

Nine Effective Management Techniques

Almost everybody thinks they're a good manager. But according to a Gallup Poll, 25 percent of U.S. employees would fire their bosses if they could. That means at least one in four of you are failing.

But that number's not surprising when you consider how few managers receive any kind of formal management training. If you're curious about how you stack up, determine how many of the following practices you follow and how many you need to incorporate into your management style. It's never too late to learn.

1. **Communicate the big picture.** If you want your employees to work hard and be committed to your business, you've got to keep them in the loop. Open communication helps foster loyalty and gives employees a sense of pride. It helps them understand how their work contributes to the company's success. Set up a recurring meeting (some companies call them "all hands" or "town hall" meetings) to inform your employees about new business developments and answer any questions.
2. **Delegate work and responsibilities.** Now that you've hired some employees, share your workload with them. Delegate projects according to people's strengths and weaknesses, and let employees develop their own good work habits and leadership skills. Control freaks (Hint: That's most of you.) will struggle with this initially. Before you take on a project, try get in the habit of asking yourself if one of your employees can handle it instead.
3. **Help employees set goals.** Setting deadlines and goals helps keep employees focused, busy and motivates them to do their work. Talk to each of your employees about the company's goals, and work with them to set individual goals directly linked to your business's mission. Make sure each employee understands his or her professional growth path in the company.
4. **Recognize problems.** It's impossible to know about personality conflicts, lagging productivity or other problems in the office if you've got your head in the sand. Stay tuned in to your employees so you can be proactive and resolve situations before they escalate. If you notice a change in an employee's work habits or attitude, try to get to the root of the problem before it starts affecting the rest of your staff.

5. **Reward employees.** Everybody appreciates raises and bonuses, but monetary rewards aren't the only way to thank employees for a job well done. In fact the easiest way to recognize a worker's contribution — by simply saying "thank you" — is often the most overlooked. Whether you do it with words, money, an employee-of-the-month program or other incentives, make sure your employees know you value their efforts and contributions.
6. **Be a mentor.** As a business owner or manager, one of the greatest gifts you can give your employees is sharing your knowledge and experience. Showing your employees firsthand how you close a deal or forecast sales is far more effective than just talking them through it.
7. **Give reviews.** Employees need feedback about their performance to improve their skills and grow professionally. Set up a formal review program and give performance appraisals once or twice a year. If you set goals and give performance reviews in the same meeting, make sure you spend equal time addressing past performance and future goals.
8. **Have a heart.** Family emergencies, illnesses and other unplanned events always arise, so get used to it. Show employees some compassion by being flexible with work hours and time off so they can tend to important matters. Employees always appreciate a sympathetic boss, and as long as your business won't suffer, make every effort to accommodate workers who have special needs.
9. **Take the time to be a manager.** During busy times when work's piling up, don't forget to be a manager. Employees depend on your strength and guidance — especially when they're stressed out or faced with new projects that require your time and input. Give employees your undivided attention when they want to talk. If you can't do that in your office, head out to a neighbourhood café and chat over a cup of coffee.