

Planning for success in a new managerial role

Hilary Gee, Icendris Consultant

Leadership, motivation and teamwork are Hilary's areas of specialism: helping people identify how to tap into aspirations and become great persuaders, influencers and negotiators. We asked him what advice he would give to anyone taking their first step into management

Firstly, when accepting the new role, ask your manager...

- Why they chose you?
- Why they didn't choose the others?
- How they are going to manage any others' disappointment (for internal applicants)?
- How they are going to set the scene (announce) effectively for the team to make the transition?
- What they are hoping you will achieve in the first week, month, quarter, and year?
- What factors outside your immediate team they foresee to be areas for attention/work?
- What potential red herrings they foresee?
- What prior strengths of yours do they think could become weaknesses?
- What knowledge, skills and behaviours they would like to see you develop?
- Who they see as key people for you to cultivate for support?

Secondly, think about re-engineering relationships successfully...

- Relationships have to change – even yours with yourself, your boss, your team, your peers (new and old), suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders...even your family! What and how?
- Establish authority gently, don't try to change too much over-night – gradual change can be more acceptable (unless emergencies call for immediate or significant decisions or action)
- Communicate lots...using more asking, listening, agreeing and summarising than telling or arguing
- Focus on what's good for the business – be tough on the issues whilst fair and empathic to people
- Use a "consult and decide" approach as much as possible – especially with previous peers
- Fair and equitable management by objectives – no favouritism, distance from previous buddies
- Show respect for the achievements and strengths of former peers in your words and actions
- Re-assess what you should delegate
- Re-think your advice and counsel network
- Ensure peers who applied for your new role get useful feedback on the decision so that you and they can work on their career development agenda together based on real data

And moving forward...

- Listen and watch very carefully
- Pay attention to first meetings
- Share your general hopes, plans and broad relationship expectations with people
- Show genuine respect for the people and past achievements while looking for opportunities for learning, improvement, development and growth
- Aim high but be clear that excellence is an ever shifting goal, a journey not an end-point
- Ask lots of questions
- Get to know and build rapport with your boss, senior managers, team members, customers, peers, suppliers
- Get to know and understand your team's results, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Get your team to do a SWOT analysis and see what they think (and what their blind-spots are)
- Ask your team what they see as the key areas for you to influence on the team's behalf
- Get to know your competitors
- Build your plan
- Get some quick wins, celebrate and praise efforts, ideas and improvements
- Pre-book regular one to ones and team meetings with your direct reports and wider team
- Have real purpose and outcomes for all meetings with action plans that get followed up.