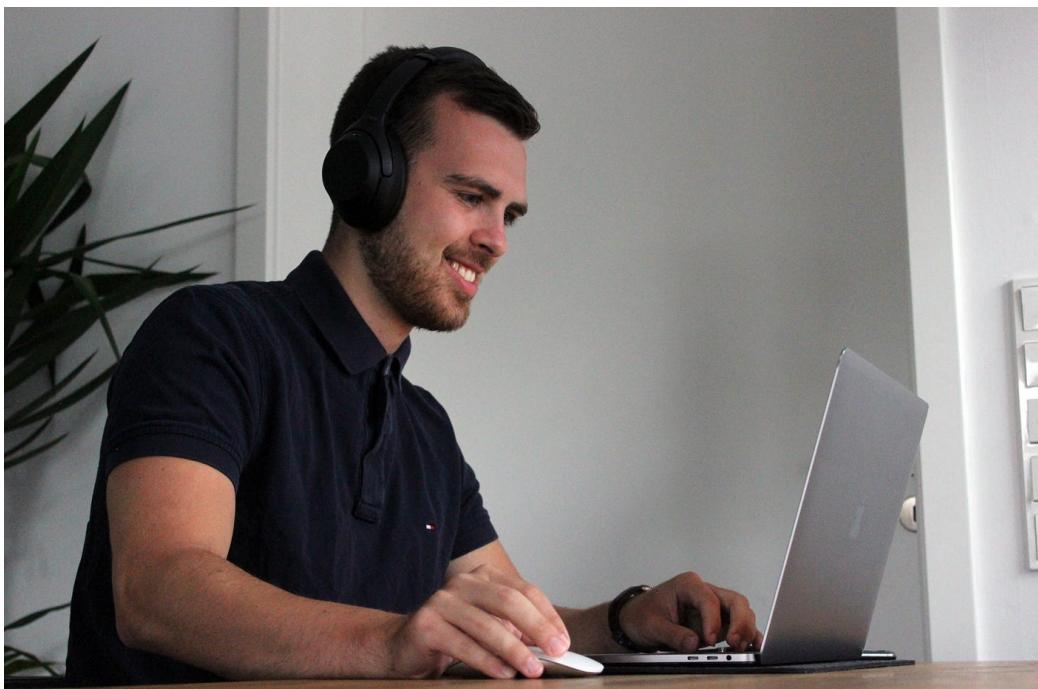


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Prologue

In this article, we will look at modern management without forgetting the lesson learned by the famous bestseller “The One Minute Manager.” *

- “One-Minute Manager”, the book
- The principles of the good manager
- To empower humans, you need to be an empowered human
- A checklist for the leaders we need now
- A new training workpack: key values for effective leadership

Our working environment may be tough or soft. Our tasks and role may be easy or complex, boring or challenging. In any of these scenarios, one thing

is in common: we have to deal with our line managers, and they have to deal with their manager... who also reports to the department head and so on, straight to the top in a never-ending chain.

AI has not yet replaced management. In my working experience, this is still a neutral statement. Technology has advanced to the point where AI can help us manage our work but cannot replace human leadership. And this can be true only if a manager is evaluated for their humanity, for the way they live their values and apply them when dealing with the people they are leading.

How can we make sure that such a manager is educated and trained? Let's look at the book "The One Minute Manager." It is a short book by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson that, after its first publication, became a New York Times bestseller, sold 15 million copies, and has been translated into more than 40 languages.



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One-Minute Manager, the Book

Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson introduced the concept of the One-Minute Manager in their book "The One Minute Manager" in 1982. The book became a bestseller and has remained popular ever since. The "One-Minute Manager" is a short and simple management style that focuses on three core principles: setting goals, praising progress, and redirecting behavior.

The book tells the story of a bright young man looking for an effective manager. This young man searched for an effective manager for many years, traveling to small towns and capital cities. He spoke to multiple types of managers: government officials, military officers, corporation executives, shop foremen, and foundation directors, among others.

He visited offices of all sizes and layouts and saw various management styles. However, he didn't always agree with what he observed. He witnessed "tough" managers who achieved success while their people did not, though their superiors thought they were good managers.

Sitting in the offices of the "tough people," the man asked them, "What kind of manager are you?" Answers varied slightly: "Autocratic," "Bottomline," "Hard-nosed," "Realistic," and "Profit-minded." He heard pride in their voices and a focus on results.

He also met "nice" managers whose people were successful, but some of whom had their doubts. Responding to the same question, they said they were "Democratic," "Participative," "Supportive," "Considerate," and "Humanistic," still with pride and a focus on people.

It disturbed him that managers seemed to prioritize either results or people. He thought autocratic and democratic managers were only partly effective, like being "half a manager."

The young man had searched far and wide for an effective manager but was still waiting. His only advantage was knowing what to look for: one who managed the organization and people in a way that benefited both. He heard stories of a special manager in a nearby town who had great results with those he worked with and was curious. He contacted the manager's secretary and was put through immediately. The manager agreed to see him anytime that week except Wednesday morning. Not expecting much, the young man went to see him.



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I think everyone can easily identify people they know from the brief introduction: we all have met “tough” managers obsessed with profits and results; they’re often autocratic and bossy. We also have met (or we still work with) managers who are supportive and focused on their people. We know that none of them can be great leaders because they are only partially effective.

While I suggest you read the book (it is very slim, easy to read, and has plenty of examples), I will describe the focal points. After that, I’ll provide some coordinates to navigate the book better.

Overall, “The One-Minute Manager” provides practical advice on becoming an effective manager by focusing on people, setting clear goals, providing feedback, and continuously improving performance. In a few points, here are the best takeaways to becoming a better leader:

1. Set One-Minute Goals: The book emphasizes the importance of setting clear, concise, and specific goals that can be accomplished in one minute. This approach helps to focus attention on what is important and provides a sense of achievement when goals are met.
2. Give One-Minute Praisings: The authors advocate for giving immediate and sincere praise for good performance. They suggest that praise should be specific, timely, and focused on the behavior rather than the person.
3. Provide One-Minute Reprimands: The book also discusses providing feedback when performance falls short of expectations. The authors suggest that reprimands should be immediate, specific, and focused on the behavior rather than the person.
4. Empower your team: The book highlights the importance of empowering team members by delegating responsibilities and providing them with the resources they need to succeed. This approach helps to build confidence, motivation, and a sense of ownership.
5. Build relationships: The authors emphasize the importance of building positive relationships with team members based on trust, respect, and open communication. This approach helps to foster a collaborative and supportive work environment.
6. Continuously improve: The book encourages continuous improvement by setting higher goals and challenging oneself and the team to improve performance. This approach helps to drive innovation, growth, and development.

What surprises me is the waterfall effect in the promotion and assignment to the positions. Imagine what organizational plan an autocratic manager have: they will try to forge the system to their image and values (profit over people, praised by their superiors). At the same time, a democratic manager will mold the organization, hoping that every person is considered (people over profit and praised by the employees).



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So there needs to be something fixed with the selection of the managers, but also with their training. If the only condition is an MBA or previous accomplishments in the company, the same mistakes will be repeated. But honestly, who can evaluate the values, ethics, and soft skills of another human?

You need to be already a better human, an empowered one, with communication skills not based only on procedures and matrix, if you want to be able to evaluate future managers. It is the honesty and integrity you have as a person, not the techniques you use, that are essential for building trust and credibility with others.

So how do we make sure managers are focused on the organization and people in a way that benefits both?

Despite the passage of time, the principles of the “One-Minute Manager” are still relevant and useful in modern management, and they can help us solve the riddle (how to manage the organization’s and the people's needs).

Here are a few reasons why we still need one-minute managers, those empowered humans who can manage both organization and people needs:

- The workforce is more diverse than ever, with different expectations and needs. One-minute managers can adapt to these differences and provide tailored management solutions.
- The pace of change is faster than ever before. One-minute managers can quickly adapt to changing circumstances and provide effective solutions.
- The competition is fiercer than ever before. One-minute managers can help organizations stay competitive by empowering their teams and continuously improving performance.
- The need for ethical and responsible management has never been greater. One-minute managers can lead by example and promote a culture of integrity and respect.

Overall, the “One-Minute Manager” principles provide a roadmap to becoming an effective manager who can balance the organization's and people's needs.

A Checklist for the Leaders We Need Now

With the help of the book, let's talk about some key points: we know from experience that this is what a good leader should do:

1. Time efficiency: The one-minute manager's approach allows managers to manage their employees quickly and efficiently without sacrificing results.
2. Employee motivation: The One Minute Manager's focus on praising progress can be a powerful motivator for employees. By giving employees regular feedback and recognition for their efforts, managers can help to boost their morale and job satisfaction.
3. Clear Communication: The one-minute manager's approach emphasizes clear and concise communication. By setting clear goals and expectations, and providing timely feedback, managers can help to ensure that everyone is on the same page and working towards the same objectives.
4. Flexibility: The one-minute manager's approach is adaptable to different management styles and situations. Managers can use the principles of the one-minute manager to manage employees in different departments, at different levels of experience, and with different personalities.

In summary, the principles of the one-minute manager are still relevant today because they offer a time-efficient, motivating, clear, and flexible

approach to management that can be adapted to different situations and styles.



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A New Training WorkPack: Key Values for Effective Leadership

If an MBA is not enough, what do we need to focus on to train today's effective leaders (or at least of tomorrow)? We need a new *curricula* that include psychological studies and self-improvement, and we also need new teachers, people who can evaluate and guide them.

I believe that these are the values and qualities required:

- Integrity: A leader must be honest, trustworthy, and transparent in their dealings with people.
- Empathy: A leader must understand and appreciate their employees' needs and respond with compassion and understanding.
- Vision: A leader must articulate a clear and compelling vision for the future and inspire people to work towards its achievement.
- Accountability: A leader must be accountable for their actions and decisions and willing to take responsibility for the outcomes.
- Collaboration: A leader must be able to work collaboratively with others and build strong relationships based on trust and respect.
- Innovation: A leader must be willing to think creatively. In today's fast-paced business environment, managers don't have much time to manage their employees.

If you want to put a quick reminder in your notebook or the desktop, here I summarized it in 50 words.

The One-Minute Manager Handbook

Setting Goals

- Set one-minute goals
- Make sure to have goals on a single page
- Review goals frequently

Praising Progress

- One-minute praisings
- Catch people doing something right
- Reprimand the behavior, not the person

Redirecting Behavior

- One-minute reprimands
- Reprimand immediately
- Reprimand the behavior, not the person

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