HBR
FROM THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW
OnPoint

A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES

Save your rookie managers—before they destroy your company.

Rescue Your Rookie Managers

New sections to guide you through each article:

- ***The Idea in Brief***
- ***The Idea at Work***
- ***Exploring Further. . .***

PRODUCT NUMBER 2292

That brilliant, aggressive, young manager seemed perfect for your department's demanding new leadership position. But several months into his new role, he's teetering on the brink of professional ruin. His team's out of control, he's constantly putting out fires, and his best employees are fleeing.

Why is this scenario so common? Many of us promote rising stars into management before they're ready—because they excelled as individual performers *and* because we fear losing them to competitors. But then we often abandon them, expecting them to master the art of management on their own.

Individual and managerial work are worlds apart. One hinges on technical expertise; the other requires **emotional competencies** that come with time and maturity. These include negotiating with peers, regulating emotions during crises, and building support for change —not to mention patience and empathy.

This HBR OnPoint collection offers alternatives to the promote-and-abandon plan. A few examples: Keep ambitious young managers off fast tracks until they've gained more experience. Develop their persuasion and influencing skills with special cross-functional team assignments. And provide ongoing one-on-one coaching.

THE ARTICLES

"The Young and the Clueless" by Kerry A. Bunker, Kathy E. Kram, and Sharon Ting

Delay promoting your best and brightest, and you *may* lose them to competitors. But push them into the managerial pool before they're ready, and you just might wreak even *greater* havoc on your entire firm. Instead, build young managers' self-awareness by providing broad and deep 360-degree feedback. Expose them to diverse leadership styles through mentoring relationships outside the usual hierarchy. And give them special assignments outside their typical career paths where they have to master *negotiating*—rather than pulling rank.

"Saving Your Rookie Managers from Themselves" by Carol A. Walker

Walker introduces several more competencies crucial to young managers' success—including delegating, projecting confidence, and focusing on the big picture—and suggests ways to strengthen them. For example, to encourage delegating, send a clear message that developing staff is just as essential as financial achievements in your new managers' responsibilities. To help rookies project confidence, encourage "conscious comportment"—ongoing awareness of the image they're projecting. Let them vent their emotions—but in your office, behind closed doors. To encourage big-picture thinking, ask rookies strategic questions, such as "What marketplace trends could affect you in six months?" Request written plans documenting strategic goals *and* supporting actions.

"When a New Manager Stumbles, Who's at Fault?" by Gordon Adler

In this fictional case study, six commentators provide additional advice for helping new managers survive—and thrive. For example, clearly communicate your company's goals and expectations, including long-term strategy and values, to new managers. How? Explain what behaviors they'd demonstrate if their performance were outstanding. Build a near-term, concrete performance plan based on clear, easy-to-measure behaviors—then lay out the actions required to execute it. Reinforce the plan by observing performance and then commending or correcting as needed *in real time*, rather than waiting for formal performance reviews.

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ARTICLE

Do your rising stars a favor: Don't make them managers—yet.

The Young and the Clueless

by Kerry A. Bunker, Kathy E. Kram, and Sharon Ting

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PRODUCT NUMBER 2306

THE IDEA IN BRIEF

HELL-BENT on sabotaging your company? Then promote your brightest young professionals into your most demanding roles—especially when they threaten to leave unless you fast-track them. Nonsense, you say? Hardly.

Promoting talented young managers too quickly prevents them from developing key **emotional competencies**—such as negotiating with peers, regulating negative emotions during crises, and building support for change—skills that come only with time and experience.

Worse, many "young and clueless" managers lack patience, openness, and empathy—qualities more vital than raw intellect at top leadership levels, where business issues grow more complex and stakes are notoriously high.

Aggressive and insensitive, fast-tracked managers may pooh-pooh relationships with peers and subordinates—not realizing they *need* those connections to conquer problems. Issues become crises, defeating managers. Your company, customers, and employees all pay the price.

The solution? **Delay promotions** so managers can mature emotionally. This isn't easy. You must balance confrontation and support, patience and urgency—and risk losing your finest. But premature promoting carries far greater risks.

THE IDEA AT WORK

1. **Deepen 360-degree feedback.** Provide broad and deep feedback to help managers see themselves as others do—a must for building self-awareness. Give them verbatim written responses to open-ended questions from a wide variety of peers and subordinates, not just you. Managers may discount your views as biased or uninformed. Allow time for reflection and follow-up conversations.

EXAMPLE:
Though his business acumen was unmatched in his company, a brilliant 42-year-old VP neglected peer relationships, earning a reputation as detached. Corporate wondered if he could inspire staff to support important new strategies. After an in-depth 360-degree review, he began strengthening interpersonal connections.

2. **Interrupt the ascent.** To help managers learn to move others' hearts and minds, give them special assignments outside their typical career path. They'll *have* to master negotiation and influence skills, rather than relying on rank for authority.

EXAMPLE:
A quick-tempered regional sales director wasn't ready for promotion to VP. Her boss persuaded her to lead a year-long team investigating cross-selling opportunities. She learned to use persuasion to win other division managers' support, building solid relationships. Now a VP, she's perceived as a well-connected manager who can negotiate on her team's behalf.

3. **Act on your commitment.** If you've warned managers that promotion depends on emotional competencies, follow through. These competencies are *not* optional.

EXAMPLE:
A conflict-averse senior VP managed his own group well but avoided collaborative situations, where the potential for conflict increased. Exploring external alliances, the firm considered collaboration vital. The CEO demoted him, temporarily pulling him from the succession plan. Assigned to a cross-functional team project, he learned to handle disputes and build consensus. He's back on track.

4. **Institutionalize personal development.** Make it clear that success at your company hinges on emotional competence.

EXAMPLE:
One CEO articulated corporate values emphasizing continual learning, including asking for help. He created incentives encouraging such behaviors and built emotional-skills requirements into the firm's succession planning. Known for learning and growing, the firm attracts and retains talented young executives.

5. **Cultivate informal networks.** Encourage managers to forge mentoring relationships outside the usual hierarchy. They'll encounter diverse leadership styles and viewpoints, gain opportunities for reflection—and mature emotionally.

He's a rising star. He's also arrogant and unseasoned. Denying him that promotion might be the best thing you could do for his career – and your company.

The Young and the Clueless

by Kerry A. Bunker, Kathy E. Kram, and Sharon Ting

In many ways, 36-year-old Charles Armstrong is a natural leader. He's brilliant, creative, energetic, aggressive – a strategic and financial genius. He's risen quickly through the ranks due to his keen business instincts and proven ability to deliver bottom-line results, at times jumping from one organization to another to leapfrog through the hierarchy. But now his current job is on the line. A division president at an international consumer products company, he's just uncovered a major production setback on a heavily promoted new product. Thousands of orders have been delayed, customers are furious, and the company's stock price has plummeted since the news went public.

Worse, the crisis was utterly preventable. Had Armstrong understood the value of building relationships with his peers and had his subordinates found him approachable, he might have been able to appreciate the cross-functional challenges of developing this particular product. He might have learned of the potential delay months earlier instead of at the eleventh hour. He could have postponed a national advertising campaign and set expectations with investors. He might have even found a way to solve the problems and launch the product on time. But despite his ability to dazzle his superiors with talent and intellect, Armstrong is widely viewed by his peers and subordinates as self-promoting, intolerant, and remote. Perhaps worse, he's only half aware of how others perceive him, and to the extent he does know, he's not terribly concerned. These relationships are not a priority for him. Like so many other talented young managers, Armstrong lacks the emotional competencies that would enable him to work more effectively as part of a team. And now his bosses seem to have unwittingly undermined his career, having promoted him too quickly, before he could develop the relationship skills he needs.

Most executives seek out smart, aggressive people, paying more attention to their accomplishments than to their emotional maturity.

Break the Pattern

What happened with Charles Armstrong is an increasingly common phenomenon. In the past ten years, we've met dozens of managers who have fallen victim to a harmful mix of their own ambition and their bosses' willingness to overlook a lack of people skills. (As with all the examples in these pages, we've changed Armstrong's name and other identifying features to protect our clients' identities.) Indeed, most executives seek out smart, aggressive people, paying more attention to their accomplishments than to their emotional maturity. What's more, they know that their strongest performers have options–if they don't get the job they want at one company, they're bound to get it somewhere else. Why risk losing them to a competitor by delaying a promotion?

The answer is that promoting them can be just as risky. Putting these unseasoned managers into positions of authority too quickly robs them of the opportunity to develop the emotional competencies that come with time and experience – competencies like the ability to negotiate with peers, regulate their emotions in times of crisis, or win support for change. Bosses may be delighted with such managers' intelligence and passion – and may even see younger versions of themselves – but peers and subordinates are more likely to see them as arrogant and inconsiderate, or, at the very least, aloof. And therein lies the problem. At some point in a young manager's career, usually at the vice president level, raw talent and determined ambition become less important than the ability to influence and persuade. And unless senior executives appreciate this fact and make emotional competence a top priority, these high-potential managers will continue to fail, often at significant cost to the company.

Research has shown that the higher a manager rises in the ranks, the more important soft leadership skills are to his success.[1] Our colleagues at the Center for Creative Leadership have found that about a third of senior executives derail or plateau at some point, most often due to an emotional deficit such as the inability to build a team or regulate their own emotions in times of stress. And in our combined 55 years of coaching and teaching, we've seen firsthand how a young manager risks his career when he fails to develop emotional competencies. But the problem isn't youth per se. The problem is a lack of emotional maturity, which doesn't come easily or automatically and isn't something you learn from a book. It's one thing to understand the importance of relationships at an intellectual level and to learn techniques like active listening; it's another matter entirely to develop a full range of interpersonal competencies like patience, openness, and empathy. Emotional maturity involves a fundamental shift in self-awareness and behavior, and that change requires practice, diligence, and time.

Armstrong's boss admits that he may have promoted the young manager too soon: "I was just like Charles when I was his age, but I was a director, not a division president. It's easier to make mistakes and learn when you aren't in such a big chair. I want him to succeed, and I think he could make a great CEO one day, but sometimes he puts me at risk. He's just too sure of himself to listen." And so, in many cases, executives do their employees and the company a service by delaying the promotion of a young manager and giving him the chance to develop his interpersonal skills. Interrupting the manager's ascent long enough to round out his experience will usually yield a much more effective and stable leader.

This article will look at five strategies for boosting emotional competencies and redirecting managers who are paying a price for damaged or nonexistent relationships. The strategies aren't terribly complicated, but implementing them and getting people to change their entrenched behaviors can be very difficult. Many of these managers are accustomed to receiving accolades, and it often isn't easy for them to hear–or act on–difficult mes-

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sages. You may have to satisfy yourself with small victories and accept occasional slipups. But perhaps the greatest challenge is having the discipline to resist the charm of the young and the clueless – to refrain from promoting them before they are ready and to stay the course even if they threaten to quit.

Deepen 360-Degree Feedback

With its questionnaires and standardized rating scales, 360-degree feedback as it is traditionally implemented may not be sufficiently specific or detailed to get the attention of inexperienced managers who excel at bottom-line measures but struggle with more subtle relationship challenges. These managers will benefit from a deeper and more thorough process that includes time for reflection and follow-up conversations. That means, for example, interviewing a wider range of the manager's peers and subordinates and giving her the opportunity to read verbatim responses to open-ended questions. Such detailed and extensive feedback can help a person see herself more as others do, a must for the young manager lacking the self-awareness to understand where she's falling short.

We witnessed this lack of self-awareness in Bill Miller, a 42-year-old vice president at a software company – an environment where technical ability is highly prized. Miller had gone far on pure intellect, but he never fully appreciated his own strengths. So year after year, in assignment after assignment, he worked doubly hard at learning the complexities of the business, neglecting his relationships with his colleagues as an unintended consequence. His coworkers considered his smarts and business acumen among the finest in the company, but they found him unapproachable and detached. As a result, top management questioned his ability to lead the type of strategic change that would require motivating staff at all levels. Not until Miller went through an in-depth 360-degree developmental review was he able to accept that he no longer needed to prove his intelligence – that he could relax in that respect and instead work on strengthening his personal connections. After months of working hard to cultivate stronger relationships with his employees, Miller began to notice that he felt more included in chance social encounters like hallway conversations.

Art Grainger, a 35-year-old senior manager at a cement and concrete company, was generally considered a champion by his direct reports. He was also known for becoming defensive whenever his peers or superiors questioned or even discussed his unit's performance. Through 360-degree reviews, he discovered that while everyone saw him as committed, results-oriented, and technically brilliant, they also saw him as overly protective, claiming he resisted any action or decision that might affect his department. Even his employees felt that he kept them isolated from the rest of the company, having said he reviewed all memos between departments, didn't invite people from other parts of the company to his department's meetings, and openly criticized other managers. Only when Grainger heard that his staff agreed with what his bosses had been telling him for years did he concede that he needed to change. Since then, he has come to see members of other departments as potential allies and has tried to redefine his team to include people from across the company.

It's worth noting that many of these smart young managers aren't used to hearing criticism. Consequently, they may discount negative feedback, either because the comments don't mesh with what they've heard in previous conversations or because their egos are so strong. Or they may conclude that they can "fix" the problem right away – after all, they've been able to fix most problems they've encountered in the past. But developing emotional competencies requires practice and ongoing personal interactions. The good news is that if you succeed in convincing them that these issues are career threatening, they may apply the same zeal to their emotional development that they bring to their other projects. And that's why 360-degree feedback is so valuable: When it comes from multiple sources and is ongoing, it's difficult to ignore.

Interrupt the Ascent

When people are continually promoted within their areas of expertise, they don't have to stray far from their comfort zones, so they seldom need to ask for help, especially if they're good problem solvers. Accordingly, they may become overly independent and fail to cultivate relationships with people who could be useful to them in the future. What's more, they may rely on the authority that comes with rank rather than learning how to influence people. A command-and-control mentality may work in certain situations, particularly in lower to middle management, but it's usually insufficient in more senior positions, when peer relationships are critical and success depends more on the ability to move hearts and minds than on the ability to develop business solutions.

We sometimes counsel our clients to broaden young managers' skills by assigning them to cross-functional roles outside their expected career paths. This is distinct from traditional job rotation, which has employees spending time in different functional areas to enhance and broaden their knowledge of the business. Rather, the manager is assigned a role in which he doesn't have much direct authority. This will help him focus on developing other skills like negotiation and influencing peers.

Consider the case of Sheila McIntyre, a regional sales director at a technology company. McIntyre had been promoted quickly into the managerial ranks because she consistently outsold her colleagues month after month. In her early thirties, she began angling for another promotion–this time, to vice president–but her boss, Ron Meyer, didn't think she was ready. Meyer felt that McIntyre had a quick temper and little patience for people whom she perceived as less visionary. So he put the promotion on hold, despite McIntyre's stellar performance, and created a yearlong special assignment for her–heading a team investigating cross-selling opportunities. To persuade her to take the job, he not only explained that it would help McIntyre broaden her skills but promised a significant financial reward if she succeeded, also hinting that the hoped-for promotion would follow. It was a stretch for McIntyre. She had to use her underdeveloped powers of persuasion to win support from managers in other divisions. But in the end, her team presented a brilliant cross-selling strategy, which the company implemented over the following year. More important, she developed solid relationships with a number of influential people throughout the organization and learned a lot about the value of others' insights and experiences. McIntyre was eventually promoted to vice president, and to Meyer's satisfaction, her new reports now see her not just as a superstar salesperson but as a well-connected manager who can negotiate on their behalf.

Such cross-functional assignments – with no clear authority or obvious ties to a career path – can be a tough sell. It's not easy to convince young managers that these assignments are valuable, nor is it easy to help them extract relevant knowledge. If the managers feel marginalized, they may not stick around. Remember Bill Miller, the vice president who had neglected his emotional skills in his zeal to learn the business? While he was successful in some of his early informal attempts to build relationships, he was confused and demoralized when his boss, Jerry Schulman, gave him a special assignment to lead a task force reviewing internal processes. Miller had expected a promotion, and the new job didn't feel "real." Schulman made the mistake of not telling Miller that he saw the job as an ideal networking opportunity, so Miller began to question his future at the company. A few months into the new job, Miller gave his notice. He seized an opportunity – a step up – at an arch-rival, taking a tremendous amount of talent and institutional knowledge with him. Had Schulman shared his reasoning with Miller, he might have retained one of his most valuable players – one who had already seen the importance of developing his emotional competence and had begun to make progress.

Act On Your Commitment

One of the reasons employees get stuck in the pattern we've described is that their bosses point out deficits in emotional competencies but don't follow through. They either neglect to articulate the consequences of continuing the destructive behavior or make empty threats but proceed with a promotion anyway. The hard-charging young executive can only conclude that these competencies are optional.

A cautionary tale comes from Mitchell Geller who, at 29, was on the verge of being named partner at a law firm. He had alienated many of his peers and subordinates over the years through his arrogance, a shortcoming duly noted on his yearly performance reviews, yet his keen legal mind had won him promotion after promotion. With Geller's review approaching, his boss, Larry Snow, pointed to heavy attrition among the up-and-coming lawyers who worked for Geller and warned him that further advancement would be contingent on a change in personal style. Geller didn't take the feedback to heart – he was confident that he'd get by, as he always had, on sheer talent. And true to form, Snow didn't stick to his guns. The promotion came through even though Geller's behavior hadn't changed. Two weeks later, Geller, by then a partner responsible for managing client relationships, led meetings with two key accounts. Afterward, the first client approached Snow and asked him to sit in on future meetings. Then the second client withdrew his business altogether, complaining that Geller had refused to listen to alternative points of view.

Contrast Geller's experience with that of 39-year-old Barry Kessler, a senior vice president at an insurance company. For years, Kessler had been heir apparent to the CEO due to his strong financial skills and vast knowledge of the business – that is, until John Mason, his boss and the current CEO, began to question the wisdom of promoting him.

While Kessler managed his own group exceptionally well, he avoided collaboration with other units, which was particularly important as the company began looking for new growth opportunities, including potential alliances with other organizations. The problem wasn't that Kessler was hostile, it was that he was passively disengaged – a flaw that hadn't seemed as important when he was responsible only for his own group. In coaching Kessler, we learned that he was extremely averse to conflict and that he avoided situations where he couldn't be the decision maker. His aversions sharply limited his ability to work with peers.

Mason sent a strong signal, not only to Kessler but to others in the organization, when he essentially demoted Kessler by taking away some of his responsibilities and temporarily pulling him from the succession plan. To give Kessler an opportunity to develop the skills he lacked, Mason asked him to lead a cross-functional team dedicated to finding strategic opportunities for growth. Success would require Kessler to devote more time to developing his interpersonal skills. He had no authority over the other team members, so he had to work through disputes and help the team arrive at a consensus. Two years

Think Before Promoting

It's not unusual for a star performer to be promoted into higher management before he's ready. Yes, he may be exceptionally smart and talented, but he may also lack essential people skills. Rather than denying him the promotion altogether, his boss might do well to delay it–and use that time to help develop the candidate's emotional competencies. Here's how.

Deepen 360-Degree Feedback. Go beyond the usual set of questionnaires that make up the traditional 360-degree-feedback process. Interview a wide variety of the manager's peers and subordinates and let him read verbatim responses to open-ended performance questions.

Interrupt the Ascent. Help the inexperienced manager get beyond a command-and-control mentality by pushing him to develop his negotiation and persuasion skills. Instead of promoting him, give him cross-functional assignments where he can't rely on rank to influence people.

Act On Your Commitment. Don't give the inexperienced manager the impression that emotional competencies are optional. Hold him accountable for his interpersonal skills, in some cases taking a tough stance by demoting him or denying him a promotion, but with the promise that changed behaviors will ultimately be rewarded.

Institutionalize Personal Development. Weave interpersonal goals into the fabric of the organization and make emotional competence a performance measure. Also work to institute formal development programs that teach leadership skills and facilitate self-awareness, reflection, and opportunities to practice new emotional competencies.

Cultivate Informal Networks. Encourage the manager to develop informal learning partnerships with peers and mentors in order to expose him to different leadership styles and perspectives. This will provide him with honest and ongoing feedback and continual opportunities to learn.

later, Kessler reports that he is more comfortable with conflict and feedback, and he's worked his way back into the succession plan.

By the way, it's counterproductive to hold managers to a certain standard of behavior without showing that the same standard applies to everyone, right up to top management. In many cases, that means acknowledging your own development goals, which isn't easy. One CEO we worked with, Joe Simons, came to realize during 360-degree feedback and peer coaching that his personal style was interfering with his subordinates' growth. Simons had declared innovation a corporate priority, yet his fear of failure led him to micromanage his employees, stifling their creativity. To stop this pattern and express his newfound commitment to improving his relationship skills, he revealed his personal goals–to seek advice more regularly and to communicate more openly–to his direct reports. He promised to change specific behaviors and asked for the team's feedback and support in this process. Going public with these goals was tough for Simons, a private person raised on traditional command-and-control leadership. Admitting that he needed to change some behaviors felt dangerously weak to him, especially given that the company was going through a difficult time and employees were looking to him for assurance, but his actions made his new priorities clear to employees.

Simons's candor won people's trust and respect, and over the course of many months, others in the company began to reflect more openly on their own emotional skills and engage in similar processes of personal development. Not only did his relationships with his direct reports improve, but Simons became a catalyst and model for others as well. He told us of an encounter with Gwen Marshall, the company's CFO and one of Simons's direct reports. Marshall was concerned about a new hire who wasn't coming up to speed as quickly as she had hoped–he was asking lots of questions and, she felt, not taking enough initiative. She had just snapped at him at the close of a meeting, and he'd looked surprised and angry. In speaking to Simons about the incident, however, she acknowledged that her impatience was perhaps unfair. He was, after all, new to the job. What's more, the nature of finance demanded precise thinking and a thorough knowledge of the business. Marshall ended the conversation by saying she would apologize to the new employee. Simons was surprised at Marshall's comments–he was used to seeing her simply blow off steam and move on to the next task. But possibly due to Simons's example, she had become more attuned to the importance of her own emotional competence. Such reflection has become a habit among Simons's team–a change that has enhanced personal relationships and increased the team's overall performance.

Institutionalize Personal Development

One of the most effective ways to build managers' emotional competencies is to weave interpersonal goals into the fabric of the organization, where everyone is expected to demonstrate a specific set of emotional skills and where criteria for promotion include behaviors as well as technical ability. A built-in process will make it easier to uncover potential problems early and reduce the chances that people identified as needing personal development will feel singled out or unfairly held back. Employees will know exactly what's expected of them and what it takes to advance in their careers.

Here's a case in which institutionalizing personal development was extremely effective: Mark Jones is an executive who was tapped for the CEO job at a major manufacturing company on the condition that he engage a coach because of his reputation for being too blunt and aggressive. A yearlong coaching relationship helped Jones understand the pitfalls associated with his style, and he decided that others could benefit from arriving at such an understanding far earlier in their careers. To that end, he launched several major initiatives to shape the company culture in such a way that personal and professional learning were not only encouraged but expected.

First, he articulated a new set of corporate values and practices that were based on meeting business objectives and developing top-notch leadership skills. One of the values was "Dare to be transparent," which meant that all employees, especially those in senior leadership roles, were expected to be open about their weaknesses, ask for help, and offer honest, constructive feedback to their peers. Knowing that it would be necessary to create incentives and rewards for these new behaviors, Jones took an active role in the review and personal-development goals of the company's top 100 executives, and he mandated that all employees' performance plans incorporate specific actions related to developing their own emotional competencies. Jones also made emotional skills a key qualification in the search for a successor – a requirement that many organizations pay lip service to. Many of them often overvalue raw intellect and depth of knowledge, largely because of the war for talent, which has resulted in a singular focus on hiring and retaining the best and brightest regardless of their emotional competence. Finally, Jones created a new position, corporate learning officer; he and the CLO partnered with a nearby university to create a learning institute where corporate executives could teach in and attend leadership programs. Jones himself is a frequent lecturer and participant in the various courses.

Through all these actions, Jones has made it clear that employees need to make continual learning and emotional development a priority. He's also emphasized that everyone from the CEO on down is expected to set goals for improving personal skills. Since implementing the program, he is finding it easier to attract and retain talented young executives – indeed, his organization has evolved from a recruiter's nightmare to a magnet for young talent. It is becoming known as a place where emerging leaders can find real opportunities to learn and grow.

We worked with another company where the senior management team committed to developing the emotional competencies of the company's leaders. The team first provided extensive education on coaching to the HR department, which in turn supervised a program whereby top managers coached their younger and more inexperienced colleagues. The goal was to have both the experienced and inexperienced benefit: The junior managers provided feedback on the senior people's coaching skills, and the senior people helped foster emotional competencies in their less-experienced colleagues.

The results were encouraging. Wes Burke, an otherwise high-performing manager, had recently been struggling to meet his business targets. After spending time with Burke and conferring with his subordinates and peers, his coach (internal to the organization) came to believe that, in his zest to achieve his goals, Burke was unable to slow down and listen to other people's ideas. Burke wasn't a boor: He had taken courses in communication and knew how to fake listening behaviors such as nodding his head and giving verbal acknowledgments, but he was often distracted and not really paying attention. He never accepted this feedback until one day, while he was walking purposefully through the large operations plant he managed, a floor supervisor stopped him to discuss his ideas for solving an ongoing production problem. Burke flipped on his active-listening mode. After uttering a few acknowledgments and saying, "Thanks, let's talk more about that," he moved on, leaving the supervisor feeling frustrated and at a loss for how to capture his boss's interest. As it happened, Burke's coach was watching. He pulled the young manager aside and said, "You didn't hear a word Karl just said. You weren't really listening." Burke admitted as much to himself and his coach. He then apologized to Karl, much to the supervisor's surprise. Keeping this incident in mind helped Burke remember the importance of his working relationships. His coach had also helped him realize that he shouldn't have assumed his sheer will and drive would somehow motivate his employees. Burke had been wearing people down, physically and psychologically. A year later, Burke's operation was hitting its targets, an accomplishment he partially attributes to the one-on-one coaching he received.

Cultivate Informal Networks

While institutionalized programs to build emotional competencies are critical, some managers will benefit more from an informal network of relationships that fall outside the company hierarchy. Mentoring, for example, can help both junior and senior managers further their emotional development through a new type of relationship. And when the mentoring experience is a positive one, it often acts as a springboard to a rich variety of relationships with others throughout the organization. In particular, it gives junior managers a chance to experience different leadership styles and exposes them to diverse viewpoints.

Sonia Greene, a 32-year-old manager at a consulting firm, was hoping to be promoted to principal, but she hadn't raised the issue with her boss because she assumed he didn't think she was ready, and she didn't want to create tension. She was a talented consultant with strong client relationships, but her internal relationships were weak due to a combination of shyness, an independent nature, and a distaste for conflict, which inhibited her from asking for feedback. When her company launched a mentoring program, Greene signed up, and through a series of lengthy conversations with Jessica Burnham, a partner at the firm, she developed new insights about her strengths and weaknesses. The support of an established player such as Burnham helped Greene become more confident and honest in her development discussions with her boss, who hadn't been aware that Greene was willing to receive and act on feedback. Today, Greene is armed with a precise understanding of what she needs to work on and is well on her way to being promoted. What's more, her relationship with Burnham has prompted her to seek out other connections, including a peer group of up-and-coming managers who meet monthly to share experiences and offer advice to one another.

Peer networking is beneficial to even the most top-level executives. And the relationships needn't be confined within organizational boundaries. Joe Simons, a CEO we mentioned earlier, wanted to continue his own personal development, so he cultivated a relationship with another executive he'd met through our program. The two men have stayed in touch through regular e-mails and phone calls, keeping their discussions confidential so they can feel free to share even the most private concerns. They also get together periodically to discuss their goals for personal development. Both have found these meetings invaluable, noting that their work relationships have continued to improve and that having a trustworthy confidant has helped each avoid relapsing into old habits during times of stress.

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Delaying a promotion can be difficult given the steadfast ambitions of the young executive and the hectic pace of organizational life, which makes personal learning seem like an extravagance. It requires a delicate balance of honesty and support, of patience and goading. It means going against the norm of promoting people almost exclusively on smarts, talent, and business results. It also means contending with the disappointment of an esteemed subordinate.

But taking the time to build people's emotional competencies isn't an extravagance; it's critical to developing effective leaders. Give in to the temptation to promote your finest before they're ready, and you're left with executives who may thrive on change and demonstrate excellent coping and survival skills but who lack the self-awareness, empathy, and social abilities required to foster and nurture those strengths in others. MBA programs and management books can't teach young executives everything they need to know about people skills. Indeed, there's no substitute for experience, reflection, feedback, and, above all, practice.

1. In his HBR articles "What Makes a Leader?" (November–December 1998) and "Primal Leadership: The Hidden Driver of Great Performance" (with Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, December 2001), Daniel Goleman makes the case that emotional competence is the crucial driver of a leader's success.

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ARTICLES

***Best of HBR on Leadership: Emotionally Intelligent Leadership* (HBR OnPoint Collection, December 2001, Product no. 8156)**
This collection takes a closer look at the importance of **emotional intelligence** (EI)—that potent blend of self-management and relationship skills that even the most technically brilliant top-level manager needs to do his most crucial work: getting things done through others.

Three articles show how managers can improve their EI: In "What Makes a Leader?", Daniel Goleman sets the stage by defining the five EI components. In "Leadership That Gets Results," he explains how to mix and match those components as organizational circumstances dictate. In "Primal Leadership: The Hidden Driver of Great Performance," Goleman and his coauthors reveal how managers can project the positive energy that inspires others to excel.

"Why Entrepreneurs Don't Scale" by John Hamm (*Harvard Business Review*, December 2002, Product no. R0212J)
One of the biggest "aha's" smart, ambitious young managers experience is realizing that the talents that worked so well for them as individual contributors aren't nearly as valuable in the realm of management. Hamm sheds light on this phenomenon by examining the **transition process** by which entrepreneurs shift from launching a new business to managing a growing concern.

Like "young and clueless" managers, entrepreneurs initially succeed by their ability to execute tough tasks and their single-mindedness. But when their company is up and running, the capacity to delegate and to inspire others, along with other emotional competencies, becomes far more crucial. Hamm offers insights that can help *your* bright new managers make this vital transformation.

"A Better Way to Deliver Bad News" by Jean-François Manzoni (*Harvard Business Review*, September 2002, Product no. 1776)
This article focuses on the **feedback process** so essential to shaping brash young managers' emotional maturation. In particular, Manzoni describes a common pitfall many executives stumble into while correcting errant managers: initiating the conversation without considering alternative explanations for problem behavior, assuming a win-lose outcome, and rigidly maintaining irrelevant assumptions.

The culprit behind this pitfall? Two biases: 1) *The fundamental attribution error*: We attribute problem behavior to character ("Jeremy's not delegating because he's too controlling") versus circumstances (maybe he is delegating, but his subordinates have some other ax to grind). 2) *The false consensus effect*: We assume that others see situations as we do, and fail to revise our assumptions during feedback sessions. Manzoni describes a more open-minded, flexible—and productive—way to deliver corrective feedback.

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FROM THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

HBR OnPoint

ARTICLE

Why do so many new managers falter?

No one taught them Management 101.

Saving Your Rookie Managers from Themselves

by Carol A. Walker

New sections to guide you through the article:

- ***The Idea in Brief***
- ***The Idea at Work***
- ***Exploring Further. . .***

PRODUCT NUMBER 9691

THE IDEA IN BRIEF

YOU'VE wisely promoted a top performer into management. Six months later, this rising star has fallen hard: He's overwhelmed, fearful, not respected by his staff. Why?

You probably promoted him based on his technical competence—then expected him to learn management skills by osmosis.

But he didn't grasp the real challenges of management—for example, empowering others versus striving for personal achievement. Insecure about asking for help, he turned inward. His team's morale plummeted; productivity faltered.

How to save your erstwhile star? Help him master delegating, thinking strategically, and communicating—basic skills that trip up *most* new managers.

THE IDEA AT WORK

ESSENTIAL management skills for rookie managers:

Delegating. Under pressure to produce, rookies often "just do it" themselves because they fear losing control or overburdening others. But failure to delegate blocks their staffs' advancement, making them resentful, and then disengaged.

How to help:
- Explain that developing staff is *as* essential as financial achievements.
- Lead by example. Trust and empower your rookie; he'll engage his *own* team.
- Encourage him to take small risks in playing to his staff's strengths. Early successes will build his confidence.
- Help him break complex projects into manageable chunks with clear milestones.

Getting support from above. Many rookie managers believe they're in servitude to bosses, not in partnership. To avoid seeming vulnerable, they don't ask for help. But if they don't see you as a critical support source, they won't see *themselves* as one for their team.

How to help:
- Emphasize that open communication is essential to your rookie's success. Discourage covering up problems.
- Introduce him to other managers as resources.
- Have *him* prepare agendas for your regular meetings. The process will help him organize his thoughts.

Projecting confidence. Rookies who don't project confidence won't energize their teams. Frantic, arrogant, or insecure demeanors may repel others in the company.

How to help:
- Encourage "conscious comportment": constant awareness of the image your rookie is projecting.
- Let him express his feelings—but in your office, behind closed doors.
- Keep him from undermining his own authority; e.g., by pushing an initiative only because top management requested it. Walk through the process of presenting an initiative persuasively, ensuring he can *own* the message—not just deliver it.

Focusing on the big picture. Many rookie managers let fire fighting eclipse strategic initiatives. Fire fighting *feels* productive—but it doesn't teach teams to handle challenges themselves or think strategically.

How to help:
- Explain that strategic thinking will constitute more of your rookie's work as his career advances.
- Help him focus on the long-term, big picture. Ask strategic questions; e.g., "What marketplace trends are you seeing that could affect you in six months?"
- Request written plans documenting strategic goals as well as concrete, supporting actions.

Giving constructive feedback. Most rookies dread correcting staffers' inadequate performance. But avoidance costs managers their credibility.

How to help:
- Explain that constructive feedback strengthens staffers' skills.
- Role-play giving feedback about behaviors, not personalities.

You've promoted your star performer into management. Now help him avoid the classic errors that beginners so often make.

Saving Your Rookie Managers from Themselves

by Carol A. Walker

TOM EDELMAN, like a million freshly minted managers before him, had done a marvelous job as an individual contributor. He was smart, confident, forward thinking, and resourceful. His clients liked him, as did his boss and coworkers. Consequently, no one in the department was surprised when his boss offered him a managerial position. Tom accepted with some ambivalence – he loved working directly with clients and was loath to give that up – but on balance, he was thrilled.

Six months later, when I was called in to coach Tom (I've disguised his name), I had trouble even picturing the confident insider he once had been. He looked like a deer caught in the headlights. Tom seemed overwhelmed and indeed even used that word several times to describe how he felt. He had started to doubt his abilities. His direct reports, once close colleagues, no longer seemed to respect or even like him. What's more, his department had been beset by a series of small crises, and Tom spent most of his time putting out these fires. He knew this wasn't the most effective use of his time, but he didn't know how to stop. These problems hadn't yet translated into poor business results, but he was in trouble nonetheless.

His boss realized that he was in danger of failing and brought me in to assist. With support and coaching, Tom got the help he needed and eventually became an effective manager. Indeed, he has been promoted twice since I worked with him, and he now runs a small division within the same company. But his near failure – and the path that brought him to that point – is surprisingly typical. Most organizations promote employees into managerial positions based on their technical competence. Very often, however, those people fail to grasp how their roles have changed – that their jobs are no longer about personal achievement but instead about enabling others to achieve, that sometimes driving the bus means taking a backseat, and that building a team is often more important than cutting a deal. Even the best employees can have trouble adjusting to these new realities. That trouble may be exacerbated by normal insecurities that make rookie managers hesitant to ask for help, even when they find themselves in thoroughly unfamiliar territory. As these new managers internalize their stress, their focus becomes internal as well. They become insecure and self-focused and cannot properly support their teams. Inevitably, trust breaks down, staff members are alienated, and productivity suffers.

Many companies unwittingly support this downward spiral by assuming that their rookie managers will somehow learn critical management skills by osmosis. Some rookies do, to be sure, but in my experience they're the exceptions. Most need more help. In the absence of comprehensive training and intensive coaching–which most companies don't offer–the rookie manager's boss plays a key role. Of course, it's not possible for most senior managers to spend hours and hours every week overseeing a new manager's work, but if you know what typical challenges a rookie manager faces, you'll be able to anticipate some problems before they arise and nip others in the bud.

Delegating

Effective delegation may be one of the most difficult tasks for rookie managers. Senior managers bestow on them big responsibilities and tight deadlines, and they put a lot of pressure on them to produce results. The natural response of rookies when faced with such challenges is to "just do it," thinking that's what got them promoted in the first place. But their reluctance to delegate assignments also has its roots in some very real fears. First is the fear of losing stature: If I assign high-profile projects to my staff members, they'll get the credit. What kind of visibility will I be left with? Will it be clear to my boss and my staff what value I'm adding? Second is the fear of abdicating control: If I allow Frank to do this, how can I be sure that he will do it correctly? In the face of this fear, the rookie manager may delegate tasks but supervise Frank so closely that he will never feel accountable. Finally, the rookie may be hesitant to delegate work because he's afraid of overburdening his staff. He may be uncomfortable assigning work to former peers for fear that they'll resent him. But the real resentment usually comes when staff members feel that lack of opportunity is blocking their advancement.

Signs that these fears may be playing out include new managers who work excessively long hours, are hesitant to take on new responsibilities, have staff members who seem unengaged, or have a tendency to answer on behalf of employees instead of encouraging them to communicate with you directly.

The first step toward helping young managers delegate effectively is to get them to understand their new role. Acknowledge that their job fundamentally differs from an individual contributor's. Clarify what you and the organization value in leaders. Developing talented, promotable staff is critical in any company. Let new managers know that they will be rewarded for these less tangible efforts in addition to hitting numerical goals. Understanding this new role is half the battle for rookie managers, and one that many companies mistakenly assume is evident from the start.

After clarifying how your rookie manager's role has changed, you can move on to tactics. Perhaps it goes without saying, but you should lead by example. You have the responsibility to empower the rookie who works for you and do what you can to help him overcome his insecurities about his value to the organization. You can then assist him in looking for opportunities to empower and engage his team.

One young manager I worked with desperately needed to find time to train and supervise new employees. His firm had been recently acquired, and he had to deal with high staff turnover and new industrywide rules and regulations. The most senior person on his staff–a woman who had worked for the acquiring company–was about to return from an extended family leave, and he was convinced that he couldn't ask her for help. After all, she had a part-time schedule, and she'd asked to be assigned to the company's largest client. To complicate matters, he suspected that she resented his promotion. As we evaluated the situation, the manager was able to see that the senior staffer's number one priority was reestablishing herself as an important part of the team. Once he realized this, he asked her to take on critical supervisory responsibilities, balanced with a smaller client load, and she eagerly agreed. Indeed, she returned from leave excited about partnering with her manager to develop the team.

When a new manager grumbles about mounting workloads, seize the opportunity to discuss delegation. Encourage him to take small risks initially, playing to the obvious strengths of his staff members. Asking his super-organized, reliable assistant to take the lead in handling the logistics of a new product launch, for example, is much less risky than asking a star salesperson, unaccustomed to this sort of detailed work, to do it. Early successes will build the manager's confidence and willingness to take progressively larger risks in stretching each team member's capabilities. Reinforce to him that delegation does not mean abdication. Breaking a complex project into manageable chunks, each with clearly defined milestones, makes effective follow-up easier. It's also important to schedule regular meetings before the project even begins in order to ensure that the manager stays abreast of progress and that staff members feel accountable.

Getting Support from Above

Most first-time managers see their relationship with their boss more as one of servitude than of partnership. They will wait for you to initiate meetings, ask for reports, and question results. You may welcome this restraint, but generally it's

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a bad sign. For one thing, it puts undue pressure on you to keep the flow of communication going. Even more important, it prevents new managers from looking to you as a critical source of support. If they don't see you that way, it's unlikely that they will see themselves that way for their own people. The problem isn't only that your position intimidates them; it's also that they fear being vulnerable. A newly promoted manager doesn't want you to see weaknesses, lest you think you made a mistake in promoting her. When I ask rookie managers about their relationships with their bosses, they often admit that they are trying to "stay under the boss's radar" and are "careful about what [they] say to the boss."

Some inexperienced managers will not seek your help even when they start to founder. Seemingly capable rookie managers often try to cover up a failing project or relationship – just until they can get it back under control. For example, one manager I worked with at a technology company hired a professional 20 years her senior. The transition was rocky, and, despite her best efforts, the individual wasn't acclimating to the organization. (The company, like many in the technology sector, was very youth oriented.) Rather than reaching out to her boss for help, the manager continued to grapple with the situation alone. The staff member ultimately resigned at the busiest time of the year, and the young manager suffered the dual punishment of being understaffed at the worst possible moment and having it known that she had lost a potentially important contributor.

What's the boss of a rookie manager to do? You can begin by clarifying expectations. Explain the connection between the rookie's success and your success, so that she understands that open communication is necessary for you to achieve your goals. Explain that you don't expect her to have all the answers. Introduce her to other managers within the company who may be helpful, and encourage her to contact them as needed. Let her know that mistakes happen but that the cover-up is always worse than the crime. Let her know that you like to receive occasional lunch invitations as much as you like to extend them.

Lunch and drop-by meetings are important, but they usually aren't enough. Consider meeting regularly with a new manager – perhaps weekly in the early stages of a new assignment, moving to biweekly or monthly as her confidence builds. These meetings will develop rapport, provide you with insight into how the person is approaching the job, and make the new manager organize her thoughts on a regular basis. Be clear that the meetings are her time and that it's up to her to plan the agenda. You're there to ask and answer questions and to offer advice. The message you send is that the individual's work is important to you and that you're a committed business partner. More subtly, you're modeling how to simultaneously empower and guide direct reports.

Projecting Confidence

Looking confident when you don't feel confident – it's a challenge we all face, and as senior managers we're usually conscious of the need when it arises. Rookie managers are often so internally focused that they are unaware of this need or the image they project. They are so focused on substance that they forget that form counts, too. The first weeks and months on the job are a critical time for new leaders to reach out to staff. If they don't project confidence, they are unlikely to inspire and energize their teams.

I routinely work with new managers who are unaware that their everyday demeanor is hurting their organizations. In one rapidly growing technology company, the service manager, Linda, faced high levels of stress. Service outages were all too common, and they were beyond her control. Customers were exacting, and they too were under great pressure. Her rapidly growing staff was generally inexperienced. Distraught customers and employees had her tied up in knots almost daily. She consistently appeared breathless, rushed, and fearful that the other shoe was about to drop. The challenge was perhaps too big for a first-time manager, but that's what happens in rapidly growing companies. On one level, Linda was doing an excellent job keeping the operation going. The client base was growing and retention was certainly high–largely as a result of her energy and resourcefulness. But on another level, she was doing a lot of damage.

Linda's frantic demeanor had two critical repercussions. First, she had unwittingly defined the standard for acceptable conduct in her department, and her inexperienced staff began to display the same behaviors. Before long, other departments were reluctant to communicate with Linda or her team, for fear of bothering them or eliciting an emotional reaction. But for the company to arrive at real solutions to the service problems, departments needed to openly exchange information, and that wasn't happening. Second, Linda was not portraying herself to senior managers as promotion material. They were pleased with her troubleshooting abilities, but they did not see a confident, thoughtful senior manager in the making. The image Linda was projecting would ultimately hold back both her career and her department.

Not all rookie managers display the problems that Linda did. Some appear excessively arrogant. Others wear their self-doubt on their sleeves. Whether your managers appear overwhelmed, arrogant, or insecure, honest feedback is your best tool. You can help rookie managers by telling them that it's always safe to let out their feelings–in your office, behind closed doors. Reinforce just how long a shadow they cast once they assume leadership positions. Their staff members watch them closely, and if they see professionalism and optimism, they are likely to demonstrate those characteristics as well. Preach the gospel of conscious comportment – a constant awareness of the image one is projecting to the world. If you observe a manager projecting a less-than-positive image, tell that person right away.

You should also be alert to new managers who undermine their own authority. Linda made another classic rookie mistake when she attempted to get her staff members to implement an initiative that her boss had come up with. In presenting the initiative, she let her team know it was important to implement because it had come from the division's senior vice president. While her intentions were good – rallying the team to perform – her words encouraged the group to focus attention above her rather than on her. There is no quicker way for a rookie manager to lose credibility with her staff than to appear to be a mouthpiece for senior management. Pointing out that senior management will be checking up on the initiative certainly won't hurt, but the rookie manager must take care never to be perceived simply as the messenger.

Just-in-time coaching is often the most effective method for showing rookie managers how to project confidence. For instance, the first time you ask a new manager to carry out an initiative, take a little extra time to walk her through the process. Impress upon her the cardinal rule of management: Your staff members don't necessarily have to like you, but they do need to trust you. Ensure that the new manager owns the message she's delivering.

Layoffs are a classic example of a message the rookie manager will struggle with. Don't allow a rookie to proceed half-prepared. Share as much information as you can. Make sure she's ready for all the likely questions and reactions by asking her to do an informal dry run with you. You might be surprised by how poorly she conveys the message in her first few attempts. A little practice may preserve the image of your manager and your company.

Focusing on the Big Picture

Rookie managers have a real knack for allowing immediate tasks to overshadow overarching initiatives. This is particularly true for those promoted from within, because they've just come from the front lines where they're accustomed to constant fire fighting. As a recent individual contributor armed with plenty of technical know-how, the rookie manager instinctively runs to the immediate rescue of any client or staff member in need. The sense of accomplishment rookies get from such rescues is seductive and far more exhilarating than rooting out the cause of all the fire fighting. And what could be better for team spirit than having the boss jump into the trenches and fight the good fight?

Of course, a leader shows great team spirit if he joins the troops in emergencies. But are all those emergencies true emergencies? Are newer staff members being empowered to handle complex challenges? And if the rookie manager is busy fighting fires, who is thinking strategically for the department? If you're the senior manager and these questions are popping into your head, you may well have a rookie manager who doesn't fully understand his role or is afraid to seize it.

I recently worked with a young manager who had become so accustomed to responding to a steady flow of problems that he was reluctant to block off any time to work on the strategic initiatives we had identified. When I probed, he revealed that he felt a critical part of his role was to wait for crises to arise. "What if I schedule this time and something urgent comes up and I disappoint someone?" he asked. When I pointed out that he could always postpone his strategy sessions if a true emergency arose, he seemed relieved. But he saw the concept of making time to think about the business as self-indulgent – this, despite the fact that his group was going to be asked to raise productivity significantly in the following fiscal year, and he'd done nothing to prepare for that reality.

Senior managers can help rookies by explaining to them that strategic thinking is a necessary skill for career advancement: For first-time managers, 10% of the work might be strategic and 90% tactical. As executives climb the corporate ladder, however, those percentages will flip-flop. To be successful at the next level, managers must demonstrate that they can think and act strategically. You can use your regularly scheduled meetings to help your managers focus on the big picture. Don't allow them to simply review the latest results and move on. Ask probing questions about those results. For example, "What trends are you seeing in the marketplace that could affect you in two quarters? Tell me how your competition is responding to those same trends." Don't let them regale you with the wonderful training their staffs have been getting without asking, "What additional skills do we need to build in the staff to increase productivity by 25% next year?" If you aren't satisfied with your managers' responses, let them know that you expect them to think this way – not to have all the answers, but to be fully engaged in the strategic thought process.

Rookie managers commonly focus on activities rather than on goals. That's because activities can be accomplished quickly (for example, conducting a seminar to improve the sales staff's presentation skills), whereas achieving goals generally takes more time (for example, actually enhancing the sales staff's effectiveness). The senior manager can help the rookie manager think strategically by asking for written goals that clearly distinguish between the goals and their supporting activities. Insisting on a goal-setting discipline will help your new (and not-so-new) managers to organize their strategic game plans. Critical but soft goals, such as staff development, are often overlooked because they are difficult to measure. Putting such goals in print with clear action steps makes them concrete, rendering a sense of accomplishment when they are achieved and a greater likelihood that they will be rewarded. Managers with clear goals will be less tempted to become full-time tacticians. Just as important, the process will help you ensure that they are thinking about the right issues and deploying their teams effectively.

Giving Constructive Feedback

It's human nature to avoid confrontations, and most people feel awkward when they have to correct others' behavior or actions. Rookie managers are no exception, and they often avoid addressing important issues with their staff. The typical scenario goes something like this: A staff member is struggling to meet performance goals or is acting inappropriately in meetings. The manager sits back, watches, and hopes that things will magically improve. Other staff members observe the situation and become frustrated by the manager's inaction. The manager's own frustration builds, as she can't believe the subordinate doesn't get it. The straightforward performance issue has now evolved into a credibility problem. When the manager finally addresses the problem, she personalizes it, lets her frustration seep into the discussion with her staff member, and finds the recipient rushing to defend himself from attack.

Most inexperienced managers wait far too long to talk with staff about performance problems. The senior manager can help by creating an environment in which constructive feedback is perceived not as criticism but as a source of empowerment. This begins with the feedback you offer to your managers about their own development. It can be as simple as getting them to tell you where their weaknesses are before they become problematic. After a good performance review, for example, you might say to your new manager, "By all accounts, you have a bright future here, so it's important that we talk about what you *don't* want me to know. What are you feeling least confident about? How can we address those areas so that you're ready for any opportunity that arises?" You'll probably be surprised by how attuned most high performers are to their own development needs. But they are not likely to do much about them unless you put those needs on the table.

More than likely, the feedback your managers have to offer their staffs will not always be so positive or easy to deliver. The key is to foster in them the desire to help their reports achieve their goals. Under those circumstances, even loathsome personal issues become approachable.

One of my clients managed a high-performing senior staff member who was notably unhelpful to others in the department and who resented her own lack of advancement. Instead of avoiding the issue because he didn't want to tell the staff member that she had a bad attitude, the senior manager took a more productive approach. He leveraged his knowledge of her personal goals to introduce the feedback. "I know that you're anxious for your first management role, and one of my goals is to help you attain that. I can't do that unless I'm completely honest with you. A big part of management is developing stronger skills in your staff. You aren't demonstrating that you enjoy that role. How can we can work together on that?" No guilt, no admonishment – just an offer to help her get what she wanted. Yet the message was received loud and clear.

A brainstorming session this client and I had about ways to offer critical feedback led to that approach. Often, brainstorming sessions can help rookie managers see that sticky personal issues can be broken down into straightforward business issues. In the case of the unhelpful senior staff member, her attitude didn't really need to enter the discussion; her actions did. Recommending a change in action is much easier than recommending a change in attitude. Never forget the old saw: You can't ask people to change their personalities, but you can ask them to change their behaviors.

Indeed, senior managers should share their own techniques for dealing with difficult conversations. One manager I worked with became defensive whenever a staff member questioned her judgment. She didn't really need me to tell her that her behavior was undermining her image and effectiveness. She did need me to offer her some techniques that would enable her to respond differently in the heat of the moment. She trained herself to respond quickly and earnestly with a small repertoire of questions like, "Can you tell me more about what you mean by that?" This simple technique bought her the time she needed to gather her thoughts and engage in an interchange that was productive rather than defensive. She was too close to the situation to come up with the technique herself.

• • •

Delegating, thinking strategically, communicating – you may think this all sounds like Management 101. And you're right. The most basic elements of management are often what trip up managers early in their careers. And because they are the basics, the bosses of rookie managers often take them for granted. They shouldn't – an extraordinary number of people fail to develop these skills. I've maintained an illusion throughout this article – that only rookie managers suffer because they haven't mastered these core skills. But the truth is, managers at all levels make these mistakes. An organization that supports its new managers by helping them to develop these skills will have surprising advantages over the competition.

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ARTICLES

Purposeful Managers (HBR OnPoint Collection, Product no. 8962)

Your rookies aren't the only managers faltering on the job. According to one article in this collection, as many as 90% of *all* managers fail to carry out their primary responsibilities: creating and implementing strategy and fueling innovation. Why? They lack focus and energy, avoid complex challenges in favor of busywork, and don't delegate. These articles offer powerful antidotes to all three problems:

- **"Beware the Busy Manager" by Heike Bruch and Sumantra Ghoshal:** By giving your rookie managers meaningful challenges and letting *them* decide how to meet them, you impart *focus* and *energy*—two essential ingredients they'll need to define their goals and take personal responsibility for their new role.
- **"Managers Can Avoid Wasting Time" by Ronald N. Ashkenas and Robert H. Schaffer:** To resist the lure of busywork and fire fighting, rookies need the confidence to tackle *big* challenges. Help them by demonstrating how to break huge, ill-defined projects into manageable pieces that focus on bottom-line, quickly achievable results.
- **"Management Time: Who's Got the Monkey?" by William Oncken, Jr., and Donald L. Wass:** To help new managers delegate to and develop their team (instead of accumulating more and more subordinates' problems on their backs), explain the five levels of initiative they can expect from staffers, and how to respond to each.

"The Set-Up-to-Fail Syndrome" by Jean-François Manzoni and Jean-Louis Barsoux (*Harvard Business Review*, March–April 1998, Product no. 861X)

By letting your rookie manager stumble into the job without sufficiently mastering management skills, you risk activating the set-up-to-fail syndrome: He inevitably slips up (e.g., failing to delegate), and you start questioning his performance. You begin micromanaging him, and *he* starts doubting himself. He stops giving his best, confirming your worst suspicions—so you tighten the screws further.

To avoid this destructive dynamic, understand how set-up-to-fail starts with *your* own perceptions. Then take steps to either prevent the syndrome from kicking in—or reverse it through honest dialogue and clear expectations.

"The Executive as Coach" by James Waldroop and Timothy Butler (*Harvard Business Review*, November–December 1996, Product no. 5343)

An effective way to ensure that your recently promoted top performer *stays* on top as a new manager? Coach him: meet with him regularly to help him change behaviors (e.g., avoiding all confrontation with subordinates) that threaten to derail his career and hurt your company.

Coaching takes time and discipline, but it also pays big dividends. This article explains how to assess the seriousness and source of your rookie's problematic behavior, introduce the idea of coaching to him, and use role-playing and other coaching techniques.

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FROM THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW
OnPoint

ARTICLE

Promoting your top performers—and then abandoning them to the perils of management?

When a New Manager Stumbles, Who's at Fault?

by Gordon Adler

New sections to guide you through the article:

- ***The Idea in Brief***
- ***The Idea at Work***
- ***Exploring Further. . .***

PRODUCT NUMBER 2314

THE IDEA IN BRIEF

A RISING corporate star has fallen: Thanks to his success as a sales rep at Bulwark Securities, Rafferty Goldstone (a character in this HBR case study) was promoted to manager. But six months later, his best reps are leaving, his team's barely making quota, and he's floundering in oceans of paperwork. His boss has granted him one week to explain how he plans to turn things around.

Though Rafferty is fictional, his plight is all too real—and common. Why? Many executives wrongly assume that talented individual contributors will master management on their own. They promote them, then abandon them. Or, they use the "sink-or-swim" managerial-development method: Throw promising candidates into the "pool." Nurture those who show some swimming ability. Let the others drown.

Either approach exacts a huge toll on managers, their teams, and their entire company. Ill prepared for the realities of their role, nascent managers soon founder under waves of crises.

Six experts comment on Rafferty's fate. Their advice offers a lifeline for any firm struggling to cultivate strong new managers.

THE IDEA AT WORK

THE most successful companies hold senior executives accountable for acquiring, coaching, and mentoring managerial talent. To help *your* new managers swim, not sink:

Ask yourself pointed questions *before* promoting a talented individual performer. For example, "Is there a match between the individual's skills and motivations and the company's needs?" Many aspiring managers think the role is about power, prestige, and money. It isn't: It's about getting things done through others in ways that meet the company's needs. Does this decidedly less glamorous picture appeal to that star you'd love to promote? Find out now—not later.

Be crystal clear about your company's goals and expectations. Once you've promoted rising stars, establish and communicate your performance expectations. For example, show new managers what behaviors they'd demonstrate if their performance were outstanding. Train them to meet those expectations, evaluate their performance against those expectations, and follow up with commendations or corrections.

Also, explain your company's big-picture strategy, values, and productivity standards. Tell new managers what their days should look like and how they should budget their time. Help them focus their teams on your company's future.

Start training early—then keep it up. Ever wished you could give would-be managers a taste of the role—without risk? You can: Challenge them to repair a damaged customer relationship, organize a conference, design and deliver a training course, or coordinate a new product-line launch. Once they're promoted, don't stop at a one-week, theory-based orientation seminar. Offer ongoing training that teaches specific skills.

Provide constant one-on-one coaching and performance assessment. Build a near-term, concrete performance plan based on clear, easy-to-measure behaviors—then lay out the actions to execute it. Every day, observe rookies' behavior, commend successes, and correct flaws—in real time. Don't wait for formal performance reviews.

Encourage new managers to build mentoring networks. Mentors and role models from other parts of the company can serve as valuable sounding boards for new managers struggling with their role.

Bulwark Securities' new managers get a five-pound policy manual. They need a lot more.

When a New Manager Stumbles, Who's at Fault?

by Gordon Adler

Everything was fine until Paul MacKinley, my manager at the Minneapolis, Minnesota, branch of Bulwark Securities, waved me down in the parking lot. It was June 1995. He was standing directly in the bright sun, so I had to squint to make out his features. "Goldstone," he said, "there's a management slot opening up in the Framingham, Massachusetts, branch."

I parked the car and found him ten minutes later, hunched over a spreadsheet. MacKinley cared about the bottom line, you had to give him that. He was fond of saying, Just do your job and don't saddle me with lawsuits. He looked up at me. "If my memory serves me right, Goldstone [he never called me Rafferty], you've got an M.B.A. from Kellogg, eight years under your belt as a sales rep, and you've been at play in the fields of management, so to speak."

"Uh-huh, I've been coordinator of the Centurion Graphics account, I was Frank Arnold's mentor, and I was a member of the task force for improving sales calls."

MacKinley nodded. "Management's where it's at–power, prestige, money. Are you 40 yet?"

"Thirty-eight."

"Good, young enough to want it bad, and too young to know better."

My father used to say leaders are born, not made. I'd wanted to test his theory for a long time – find out what it was like to take charge. For some time, I had resented MacKinley hounding me about quotas and compliance; after all, I'd been one of the top three reps, averaging $300,000 per year. I dreamt of having MANAGER on my door. My view back in 1995 was this: I understand sales and the Bulwark line of products. I understand reps. That's all it takes.

That night, my wife, Jane, said that she wasn't sure it was a good thing for us or for Jamie, our son. I remember her exact words. *I don't want to be married to a 45-year-old heart patient.* I tried to bring her around by telling her that Framingham was my hoop dream, maybe my only chance to make the move into management. I could try out my own management philosophy: Do unto the reps as you would have

PHOTO: DONOVAN REESE/TONY STONE WORLDWIDE done unto you. She said we didn't need the hassle. I told her it wouldn't be any hassle – branch manager was nothing more than being lead sales rep, only with more sway and liability. The numbers'll be a cakewalk.

I think often of the image of management I had eight months ago, an image I talked about only to Jane. It's always there, a searing reminder. It's still the only image of management that I like, the only one in which I can picture myself. It's amazing I could have been so wrong.

I signed my new contract on June 30, and on July 17 they flew me and 11 other green dreamers out to Bulwark headquarters in San Francisco for five days of management orientation. It was college all over again. Three hundred pages of theory: strategic analysis, product positioning, performance evaluation, diagnosing personnel problems, setting expectations, delegating, coaching, feedback. A marketing guy told us that customers had been clamoring for better quality and service. Spinnaker Invest, our major competitor in the full-service market, had already jumped on the bandwagon, and now Bulwark was repositioning itself as well. He said corporate expected us to unleash our new investment products like the Assurance Funds and, most important, the Plus Service Account. I remember thinking, Great, I'll be spending more time on the key accounts.

On the last afternoon, Bulwark's CEO, Christopher Woodbone, made an appearance. He bestowed on each of us a five-pound policy manual with our names embossed in one-carat gold. When he shook my hand, he gave me a grave look and said, "Apply it scrupulously, follow the Bulwark Commandments, and you won't be kicking off from the end zone." Afterward there was an exchange of cards. Jim Slake, head of human resources, clapped me on the back and told me to call him anytime. I had met him during the interview process; he had said the same thing then. He also told me his only management handicap was that he couldn't tell a teaspoon from a tee shot. I said, "I don't play golf, so I don't have to worry about my handicap." It seemed funny at the time.

I spent the last two weeks in Minneapolis messing with details – prepping the guys who would be taking on my accounts, bickering with the real estate agent who was selling our house, arguing with the Country Properties lady who would be showing us around the suburbs west of Boston. Then we pulled up stakes and took a few days off to settle in. Finally, I drove over to my new office. It took me the entire weekend of August 26 and 27 to set it up. When I was a rep, my desk was strewn with scraps of paper, forms, a Rolodex, pictures of my kid, pictures by my kid, a cactus, I didn't care. Now the placement of everything seemed so momentous. The desk was a gargantuan problem. I finally settled on facing it out the window. For head-to-heads, I bought a conference table and four Wassily chairs. I parked the policy manual and the other five pounds of training stuff on my shelf. (Every time I look at it, I wonder if anybody ever uses it. Reading policy manuals doesn't prepare you for real-life jams. And what was I supposed to say in the middle of a conversation with a sales associate – "Excuse me, let me look this up in the manual so I can find out the politically correct way to respond to you"?)

A few days later, I got a card from MacKinley. Good luck, Goldstone. *My commandments: 50% people development, 30% sales and product leadership, 30% administrative compliance. Right – 110%.* I had no idea what he meant.

On Wednesday, August 30, Gloria Ludlow dropped in. She's my regional director. We exchanged chitchat for about 20 minutes, then she declared, "I'm not going to ask questions on expenses: You can do whatever you want, but you'll be accountable. You're not being evaluated on how well you produce. It's all in how your reps do."

I told her the reps were already cracking jokes about the Plus Service Account. They weren't exactly enamored of the investment counseling part. Her reply? "You sell Woodbone's policy, you hit quota." I didn't want to contradict her, but I just couldn't stop myself from blurting out that reps sell what they know, and I'd rather not shove the PSA down their throats. She raised an eyebrow. "Rafferty, call me if you need to talk. Don't wait until there's a crisis." I thought, What crisis?

It dawned on me that I'd seen all the sales reps as clones of myself.

My first official day was Tuesday, September 5. I was so nervous in the morning that I just filed papers, joked around with the support staff, and asked the reps to come by one by one in the afternoon.

Around 1 o'clock, right in the middle of my egg salad, my youngest rep, Juba Puckett, came in. I told her I'd read her updates and thought she should change her strategy for the Cummaquid account. It felt like my first ten minutes of real management. I was smiling like a banshee until she pointed out that I had egg on my tie.

The rest of the afternoon, I asked the reps questions about their goals, ambitions, product ideas, suggestions. Exactly what I always wished MacKinley'd asked me. Three reps wanted to know how I'd pulled off my promotion, a few said they just wanted to be left alone to do their jobs, others really wanted to know my expectations. The interviews went okay, except that as the afternoon dragged on, it dawned on me that I'd seen them all as clones of myself – my motivations, my talents. No way was I prepared for their individuality.

At around 5:30, Bill Durkee came by and apologized for his falling sales. He was having problems at

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The management slot in Framingham, Massachusetts, was Goldstone's hoop dream.

home. Durkee's a real nice guy: On the secretaries' birthdays, he brings them orchids that he breeds in his garage. I told him it's tough to balance work with family. When his lips started quivering, I went into a big brother act. "Bill, you know you can come by anytime." He thanked me profusely and shook my hand.

The first weeks whizzed by. It was like driving late at night in a rainstorm, and suddenly you realize you have no memory of the last ten miles. I was poring over the details of the Plus Service Account. (For the reps, the program meant changing how they helped clients with assets of less than $5,000.) At orientation, Slake had recommended that we hold off on the first sales meeting until we'd gotten the feel of the branch. I had this gnawing feeling it was time to show them who was in charge, so I called the first one for Thursday, September 28. I'll never forget that day.

I sent the reps a survey: Each one checked the box, Manager Should Spend More Time with Me.

I started with the new commandments: profit, service, compliance. I told them about a minor skirmish I'd had with legal – Puckett had had some problems, so I'd chewed out one of the junior lawyers. It was spooky: They were all staring at me, and a few were actually taking notes. Ten minutes into my sermon, Tony Skrow shouldered into the room.

Take Brando's voice, Nicholson's laugh, add a pinch of Donald Trump, and you've got Tony Skrow. The top performer. He'd been so good for 15 years that there had been rumors, never substantiated, that he was churning his accounts.

He stood at the door, and for a half minute or so, the only sound was his huffing. I was about to repeat my spiel about easing off on our sales pressure when he launched his first strike at me.

He said, "Hey, I'm into traditional investment management. I'm about as interested in insurance, tax minimization, retirement annuities, real estate – except my own, of course – as I am in Tofutti. I don't make $400,000 a year advising Granny Clampett what to buy with the $5,000 life savings she's got in a tomato can."

While Skrow bellowed on, I heard Durkee and Puckett giggling like a couple of delinquent high schoolers in the corner by the drinking fountain. I had a feeling they'd checked up on me, and they knew I was only the second or third performer in Minneapolis.

I cleared my throat. "Not everybody's interested in money and personal gain." Skrow crouched down like Joe Louis and rasped, "I don't like money, actually, but it quiets my nerves."

I pointed out that whether he liked it or not, Bulwark was moving into service. Skrow boomed, "And profit. Without us heavy producers, the company would be nowhere."

I knew I had to do something to counter the damage, so I sent a survey to the reps. One hundred percent checked the box: Manager Should Spend More Time with Me. In the space for comments, they wrote that I shouldn't peer over their shoulders about compliance. Thirty percent were satisfied with my direction; 35% were neutral; 35% wanted more. How was I supposed to deal with that? In San Francisco, they'd told us to set sales and team-leader agendas. I began to wish that Jim Slake and his whole human resources department were working down the hall.

PHOTO: JUDY ROYSTER

By Columbus Day, 30 reps were vying for most of my time, and the rest was being eaten up by system crashes, conflagrations between reps, and head-on collisions with clients. I felt like I was drowning in waves of potentially relevant information. I found myself making notes on strategic plans at the dinner table and reading budgets at 3 A.M.

One Friday at about 5:30, I really felt like calling somebody. Someone who could help me sort this out. Gloria Ludlow seemed like a natural choice. I picked up the phone. She had years of experience and MacKinley'd told me she was on the way up, express. Still, she was an unknown. She set the quotas. She had her own agenda. And this didn't feel like "keeping her informed." I put the phone back in its cradle and left.

To get control of my days, I bought a deluxe master planner. The owner's manual says, *Don't let irrelevant people and topics interrupt your schedule. Get control of your time. And yourself.* The very next day, between 7:10 and 5:55, I had 41 disjointed conversations that lasted anywhere from ten seconds to 20 minutes. Walking from my desk to the men's room, the only place I seemed to get any peace, I played conversation tag – a pregnant wife, a herniated disk, Durkee's problem client in London, the new training program for the Assurance funds, a malfunctioning keyboard, a call to the guys in Tucson about a loan. My assistant tried to prioritize my time. Too big a job.

Since July, corporate had come up with a wide array of new products. I was raised on stocks and bonds, and now we were talking about derivatives, trusts, even precious metals. My one area of expertise was rapidly becoming my greatest area of ignorance. If you'd asked me, I couldn't have told you where Bulwark should be going with new products. We had reps' meetings every Wednesday, and I felt more and more ignorant at each one. When Skrow deigned to show up, he asked nitpicky questions about new products that only Durkee could answer.

The Friday before Veterans Day, one of our lowest-producing reps quit. Talk about luck. I knew the top rep at Spinnaker, our main competitor, and I lured him away with the promise of his own corner office, wrenched from finance, which was having turnover problems. I could tell the other reps were ticked off – Skrow in particular, though he didn't say anything.

The morning after my quarterlies came in, Ludlow called me. "Goldstone," she said, "you're under quota." As if I didn't know I'd gone over on my expense ratios. I told her sales were off, reps were doing long hours, a thousand a week. Her answer? "No excuses, Goldstone."

Then she went over every little credit and debit with a fine-tooth comb, talking cut, cut, cut. I wanted to tell her that if we don't bring in the sales, the costs are BS. But in the end, I just said that my brokers didn't like having the Plus Service Account crammed down their throats. She said, "Your reps are your problem, your quotas are mine." I didn't say anything, and she must have sensed panic. After a pause, I heard, "Look, Rafferty, why don't you sign up for one of the employee development programs. It's usually two half-day seminars. You'll see how other managers handle their loads." "Sure," I said, but when I hung up, I was thinking that's just what I need – a whole day out of the office, wasted.

I felt like I was drowning in waves of potentially relevant information. I was reading budgets at 3 A.M.

Ten minutes later, when I had just started working on some expense forms for corporate that were already a month overdue, Durkee came into my office and started blubbering. He was working incredible hours. He sat in the front row at every sales meeting with his blue Eagle notebook. He could quote the PSA stuff verbatim. Customers loved him. He never bulldozed them. Problem was, they never called back and he never sold. I really felt sorry for the guy. He's got two kids, a mortgage, a sick father, debt, and a wife, sort of, and I'm supposed to tell him he's just not made to be a broker.

Boy, was I relieved when he left.

Ludlow called the next day to remind me she'd had complaints from corporate – I wasn't getting my expense forms in on time. I told her I was going to be on quota second quarter because I was doing the forms meticulously.

"From now on, I want them meticulous *and* on time," she shot back. "Have you signed up for a training seminar?"

"Sure."

I filled the gray space between Christmas Eve and New Year's with paperwork – forms for legal I'd gotten behind on and the first performance appraisals I'd scheduled for early in the new year.

I needed to talk to someone about Durkee, but I didn't want to go back to Ludlow. I signed up for a seminar. One full day, the second Monday in January, in New Haven, Connecticut. It was basically a pep talk. Consultants hired by corporate. The expert reminded us to read our manuals. We role-played some, but none of the parts matched Durkee's situation – or mine, for that matter. I talked to two managers from Philadelphia and one from Atlanta. They sympathized. I sympathized. It was touchy-feely. It didn't help solve my problems.

On February 5, Ludlow and I flew out to corporate.

I figured it was a chance to talk with Jim Slake about Skrow and Durkee and explain my first-quarter figures to the financial guys. Instead, I got third degree. What are you doing to keep your people up to speed? What's the size of the market going to be? What did you want your share to be? What kind of expenses can you maintain and still be competitive? What's your projected return on investment? I felt like I was running my own $50 million business. I guess I did all right because they said they were looking forward to my five-year plan and half-year results – in two weeks.

After my presentation, Ludlow and I killed an hour in the Faulty Propeller, a bookstore and coffee shop she knew near the wharf. I had been an English major at the University of Michigan, and the more I looked around and sipped at my double espresso, the more I wondered why I'd ever gone into finance.

I wanted to talk about a new sales idea I had, a mailing to our best clients with a personal letter from me. She didn't want any of that. She wanted to talk about my organizational agenda, hiring and firing, training and motivating my people. She said my priority should be developing my people, then maintaining a higher level of customer satisfaction. She pointed out that it's tough to manage someone who has been in the business longer than you have. She said that when someone has personal problems, you need to listen, but you also need to try to get that person to separate work from home; sometimes work can be a haven. She wrapped it up by asking if the seminar had been helpful. I said it had been, but it had eaten into my time. "Well, we'd all like to have more time, wouldn't we?" When I figured out time management, I should clue her in.

We touched down in Boston in an early-morning sleet storm. When I got to the office, I had a sour expression on my face. One of the reps out front asked if I'd been sucking on a lemon or were the numbers that bad? By lunch, people were talking about overtime and no bonuses.

You need a steel rod in your backbone to be a rep, but it's nothing compared to management.

Early in the afternoon, Puckett appeared and asked how to handle the Middlesex account. I explained over and over that she needed to get them into the Plus Service Account program and balance their biotech stocks with something a little more stable like munis, but she just wasn't getting it. She kept saying they wanted the growth funds. I kept saying they didn't understand the advantages of the PSA, and besides, if the market dipped, they'd be all over us for not covering their risk. I got dizzy and my face felt like it had caught fire. I led her to my desk, sat down, and called Thorpe, their investment officer. Within ten minutes, I'd sold my first PSA, opening balance 40 grand.

Ludlow gave me one week to figure out what to do about my performance.

Puckett asked why I was still on customer calls with her and said she really resented it. I told her I was just trying to help. Her voice rose. "Maybe I'm not the best rep on the floor, but I'm not incompetent." I told her I wasn't suggesting that, just showing her a method. She got really steamed. She clenched her jaw and said, "If you want to be the rep for this account, you can have it." She chucked the file on my desk and stormed out of the room.

I wanted to jump through one of those little windows on my computer's screen saver.

I dashed after her and whisked her back into my office. And that's when I lost my cool. I plunked her into a chair and started hollering. "You're lucky I'm helping at all."

Her chin started to quiver and then she started to cry.

I went on: "I covered when you couldn't handle that hassle with legal. Why are you worried? The Middlesex sale goes on your account, even though I made it."

The rest is a blur. It wasn't me.

I always figured you had to have a steel reinforcing rod in your backbone and the skin of an alligator to be a rep, but it's nothing compared to management. You've got to keep your cool, you've got to find it, keep it, protect it. Your cool is about all you've got.

Two days later, I made quota for the second quarter. Win one. Puckett terminated her contract. Lose one. She wrote, "PS – thanks for the motivation. I always wanted to work at Spinnaker!"

Last Friday, February 23, I met with Ludlow. She'd called to say that we needed to give some serious consideration to my performance. I'd been expecting it.

She got right to the point. "I picture the story of your first six months as a jagged line. You've had your successes. Reached quota second quarter, hired Vance away from Spinnaker. But there's no point in pulling punches, it's a downward slope. You lost Puckett, you're probably going to lose Skrow, you should have lost Durkee. You're late with forms and there was that fight with legal. I'm up to my ears. I just don't see how I can do any more for you, Rafferty." I asked her what she expected me to do. She gave me until March 1 to figure out what to do about my performance. One week.

Last night, I called MacKinley. He had a plan: two hours a week on improving relations with San Francisco; two more hours starting up regular relationships with the other guys in the Boston area. But politics just isn't my thing. He told me to capitalize on my on-the-job experience. That's like trying to learn from a stomach ulcer. Who's got the time for self-analysis? I'm worn out.

If I stay, I've got to do something about Durkee and Skrow, replace Puckett. Durkee's a tragedy looking for a final act. Skrow's the reason I'm making my quotas. Breaking in a new sales rep is the last thing I need. I can't call MacKinley every morning. I've read the lit, I've got to manage Ludlow.

What's my option?

Go back?

Quitting means defeat.

How will I tell the old man?

Is It Too Late to Save Goldstone?

Six experts discuss the process of developing new managers.

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"Management's where it's at – power, prestige, money." Paul MacKinley's words to Rafferty Goldstone set the stage for this case. A company's managers personify its values and norms. At Bulwark Securities, those values and norms are troublesome and woven with inconsistencies.

□ At management orientation, the trainers – including the CEO – talk theory but not application. They don't teach any specific skills. The human resources staff plays an administrative role rather than a strategic one. How can Bulwark claim that management development is important if its training session doesn't even touch on the practicalities of being a manager?

□ Executives from the CEO down consider the hefty policy manual their bible. If it's so important, why is it a "parting gift" at the end of orientation week?

□ MacKinley hounds Goldstone the sales rep about his quotas and compliance. Yet, in a postcard, he urges

Bulwark's sink-or-swim management training system is no system at all.

Goldstone the manager to concentrate on people development. No wonder the guy doesn't understand.

□ Gloria Ludlow lays down the law about Goldstone's responsibilities and says his priority should be developing his people. Then she cuts him loose. He doesn't react well. It's no surprise, then, that Goldstone later issues "commandments" at his own sales meeting – which he calls, sadly, because he has something to prove – and is rebuffed.

Successful organizations often mishandle how they develop their people, and Bulwark is a classic example. The purported philosophy of management at Bulwark is not evident anywhere in its actual day-to-day business. In fact, Bulwark's sink-or-swim management training system is no system at all.

Effective management-development programs give employees opportunities to test their managerial skills – and to reflect on their own situations and ambitions – long before they face the prospect of moving into a full-time managerial position. As Edgar Schein suggests in *Career Dynamics: Matching Individual and Organizational Needs* (Addison-Wesley, 1978), the multidimensional activities of managing are more complex than meet the eye. Those activities range from making decisions with incomplete information to having the communicative and emotional competence to deal with "human capital." To learn about the complexities firsthand, with little risk, would-be managers might start by repairing a damaged client relationship, organizing a conference, designing and delivering a training course, coordinating the launch of a new product line, or even managing small task forces. Goldstone had had a taste of that. MacKinley called it being "at play in the fields of management." But then what? Too often such experiences are not evaluated and put into the context of employees' overall career prospects.

Companies should also provide a formal process through which individuals can leverage their strengths (and overcome some weaknesses) so that the learning process is ongoing throughout their career. Frequently, as is the case at Bulwark, training is front-loaded at the beginning of a job with little or no follow-up.

Rigorous, regular performance evaluations are part of the answer. Such evaluations allow employees – from top to bottom – to get at the truth regarding their strengths and weaknesses. And ongoing career-development discussions provide a foundation on which to reinforce organizational values.

Honest feedback on an informal basis is another critical component of training. It sounds so simple. Yet managers' "spinning" the facts – being less than absolutely direct with their employees – is a prevalent problem that leads many organizations to entropy. Bulwark is the epitome of disorder.

If Bulwark's senior managers are committed to building an effective management-development system, they have much work to do. The first steps are as follows:

The company, led by its CEO, Christopher Woodbone, must begin to hold managers accountable for the development of people. For example, Ludlow's compensation should be based, in part, on whether her people grow and develop. The company should make that policy clear from the start. During her performance evaluations, Ludlow should be asked point-blank: "Under your watch, how have your people changed in the last year?" Ludlow should begin to set specific objectives for her subordinates, saying something like, "I think you should work on developing your presentation skills. Let's meet with our human resources representative and come up with a plan." Three months later, she could follow up to determine if her subordinates have met the objectives.

Few organizations are that explicit about accountability. But adherence to a formal process shows that senior managers believe in developing people. Managers who simply send their employees to human resources for training are abdicating their direct responsibility.

Ludlow and other Bulwark employees who are "bringing up" new managers should begin to offer frequent feedback. Six months had elapsed before Ludlow mentioned "serious consideration" of Goldstone's performance. That's inexcusable. She should be much more communicative. She can start by helping Goldstone develop solutions to the problems that have sprung up in part because of her reticence.

Bulwark's managers and subordinates must create an implicit and an explicit contract that links the career-development process with its employees' positions in real time.

It's probably too late for Goldstone. After six months, he has lost his credibility and his courage.

Such a contract would clarify Goldstone's own path and would give future Goldstones a better chance at a rewarding, satisfying career from the beginning.

Bulwark's CEO must articulate the organization's values. If employee development is indeed an explicit value, then the company must demonstrate that through its actions, not simply talk about it. Leadership can't be taught; it can only be learned.

Goldstone should meet immediately with Ludlow to determine how success is defined in his new role and to solicit real direction. He should also take advantage of Bill Durkee's technical expertise and have Durkee train both him and the other sales reps in the area of new products. Goldstone might also spend more time one-on-one with Durkee, teaching him the art of closing a deal. Or he could ask Tony Skrow to show Durkee his style and explain his sales methods in detail.

If Bulwark takes the above steps, it will become a stronger company. A well-rounded management-development and feedback system gives future leaders a much higher probability of success. The process of learning to manage becomes more than a long stumble upward.

Unfortunately, even if the company makes outstanding progress along these lines, it's probably too late for Goldstone. Goldstone has been in his new job for six months, and he has lost his credibility and, more important, his courage. Timidity guarantees failure. He is not likely to stay in a managerial position over the long term.

That doesn't mean his career is over, however. Goldstone was a good salesman. Quitting won't mean defeat. Going back to a sales job won't mean that Goldstone is a loser. Rather, the move might be the beginning of wisdom – for him and for Bulwark. Many organizations face the puzzle of how to motivate productive technicians who think they must become managers if they are to have status and prestige in the organization. Bulwark's top-level executives may have a chance to demonstrate to employees that they believe that technical experts are every bit as important to the company as managers.

How will Goldstone tell his father? If he's straightforward, he will have learned an important characteristic of successful managers.

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What Goldstone needs is one-on-one coaching, but his managers have abdicated their responsibility for coaching and development.

Bulwark has a problem that extends well beyond Goldstone. If his story is representative of Bulwark's approach to selecting and shaping new managers, then the company's chances of meeting customers' demands for improved quality and service are greatly constrained.

Bottom-line-oriented organizations like Bulwark often rely on a "spaghetti model" of managerial development: After you've boiled it, throw it against the wall; whatever sticks is done. Goldstone and ten other people have been flung into managerial roles, and six months later, their performances are being evaluated; some may be doing fine – they may be "done" – but Goldstone isn't. The spaghetti model surrenders control of the managerial-development process to fate. That's not a formula for improving quality and service.

The organization, as represented by MacKinley, Slake, and Ludlow, appears unconcerned about – or, worse, unaware of – the difference between a good sales rep and an effective manager. MacKinley is cynical, praising Goldstone for being "young enough to want it bad, and too young to know better." Slake and Ludlow, meanwhile, keep Goldstone at arm's length: "Call me if you need to talk." Many companies rationalize such a laissez-faire posture as empowerment. To Goldstone, it feels like abandonment at a time when he needs help but regards asking for it as admitting failure. The company's squandering of Goldstone's potential is the equivalent of undermanaging a portfolio or, worse, putting money in a mattress.

It's easier to enumerate the sequence of missed opportunities than it is to chart Bulwark's path forward. First, the selection process is vague and poorly developed. It provides neither a clear picture of the competencies required for success in different positions nor an assessment of performance based on the accomplishments of its best managers. Second, Bulwark's attempts to help its employees with career management are far from ideal. Employees are given the impression that successful development is all about the "power, prestige, money" that MacKinley cites as the advantages of becoming a manager. Instead, it should be about the mutual realization of the organization's goals and the individual's goals through a good fit in a rewarding role. Third, roles and expectations are ambiguous: Compliance is important, but so is pushing new products. Customers want quality and service, but quotas are paramount. Managers can get ahead by developing their people, but they need to manage expenses tightly.

For a mature manager, such apparent contradictions require a series of trade-offs, negotiated with the organization. For a newly minted manager like Goldstone, who is spinning like a top and making himself sick with uncertainty, such ambiguity can be disorienting and paralyzing. What Goldstone needs is one-on-one coaching – a mentor to guide him as he manages assignments and begins to figure out how to act as a mentor and a coach for *his* staff. But his managers, MacKinley and Ludlow, have abdicated their responsibility for coaching and development to the human resources department in the form of manager-orientation and employee-development programs. Goldstone may be able to pick up some valuable lessons at the training sessions, but that's not where his real development will take place.

Successful companies make the acquisition and development of managerial talent one of the highest priorities for their senior people. At Bulwark, the new managers are given minimal trial-run experiences, the CEO relies on a policy manual, MacKinley advises using politics to get ahead, and Ludlow lets Goldstone flounder for four months before she even broaches a dialogue about what successful management of people looks like. Given their track record and their de facto adoption of the spaghetti model, it's hard to know what will help them change their stripes. In high-growth periods, securities firms like Bulwark lull themselves into thinking that the manager is superfluous; yet in slow-growth periods, they crack the whip as if the manager is the one who makes things happen. Then they scratch their heads and wonder why their managers aren't more loyal.

On the other hand, Goldstone is no paragon of a high-potential manager. With his untested notions of power and "cool" and a management philosophy based on a narcissistic golden rule ("I'd seen them all as clones of myself"), he has made just about every mistake one could make. He's drowning, yet he doesn't know how to ask for or accept help. He's unhappy and the symptoms are apparent to those around him. He's reaching the limits of his credibility and his ability to handle the role.

Yet he has glimmers of insight. Anxiety is making him question his prior assumptions. Carpe diem! Instead of letting him self-destruct, Bulwark should commit to investing in Goldstone. He and Ludlow should build a near-term, concrete performance plan and lay out the actions to execute it. Bulwark should assign Goldstone a coach. (Ideally, that would be Ludlow.) The company should also allow a grace period for the administrative burden, or it should invest in human or technical solutions to the paper load so that Goldstone can focus on people and performance. The company should encourage Goldstone to seek an ally from within his department – most likely one of his reps – so that he can stay in touch with the pulse of the office. He should also be encouraged to seek technical help about products, sales, and marketing, and he should be given counseling by human resources. Ludlow needs to commit to skull sessions, perhaps two per week, to keep shaping Goldstone's focus and sense of priorities.

If Bulwark were to take these actions, it would be in a position by the next quarter to ask whether it had made the right choice in selecting Rafferty for management. In fact, by then, the company's senior managers might even know him well enough to call him by his first name.

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Bulwark's senior managers must define and communicate the what, when, and how of good sales management. No ambiguities.

Goldstone is only one symptom of a larger management problem at Bulwark. Look into any one of the company's branch offices and you'll most likely find other Goldstones struggling to learn the ropes while they're on the ropes as well. Bulwark has failed to legitimate management as a career path and to select, develop, and manage its human resources to their fullest potential. Instead, the company continues to promote its top producers and then abandon them, with the unrealistic expectation of a seamless transition and continued success. How shortsighted, considering that an effective sales manager can have as great an impact on a salesperson's productivity as any other single variable.

If Bulwark's senior managers took a moment to think, they would realize that the criteria for success among sales reps are significantly different from those that lead to success in managing a sales force. Good salespeople know that success depends on what they do themselves, whereas effective sales managers understand that their goals are achieved through others' performances. Recognizing just that basic difference, the CEO, Slake, and even MacKinley and Ludlow might then realize that their system of developing sales managers is woefully inadequate. The transition from one job to the other requires changes of mind-set and behavior, not simply a new set of policy books and a few pep talks. But how to reverse the damage? With commitment, it wouldn't be difficult. Effective management development need not be complex. In fact, the solution can be outlined in five steps:

☐ Define performance expectations.
☐ Communicate performance expectations.
☐ Develop through training the knowledge and skills needed to achieve those expectations.
☐ Evaluate performance against the defined expectations.
☐ Reward or correct behavior to continually enhance performance.

In Bulwark's current environment, I have no doubt that the first two steps would be interpreted as "Hand the new manager a job description." That's not what I mean. Sure, start with a job description, but then keep going. *Show* the new managers what behaviors they would demonstrate if their performances were outstanding. *Explain* the company's productivity standards, its administrative standards, its service policy. *Describe* an acceptable level of product knowledge. *Tell* the new managers specifically what they are supposed to do as they conduct day-to-day business with their sales organization. How will their days look? What are some viable ways in which sales managers budget their time?

Bulwark's senior management team must learn to define and communicate the what, when, and how of good sales management at the company. No ambiguities. The mandate must be simple, clearly stated, based on behavior, and easy to measure. Then it can become the "performance contract" upon which all other activities, such as training and performance evaluations, are based.

The next step is helping the new sales managers develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet the company's expectations. Most new managers will have some administrative tasks to master, such as learning the proper procedures for reporting and for using the management information systems, but their training should focus on teaching them how to do with the sales reps exactly what their managers are now doing with them: working through the five steps. (Note that Bulwark's formal training program should be based on the actual experiences of its sales managers; ideally, it should be conducted by successful and credible real-life practitioners.)

For training to be effective over the long term, Bulwark must make ongoing, regular performance assessment a natural part of its culture. Every single time a senior manager walks past a sales manager, hears him on the phone, watches him in an interaction, or looks at a performance report, he or she makes an evaluation. But it makes no sense to observe someone's behavior simply to store it up for future reference. The key is to convert that assessment into a meaningful management tool by commending positive behavior (thereby reinforcing it) and correcting negative behavior (thereby eliminating it) – in real time. That way, there won't be any nasty surprises or unrealistic ultimatums at formal reviews.

Nearly every employee's failure can be traced to some failure on the part of his or her manager to follow the simple process of setting and communicating performance standards, training people to meet them, evaluating their performance against them, and following up with appropriate commendation or correction. Bulwark has an opportunity to turn this situation around with Goldstone. And Goldstone, in turn, can and should do the same with his sales reps.

Many fine businesspeople are overwhelmed (perhaps even intimidated) by the prospect of managing people. A simple, logical, systematic approach to performance management can be the winning formula for developing skill and confidence in the line managers responsible for sales excellence.

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Goldstone doesn't understand Bulwark's new strategy, so how can he focus his team on a vision of the future?

Goldstone has fallen prey to an all-too-common paradox. It seems logical enough to reward strong performers in a technical discipline with a promotion to management. The expectation is that their performance in a technical area indicates their ability to perform in management. The problem, however, is that technical expertise alone is not enough to be successful in a managerial role. Being a good manager requires skills far beyond those required in a technical role. A sales representative, for example, succeeds by being driven and competitive and by taking complete ownership of the achievement of results. Although these traits are critical to a sales rep's success, who would want to work for someone like that?

Successful management requires a combination of strategic and people-management skills. Unfortunately, Goldstone possesses neither. He lacks strategic skills and therefore cannot see the big picture. It's pretty clear that he doesn't understand the company's new strategy, so how can he accurately focus his team on a vision of the future? Similarly, Goldstone doesn't know how to concentrate his efforts on the important issues that will make a difference to his staff and to his bosses. Instead, he continually attacks the details, which results in a frenetic management style. It's no wonder that people like Skrow have gone off and pursued their own agendas, even though their actions may conflict with the company's mission.

As far as people-management skills go, that's probably an even bigger problem. Goldstone doesn't understand that in his new role, he will be able to achieve results only through his team of reps. His performance, in fact, is the sum of his team's performance. He should be retaining high-caliber people and motivating them to perform at their best. Instead, he frustrates his staff by micromanaging them. No wonder Juba Puckett left! Goldstone is taking personal responsibility for everyone's job and problems. If he continues to do so, he will soon be left with ordinary performers who are more than willing to allow him to carry the burden. All his top people will have left the company.

The fault is not all Goldstone's. The company bears blame as well. Goldstone was not properly prepared for his new role. Why? In large part because Bulwark didn't give him any examples of good management to learn from. Having strong role models is key to developing managers in any organization, and Woodbone, MacKinley, and Ludlow are not exactly perfect mentors.

So what can Goldstone do? Clearly, he needs to build his strategic and people-management skills. He should identify a role model or mentor within Bulwark – perhaps someone from another division – to use as a sounding board. He could also benefit from further training in situation leadership. The training course he attended a few months into his new job was not a bad idea, but at the time Goldstone was probably too flummoxed to think clearly about its potential benefits.

He must also move quickly to secure his high-performing sales reps. He needs to figure out the company's strategy and then communicate it accurately to his team. He must also articulate the role they need to play in successfully following it. And he must define the skills that his team will require. If there are deficiencies, then he must arrange formal training for his salespeople – or replace them. MacKinley can probably help him with that. At the end of the case, it seems as if MacKinley is finally reaching out to Goldstone with substantive advice. Goldstone can't afford to pass up the help.

It's not easy to learn management skills all at once, on the job. An initiation such as the one Goldstone is being put through is quite difficult. But I've been through it – as have many other managers. I had much more support from my company when making the transition between management levels, functions, and countries than Goldstone seems to have had. But Goldstone can get through this process, too, if he keeps his wits about him. He may even be able to reconcile his mental image of the ideal management position with the reality of a rewarding management role.

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In order to turn the situation around, Goldstone will have to find the courage to admit that he is floundering.

Although many corporations have formal development processes in place and use all the right words when describing them, the Goldstones of the world are not rare. Quite often, in fact, management development means testing new managers to see if they are made of the "right stuff," instead of supporting their growth and progress.

I believe that if Bulwark truly valued management development as a means to create and sustain competitive advantage, the major players would have behaved more like this:

MacKinley: MacKinley would have conducted developmental sessions with Goldstone to discuss his career objectives, including his dream of taking on more responsibility. He would have painted a picture of what it takes to lead a group of sales reps successfully and explained to Goldstone how the task would present both exciting and difficult challenges. He would also have pointed out how important it is to learn how to learn and told Goldstone that learning from his failures would be as important as learning from his successes. He would have helped Goldstone see how valuable it is to have the ability to stop the action at any moment and reflect on what is happening and why. And how important it is to ask, when something goes wrong, What could I have done to be more effective in that situation? MacKinley would have made a sincere offer to act as Goldstone's coach; he would have known that new managers are often reluctant to ask for coaching.

Goldstone: Assuming that Goldstone took advantage of a robust development process, he would have been in a better position to assess the benefits and risks of accepting the promotion in the first place. An individual development plan would have given him a clear picture of his strengths and his opportunities for growth – a useful tool whether or not he chose to take on the new job. Once in the new position, Goldstone would have been more comfortable about asking for coaching when he needed it. His education at Bulwark would have allowed him to appreciate his own learning capabilities and to develop strategies to achieve his desired results. The support and coaching he would have received from MacKinley and Ludlow would have enabled him to be a more effective mentor.

Ludlow: Ludlow would have realized that Goldstone's success would be her success as well; she would have encouraged him to set reasonable goals and then would have supported his efforts to achieve them.

She would have worked hard to build trust between them, and that trusting relationship would have allowed for open, honest communication about the tough issues a new manager faces. Her initial coaching session would have included a primer on the strengths and weaknesses of the sales reps.

Of course, those behaviors are ideal. Many situations are more like the one portrayed in this case. So what should be done?

The responsibility for turning the situation around probably lies with Goldstone. To get the ball rolling, he'll need to find the courage to admit that he is floundering.

Ludlow clearly knows that there is a problem – and she would certainly be happier if Goldstone were doing better – but her future with Bulwark will not be jeopardized if Goldstone fails. Similarly, MacKinley and Slake could simply decide that they had made a mistake without risking their jobs. Goldstone, on the other hand, has everything to lose – and therefore, the most motivation to make things work.

First, Goldstone must step back and analyze his own performance. He must try to understand what it is about this job that is so different from his last one and why he isn't succeeding. Then he must admit to Ludlow that he doesn't know what to do, but he must do so in a way that gives her some solid material to work with. He must not be defensive; instead, he must put enough on the table so that they have a starting point on which to build a solid plan. He could begin by telling her what he learned about the company and its new strategies during the corporate training session. Then he could explain how he has tried to communicate that message and what the response has been. The key is for him to get beyond the surface-level discussions that he has had with Ludlow in the past. Ludlow, meanwhile, should take on the role of coach. She has begun to communicate with Goldstone, but she has a long way to go if she is really to be of any help.

Overall, if Goldstone takes the first step and Ludlow responds, MacKinley, Slake, and Woodbone should use this situation as a catalyst for rethinking Bulwark's management-development program. Education should be part of the strategic process at every company. Educational experiences should be designed to support the company's goals and linked to the company's success in the marketplace. Training programs should not be designed as onetime events but rather as a systemic way of communicating and enhancing the company's mission. Employees should be given regular opportunities to learn and practice new ways of delivering value to customers. And they should be encouraged to support one another back on the job as they continue to learn how to learn.

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No one thought about the implications of moving a star individual contributor into a management role.

Before any employee is moved into his or her first management position at a company, that person's senior managers should ask the following questions:

Is there a match between the skills and motivations of the individual and the needs of the company? No one at Bulwark thought about the implications of moving a star individual contributor into a management role. No one had a serious conversation with Goldstone about his understanding of management. No one had a clear idea of his motives and expectations. Goldstone didn't have a clue about what his new job would actually entail. He thought that understanding sales and products was all he would need to succeed. He thought that all sales reps would want to be managed the way he wished he had been managed. If Slake or MacKinley had talked with Goldstone about his views and hopes, they might have identified the potential problems and done something about them before Goldstone was already six months into his new job.

It also seems as if Goldstone was given not only a new job to handle but also a new business to figure out. His appointment came at a time when Bulwark was shifting from being product driven to being customer driven. Everything else aside, it's no wonder Goldstone found himself in trouble. His experience, such as it was, had prepared him to present the company in one way even as the company was changing its position in the marketplace.

Do the people who will be surrounding the new manager make a good fit for him or her? All too often, companies do not think about context when they are moving people into new positions. Bulwark fell short of the mark on several counts here, but consider just one: The company sent Goldstone halfway across the country to work for Ludlow and manage a group of sales reps without having him spend any time with those people before his appointment. He probably met Ludlow during the interview process, but he should have spent at least a few days working alongside her on some sort of project before the company decided to give him the job. The experience would have given him a sense of her style and her expectations while there was still an opportunity for him to ask questions and consider his options without risk. Similarly, at the very least, Goldstone should have had background information about each of his reps before starting the job. In the best case, he would have met with them a few times before moving and would have had a lengthy discussion with Ludlow about their skills and goals.

Is the organization's training process suited to the individual, and does it provide support once that person has begun in the new position? Bulwark's senior executives certainly did not "walk the walk" when they said that 50% of management was people development. In fact, there were few role models or processes in place to support that notion. Ludlow told Goldstone to call her if there was a crisis, MacKinley called after the crisis had occurred, and Slake was more interested in being glib than in being helpful. Little thought was given to Goldstone's selection, and the company's initial training session did not even begin to address the people- and time-management issues faced daily by those trying to shift from being individual contributors to being managers. What's more, like many companies, Bulwark responded to its new manager's transition troubles by sending him to another training session. Such exercises can be useful but not in response to a problem in progress. For Goldstone, the course was too little, too late.

Having said all this, there is hope for Goldstone and for Bulwark. Over the short term, I would recommend that Bulwark assign someone–possibly Slake–to assess the situation. If I were called in as an executive coach, I would first interview each of the key players to determine what went wrong and what they think can be done to salvage the situation. For example, I would try to find out whether Bulwark is truly in danger of losing Skrow and what Skrow really thinks of Goldstone and the company's new policies. (I would also try to find out whether Skrow is churning his accounts. If he is, the organization should not look the other way; it should take action to modify his behavior.)

Then I would conduct a 360-degree assessment of Goldstone by collecting information from him and from other members of the organization to determine which problems Goldstone must solve himself and which "belong" to the company. I would try to determine if the manager's job is the right one for someone with his skills and personality. Both Goldstone and Bulwark might be better off with Goldstone in a senior sales position rather than a managerial role.

Perhaps most important, I would make myself available as a resource if Goldstone or any of the other parties wanted to talk. At the very least, these people all need someone they can use as a sounding board.

Over the long term, I would recommend that Bulwark overhaul its entire executive development process so that it is proactive, not reactive. The company should establish career crossroads for the major functions in the organization. Its senior managers should make sure that employees understand how they all depend upon one another to make the company tick. That way, sales reps who have an inkling that they would like to become managers will learn more about their options – and the realities of the various jobs – before they need to make a decision.

Bulwark's senior management team should also learn what the company's positions call for in terms of skill and personality, and how those positions match up against the skills, personalities, and ambitions of its employees. Armed with that knowledge, they can assess and train employees in advance of promotions instead of throwing someone into a position that won't tolerate anything less than a running start.

In place of – or as part of – the five-day training session, Bulwark should consider conducting a team-building session in which new managers meet with their direct reports to discuss expectations on both sides and the issues the company will be facing in the coming year. As new managers begin their assignments, Bulwark should provide each of them with an internal mentor or an external coach – someone who can serve as a confidential sounding board for the new manager.

Finally, as a part of its career-development effort, the company should establish a process of clear objective setting and quarterly performance reviews at all levels. Such a process would have provided a forum for Goldstone to raise issues with Ludlow – and for his reps to do the same with him – before a crisis could develop.

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ARTICLES

"Pygmalion in Management" by J. Sterling Livingston (*Harvard Business Review*, September–October 1988, Product no. 1768)
This article focuses on the **power of expectations** to influence new managers' behavior and performance. When executives *expect* the best from their managers, they set a positive self-fulfilling prophecy in motion—as new managers strive to fulfill those expectations.

But to initiate this virtuous cycle, you have to do more than just establish high expectations. You must communicate them as well. Managers often communicate *low* expectations far more effectively than *high* ones—but people can't fulfill expectations they don't perceive. Also, your expectations exert their greatest impact during a new manager's first year on the job. Later, as rookies mature, their aspirations—and your expectations—become colored by past performance. Seize the advantage of that critical first year.

"The Executive as Coach" by James Waldroop and Timothy Butler (*Harvard Business Review*, November–December 1996, Product no. 5343)
These authors take a closer look at **the impact of coaching** on new managers. Coaching—regular meetings to help rookies address any problematic behaviors—is separate from formal performance evaluation and requires time and discipline. But used judiciously, it pays big dividends.

Waldroop and Butler explain how to evaluate problem behavior. For instance, ask yourself, "What does the behavior consist of? How does it affect others? How destructive is it?" They then describe ways to broach the subject of coaching with a new manager, including sample scripts that can help you safeguard managers' egos. Finally, the authors provide several coaching techniques, such as encouraging managers to learn from mistakes, moving from easier to harder behavior changes, and role-playing prickly scenarios managers may encounter.

"What Makes a Leader?" by Daniel Goleman (*Harvard Business Review*, November–December 1998, Product no. 3790)
New managers like Rafferty Goldstone are often surprised to discover that management requires getting things done through others and, therefore, hinges more on people skills—that is, **emotional intelligence** (EI)—than technical know-how.

Goleman defines the components that make up EI. Emotional intelligence competencies fall into two categories. Under the category of **self-management**, skills include *self-awareness* (knowing one's weaknesses and being willing to acknowledge them), *self-regulation* (controlling one's impulses or channeling them for good purposes), and *motivation* (having a passion for achievement for its own sake). Under the category **relating to others**, skills include *empathy* (taking into account others' feelings when making decisions) and *social skill* (building rapport with others, moving them in a desired direction, and inspiring them to cooperate).

Can new managers boost their EI? Yes—through extended practice, feedback from you, and their own enthusiasm for enhancing these competencies.