

TEN TOP LEADERSHIP TIPS FOR FIRST TIME MANAGERS

- Accept that you will still have lots to learn. You will have worked hard for your promotion and will have ample expertise in your chosen field but you may find that you lack self-confidence in your ability to lead. Be prepared to learn from others – including your new team.
- Communicate clearly. Always keep your team fully informed of project goals, priorities and those all important deadlines. Effective communication will be essential in both establishing your credibility and gaining the support of your team so make sure that you provide clear direction and always welcome questions and feedback from others.
- Set a good example. Demand from yourself the same level of professionalism, and dedication that you would expect from others. If you expect the team to be up beat and friendly then make sure you are! If you expect written reports to be error free – then double check your own!
- Encourage feedback. Sometimes employees are unwilling to speak up about certain issues unless prompted. Canvass opinion on issues such as support, training and resources and maintain an open door policy so that your team knows that you are willing to listen and help provide solutions to any problems.
- Offer recognition. By publicly recognising the efforts and achievements of your team you not only build up their confidence but also encourage future contributions and effort. Praise does not always have to be formal – praising employees can be part of your day to day communication with your team.
- Be decisive. A quality leader needs to make decisions and stick to them. People do not feel comfortable with someone who changes his or her mind. You only have to look at public opinion on government U-turns to see how easily confidence in a leader can be knocked or lost altogether.
- Help your team see the 'big picture'. Take time out to explain to your team how their assignments and projects fit into the company's larger goals and overall objectives. This will help demonstrate that every task they complete can have an impact on the company's reputation, success and bottom line.

- Create an environment of constant learning and development – and include yourself in this process. Encourage your team to explore new methods for reaching their individual and the company's goals. Allow them to make – and learn from mistakes and make a point of rewarding new and innovative ideas.
- Provide professional guidance. A good manager – and leader will also be a mentor so make yourself available to staff members and show interest in their career development within the company. Don't overlook the motivational power of positive reinforcement – your staff will appreciate your commitment to their progress.
- Be patient with yourself. Developing strong managerial skills takes time – especially as you adjust to your new position. Seek guidance from colleagues, your line manager or your professional network when you need it. In doing so you will enhance your leadership abilities and make strides to becoming a great manager.