



Seven Secrets of Successful Managers

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Over the years in working with clients around the globe, I have had the pleasure of observing many managers who were and are extremely successful in their chosen professions.

Despite their very different disciplines, industries and even cultures, the most interesting thing that I've observed is not their dissimilarities, but what they all seem to have in common. I have been amazed by the consistent pattern of behaviors that successful managers all seem to share in their approach to managing others.

However, they discovered these secrets, intuitively, through instruction or example, here are seven secrets that I believe all successful managers have in common:

1. They are a transparent example. The most successful managers wear both their personal values and the values of their organization on their sleeves. They are both knowledgeable and skillful and in constant pursuit of mastery of both. By doing this, they set an example for their people both on the job and off. Whether it's a dedication to customer service, a commitment to quality or anything else, they themselves embody and practice the value and constantly strive to master and improve it. Because they always look at their own behavior before looking at others, they are believable role models and command respect.
2. They demand the same from others. They are able to visualize the skills, knowledge and culture necessary for the organization and individuals in it to succeed, and they begin to sell others on the need for change. They are impatient regarding their goal but extremely patient in helping people buy into that goal. Once they have achieved a critical mass of people committed to change, they demand and expect full adherence to the new organizational culture. Their mission is not to create a group of mirror images of themselves, but rather to help everyone achieve their full potential. In order to do that, they must set high standards and expectations for success.
3. They coach others. For successful managers every interpersonal encounter represents a coaching opportunity. Some are planned and highly structured individual or group coaching sessions. The vast majority, however, are "in the moment" opportunities. Coaching involves a range of behaviors, educating, encouraging, demonstrating, counseling, and more, but the focus of all of these actions is to help other people succeed. These managers are constantly and actively involved in performance improvement and helping their people become more talented and capable.
4. They track performance. They have definable, measurable standards of performance against which everything is measured. They clearly articulate success points or critical success factors for everyone in their organization. These standards reflect individual development plans and are therefore customized to each member of the organization. They give responsibility but expect accountability.
5. They leverage their coaching. They recognize that for some within the group the future holds greater responsibilities. They prepare future managers by coaching them to coach others. They give these people opportunities to stretch and expand their own skills by developing skills in others.

6. They implement a mastery program. Many within the group are happy with their current level of responsibilities. Successful managers do not allow this to be an excuse for not growing. They constantly raise the bar and invent new ways for people to continue to grow and improve in their current positions. They recognize that continued growth and improvement is a life long journey rather than a destination, and the programs they implement reflect this.
7. They repeat, repeat, repeat. Successful people in any endeavor know that there is no such thing as overnight success. Good managers achieve their level of success through consistency and discipline, and they help others succeed through repeated coaching and example. They know the only way to maintain a high level of success is through repetition and discipline. In fact, without repetition and discipline, the previous six secrets are only good intentions rather than successful management practices. With them, they become the habits that form the basis of continuing success.

As with many secrets to success, these may seem like common sense. They are in fact easy to understand, but they are very difficult to execute. And it is in the execution that those at the top of their game, the truly successful managers, differentiate themselves from those who are only in the game.