

THE INTERNATIONAL
BESTSELLING SERIES

THE
RULES
OF
MANAGEMENT

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REMEMBER THAT YOUR STAFF
ARE GROWN-UPS. YOU HAVE
TO GIVE THEM ROOM TO BE
REAL PEOPLE

Sample pages

Understand the roles of others

I used to believe that to be a good manager I had to be able to do not only my own job – managing – but also everyone else's job as well. And probably, I thought in my heart of hearts, I should be able to do it as well as them if not better. Thus, I figured, if there was an emergency I could step into the breach and do their job and everything would carry on functioning. Yep, I bet you're there before me. If I were to step into their job, who would be doing mine?

Answer, of course: nobody.

The key is to have a practical understanding of what all the jobs entail but realise that you don't need to be able actually to do them. Yes, you do need back-up in the event of a crisis, but it ain't you. You're better off right where you are – managing.

To understand the role, the best way is to know what problems it solves and how it works. But you don't need to be able to do it as well as your team member does – that's what you pay them for. Something about keeping dogs and barking yourself – you need to know what job the guard dog does, but you don't need to go round biting burglars to appreciate it fully.

And often you'll employ someone for such a specialised job you wouldn't know where to begin. You might be the manager of a power plant but you don't need to know how to calculate the shelf life of plutonium. But you do need to know that you employ someone who can do that job for you.

It's also important for all your team to have an understanding of what everyone else does. This certainly helps create a team spirit and a sense of loyalty.

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Sample pages

Ensure people know exactly what is expected of them

It's easy to give someone a job description and a contract and then sit back and expect them to get on with it. Trouble is, it leads to a lot of confused people and wasted time. Better to let them know right from the off what is expected of them.

And what is expected of them? Well, it's a whole lot more than just the job itself. You have to think through every individual role and what *exactly* is expected of that person.

It's vital that people know what part they play in any strategic plan and what is expected of them as a result. It's essential that team members know the values and standards of the team and the company, and what's expected of them in attitude and behaviour (open? honest? imaginative? caring? can do?). It's also about them being clear on emotional requirements, punctuality, working overtime, behaviour towards colleagues, crisis management – everything.

For new employees this is helped if you have a 'buddy' programme where each new person is linked to someone more experienced who can show them the ropes.

Oh, and some guidelines on relationships at work. It's only fair that everyone knows what is expected of them in any given situation: you can't go rollicking someone for having sex in the broom cupboard if it hasn't been spelt out to them that they don't do that sort of thing – 'But we always did it at my previous place of work and no one complained.'

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Sample pages

Have clear expectations

One manager I worked with was very moody. When she was relaxed, everyone was productive but had fun. Occasional high jinx kept their spirits up and she didn't have a problem with it, in moderation. When she was stressed, however, you could get your head bitten off for as little as laughing too loud.

As I say, there were times she was very relaxed. But no one else on her team was. They had no idea what mood she'd be in so they were always on tenterhooks. Would she be happy with a report that was poorly presented but contained all the facts, or would she rather wait until tomorrow and have it looking perfect? Could you get away with the briefest of paperwork for a particular procedure, or did you need to fill it in in triplicate, dotting every i and crossing every t? Hard to say really – it depended which side of the bed she got out of that morning.

And how did her team respond? Well, if you've ever worked for a manager like that, you'll know the answer. They were pretty demoralised, and their standards were hugely inconsistent. Obviously, because their manager's standards were similarly wide-ranging.

Look, if your team don't know what your standards are, how can they aspire to them? They're looking to you to set the lead, and if you don't, they can't tell where they're going or how they're supposed to get there. You have to be consistent in the standards you set and the performance you expect. If something is unacceptable on Monday at 10am, it should be unacceptable on Friday at 4pm. If paperwork is supposed to be filled out a particular way, that's the way it should be done every day of the week.

It may sound unreasonable to have a basic standard and then suddenly, for no consistent reason, to expect more of people. And so it is. But it's just as unfair to let them get away with less just because you're in a particular mood. You're not being nice to