

# Preface

There's an old joke that generations of disgruntled employees like to tell each other.

"You know what the definition of manager is, don't you?"

"No, tell me."

"A manager is the person who sees the visitors so that everyone else can get the work done."

Maybe that's funny to some people. But now that you're a manager, it's your job to laugh *with* your staff, rather than having them laugh *at* you.

There are thousands of managers out there, all trying to recruit, train, and motivate their staffs. They all want the same thing: to please their bosses, to earn the respect of their employees, and, above all, to avoid the headaches that so often come with people management.

As a new manager, you may find the whole task daunting. In your old job, you could excel by mastering a specialty. You showed up every day, carved out an area of expertise, and thrived by performing at a level that impressed higher-ups at your organization.

Now you've earned a reward: a staff to manage. From now on, your success no longer depends on just your technical abilities and specialized knowledge. You will prosper only if other people do their jobs well. And if they fail, you'll pay the price.

The best managers embrace the challenge with gusto. They build trust with each employee one day at a time, learning how to woo even the most difficult types of workers to push harder, think differently, and stage experiments that help them produce better results. They set high standards and "walk the talk."

When problems arise, they mediate them with poise and fairness. During organizational upheavals and wrenching change, they keep employees informed and provide a rock of stability. When setbacks strike, they do not mope and whine about forces they cannot control; instead, they reassure their staffs and redirect everyone's focus on what matters most.

## Why Read This Book?

Do you have a mentor who helps you unlock all the secrets of managing? If you do, great. This book will serve as an added resource, a way to cross-check whether the advice you're getting squares with some of the latest views on enlightened management.

If you lack a mentor, then consider this book a friendly substitute. While we can't take your calls when you're confronting an emergency or provide a shoulder to cry on when you're going bonkers at work, we can give you plenty of practical pointers on how to handle a range of situations that you'll no doubt face as a manager.

We won't kid you: effective management requires more than reading this book and nodding with approval when you come across a tip or technique that appeals to you. *You must apply what you read.* By sampling the tools you're about to learn, you can evaluate to what extent they work for you and modify them as needed. People are not mathematical equations, so managing them is a fuzzier and more free-form process than inputting hard data. But as long as you commit to putting into practice what we're about to discuss, we promise your time spent reading this book will pay off.

## Overview of the Book

In the first chapter, you'll develop a model of the successful manager. This becomes your template for what follows. Once you know what kind of traits, skills, and behaviors will make you manage more effectively, you can mold yourself to excel.

Chapter 2 pierces some of the most prevalent myths of people management. If you're guided by mistaken notions of what it takes to lead employees, then your faulty assumptions can interfere with your better judgment and sabotage your ability to manage.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to help you hit the ground running. Your first month as a new manager will be traumatic enough without having to confront needless crises. By establishing momentum and taking preventive steps to stamp out problems before they arise, you can gain confidence and impress others with your take-charge leadership.

Chapters 4 and 5 work together to give you pointers to polish your communication skills. We begin with the all-important art of listening, a vastly overlooked skill that every strong manager must possess. You may bring great technical ability and plenty of enthusiasm to your new job, but if you hog the spotlight and interrupt constantly, you doom yourself to mediocrity.

In Chapter 5, we move from listening to talking. You'll need to say what's on your mind to employees and to your managers. You'll also need to be able to ask intelligent questions and organize your thoughts in a tight, appealing package. Persuasion flows from preparation. When you think before you speak, you can win over almost anyone and turn adversaries into allies.

Chapter 6 examines the mysteries of motivation. Many new managers stumble in their efforts to rally the troops. They assume rah-rah theatrics work best, when in fact the best way to motivate is to observe others and identify what matters most to them.

Chapters 7 and 8 guide you through two of the toughest aspects of management: giving criticism and doling out discipline. You probably dread both of these tasks. But if you learn to do them well, you can proceed with the knowledge that you're a fair-minded, respected manager.

The key to criticizing employees is helping them realize for themselves how their performance can improve. By steering clear of harsh generalizations and instead describing a specific activity in neutral terms, you remove personality from the equation and increase the odds your criticism will pay off.

When you have to discipline an employee, you need to understand when and how to do this. Discipline, after all, is about helping people who, either by intention or misunderstanding of the rules, disrupt the operations of your group. When you do this well, you bring people back into line and help make them better employees.

Chapter 9 gives you the tools to organize yourself. Many new managers trip themselves up by losing track of time and getting buried in minutiae. By tracking your work and avoiding time-killing tasks, you can boost your productivity and squeeze the most out of every hour.

Every manager must delegate, and that's the subject of Chapter 10. It's easy to bark orders and await results. But your style of giving directions will largely determine whether your employees comply or rebel.

Chapter 11 focuses on managing your manager rather than your workers. Keeping higher-ups apprised of your progress and maintaining open lines of communication can eliminate misunderstandings and ensure that you get the credit you deserve for your efforts.

Finally, in Chapter 12, you'll learn how to capitalize on your new role as manager to climb the ladder. That involves networking. The wider your web of contacts both inside and outside your organization, the faster you can nab promotions or pounce on career opportunities.

## Special Features

The idea behind the books in the Briefcase Series is to give you practical information written in a friendly person-to-person style. The chapters are short, deal with tactical issues, and include lots of examples. They also feature numerous boxes designed to give you different types of specific information. Here's a description of the boxes you'll find in this book.

 <b>Smart Managing</b>	<p>These boxes do just what they say: give you tips and tactics for being smart as a new manager.</p>
	<p>These boxes provide warnings for where things could go wrong when you're dealing with employees.</p>
	<p>Here you'll find how-to hints to make managing go more easily.</p>
	<p>Every subject has its special jargon and terms. These boxes provide definitions of these concepts.</p>
	<p>Want to know how others have done it? Look for these boxes.</p>
	<p>Here you'll find specific procedures you can follow when undertaking various management tasks.</p>
	<p>How can you make sure you won't make a mistake when managing? You can't, but these boxes will give you practical advice on how to minimize the possibility.</p>