

# Be a Successful Manager

## Checklist



# Introduction

Chances are, you've come to Mind Tools because you've just got a new job as a manager. Or, maybe you've been given the task of pulling a new team together. Whatever the reason, congratulations, and enjoy the challenge!

We understand that the thought of managing other people can be daunting, but you and your team can thrive if you follow some well-proven strategies, and make some intelligent choices.

This checklist can help you to do that. It provides a quick and effective process for highlighting the key skills that you need to be a successful manager. These include:

- Understanding the importance of delegation.
- Motivating and developing your people.
- Identifying and avoiding some common managerial mistakes.

From this, you will develop an understanding of the skills and responsibilities involved in managing a team successfully, and move on to implementing strategies that will help you become a great manager.

Enjoy using this checklist!





# 1. Learning How to Delegate

One of a manager's top priorities is delegating effectively. No matter how skilled or experienced you are, you can't do everything on your own! You can accomplish so much more with a team behind you.

Successful delegation starts with matching people and tasks, so you need to explain what your team's roles and goals are. You can do this by creating a team charter, which will allow you to consider your team members' skills and competencies.

Once you know their individual strengths, you can begin matching them to the most appropriate tasks.

## ACTION

Using the worksheet on [page 8](#), list the tasks that need to be completed, and then decide whether they can be delegated, and who they could be delegated to.

# 2. Motivating Your People

Motivated people have a positive outlook, enjoy their work, and perform well. Managing an inspired and dedicated team is enormously rewarding. And aside from delivering high performance, motivated people will likely want to stay on your team – it's win-win for you, your team, and your organization!

There are two main types of motivation:

## Extrinsic Motivation:

This is when you use external factors such as pay raises, time off and bonuses to encourage your team members. It's not always positive things that can motivate people. Fear of losing your job can also be an extrinsic motivator.

## Intrinsic Motivation:

This is internal. It's about having a personal desire to overcome a challenge, or to produce high-quality work, for example. Intrinsically motivated people get a great deal of satisfaction and enjoyment from what they do.

Every team member is different, and will likely have different motivators. So, it's important to get to know your people as individuals, so that you can motivate each one of them successfully

#### TIP

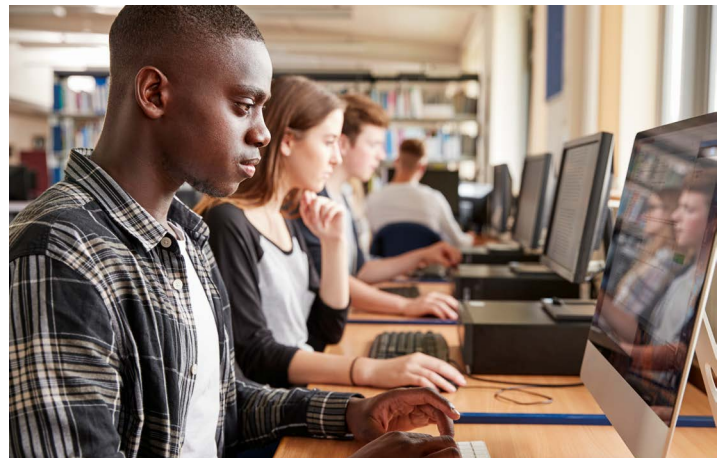
You can find out much more about motivation with our quiz, [How Good Are Your Motivation Skills?](#) This can help you learn a number of other core approaches to motivation, such as [Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory](#) and [Sirota's Three-Factor Theory](#).

## 3. Developing Talent

**Your team is made up of individuals who have different outlooks and abilities. Some may be new and need support, while others may be “old hands” looking for new opportunities to stretch their skills.**

Now it's your responsibility to develop them and, if you can help your people become better at what they do, you'll be a manager people aspire to work for, and you'll make a great contribution to your organization. Our article, [Developing Your Team](#), has tips and ideas for helping you to get the best from your people.

Remember, developing a team member involves more than just improving any areas of weakness. Instead, think about his or her strengths, and the potential he may have to reach the next level of performance.



#### ACTION

Draw up a simple development plan for each of your team members. You can start by filling in the “Developing Talent” template on the worksheet.

## 4. Communicating With Your Team

Communication skills are important in almost any role, but as a manager you will need to develop some particular techniques.

For instance, you'll need to be comfortable talking to groups of people, such as when chairing meetings, facilitating brainstorming sessions, or delivering presentations. Another key skill is knowing how to give your team members clear and effective feedback.

Also, you'll need to be prepared to do a lot of listening. You might think you know what other people are going to say, but you'll need to listen "actively" to avoid confusion and really understand what is being said.

### TIP

Chances are, you'll find a lot of your time is taken up with meetings of all kinds. Many of them will be important, but some will just drag on and devour your time. See our article, [Running Effective Meetings](#), for tips and strategies for keeping meetings as relevant and as brief as possible.

## 5. Communicating With Other People

You'll likely be the first point of contact for colleagues who want something from your team. Foremost among these will probably be your own manager, so take time to fully understand what she expects from you and your people. If you know what she wants, and how she prefers this to be delivered, you'll be better able to meet with her approval.

Part of your job is to look after your team and protect it from unreasonable pressure. Learn skills like [assertiveness](#) and [Win-Win Negotiation](#), so that you can either turn work away or negotiate additional resources.

### TIP

Take our quiz, [How Good Are Your Communication Skills?](#), to identify areas of your speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills that you can improve.

## 6. Dealing With Discipline



However much you hope it won't happen, there will likely come a time when you have to discipline one of your team members.

Discipline is different to the constructive criticism you give in your feedback to a team member. You can give feedback on his abrasive telephone manner or his poor relationships with colleagues, for example, but these may not become disciplinary issues, unless your feedback is ignored and these behaviors start to impact the rest of your team or its performance.

Obvious breaches of the law or of company policy are easy to identify and deal with (see our article, [Bad Behaviour at Work](#), for more on this). But things can get tricky when you have other situations to deal with. On the one hand you don't want to seem petty but, on the other hand, you can't ignore things that should be dealt with, such as poor timekeeping.

### ACTION

When you are faced with a potential disciplinary issue, take time to gather as much information as you can, decide what you're going to do, and act. Use the "Dealing With Discipline" worksheet to help you decide whether you need to take action.

## 7. Avoiding Management Pitfalls

There are a number of common mistakes that new managers tend to make. Making mistakes can be a valuable learning process, but “forewarned is forearmed,” so here are some traps you can avoid from the start.

- Failing to consult regularly with your manager, in a misguided attempt to show you can cope on your own.
- Approaching your boss without having thought a problem through, and without having considered how it could be solved.
- Doing anything that requires your boss to defend you to others. This can cause her to “lose face” with her peers.
- Failing to talk to your customers (whether internal or external) about what they want from your team.
- Using your authority inappropriately. Make sure that everything you ask people to do is in your organization’s interests.

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## Moving On...

This checklist is just a starting point for learning the skills you need to succeed as a manager. We have almost 300 team management articles and resources at Mind Tools, dedicated to helping you to become a better manager. You can explore them [here](#).

**We hope you rise to the challenge of managing your team, and we hope you enjoy this exciting stage of your career!**

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# Be a Successful Manager

## Worksheet

### 1. Learning How to Delegate

Task	Can this be delegated? (Y/N)	Who should it be delegated to?

### 2. Developing Talent

Name:	
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Knowledge or skills needed	Strengths	Skills Gap	Training Needs	Priority

### 3. Dealing with Discipline

Does the issue affect the quality of the team member's deliverable to the client?	
Does the issue impact adversely on the cohesiveness of the team?	
Does the issue unnecessarily undermine other team members' interests?	