



In this lesson, you'll learn how to manage frontline managers effectively by exploring the answers to these questions:

- What is your role as a manager of managers?
- Where do other managers most need your support?
- And what are some best practices for managing other managers?

Click on the first lesson below—or the *“Start eLearning”* button above—when you're ready to begin.



Understanding Where Your Role Begins—and Ends



Where Should You Focus Your Efforts? 5 Key Competencies



Best Practices for Managing Managers



Summary



Understanding Where Your Role Begins—and Ends



Same, but Different

In some ways, managing non-management-level employees and managing other managers are the same. You're setting objectives, giving feedback, delegating, and achieving results through others.

But in other ways, managing other managers is entirely different.

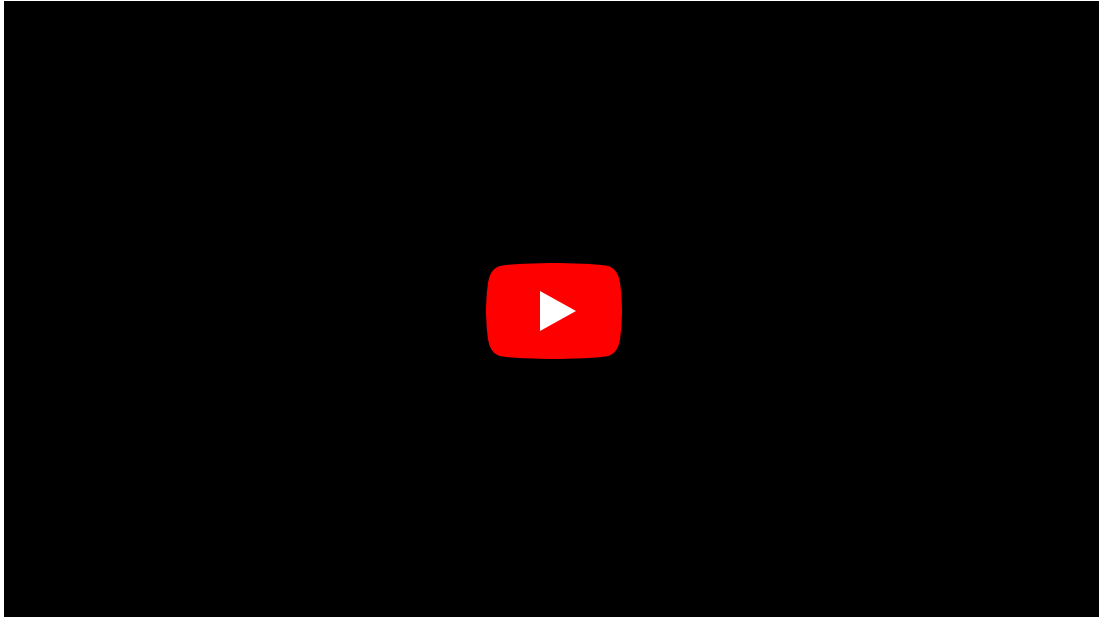
Managers serve varied roles in the company, so they have different needs and require a more refined leadership approach than other employees. They need less input on the day-to-day execution of tasks, and more input on the bigger vision, goals, and direction of the company. They need less instruction about what to do or how to do it, and more coaching on leading and motivating others.

In this lesson, you'll learn how to manage frontline managers effectively by exploring the answers to these questions:

- What is your role as a manager of managers?
- Where do other managers most need your support?

- And what are some best practices for managing other managers?

 **YOUTUBE**



How To Effectively Manage Managers

Watch this video to learn about the differences between managing non-management-level employees and managing other managers-along with three tips to make the transition.

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First, take a step back to understand your role better. Managing other managers requires you to zoom out. You're no longer focused on the details of day-to-day tasks and execution. Instead, you need to focus on high-level feedback, strategy, and vision. Your role includes:

- Advising managers when they come to you for help

- Communicating the high-level vision, goals, and objectives
- Coaching managers to develop their leadership and decision-making skills
- Talking about different management strategies
- Delegating high-level projects or objectives
- Giving feedback on management styles and outcomes
- Seeing the big picture to keep different management teams moving in the same direction
- Modelling effective management behaviours and shaping a constructive management culture
- Serving as a sounding board for managers' ideas
- Recognising and rewarding managers for accomplishments

Your role does *not* include telling managers how to manage their teams, how to execute a project, or how to solve their teams' problems. That's micromanagement. It's also not up to you to explain projects or delegate tasks to individuals on your managers' teams. Individual team members should not be reporting to you with questions, ideas, or concerns—they should be reporting to their direct manager.

Click through the comparisons below to further visualise or conceptualise your role as a manager of other managers:



It can help to think of your management team as a puzzle. Each manager is responsible for their own piece of the puzzle. You help them see the big picture and make sure that all of the pieces fit together.



Or, imagine that you're in the entertainment industry. You're the event coordinator, and your direct reports are *talent* managers of their own bands. You don't manage the band members directly, but you do oversee the bigger event—making sure that all of the right elements come together at the right time to create an amazing show.



Finally, imagine that you're renovating a house. Your team managers are like contractors—and you're the homeowner. The contractors come to you for the direction, vision, and parameters of the renovation project. They then direct their crew to execute it.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Where Should You Focus Your Efforts? 5 Key Competencies



You can best support other managers by helping them develop their management skills. Expand the rows below to introduce five key management competencies and learn some tips to develop each with your frontline managers:

Delegation —

Managers need to learn how to delegate tasks to their team members effectively. Make sure that managers aren't doing all of the work themselves. Help them learn how to distinguish the tasks they should handle from the tasks their team can handle. Also, coach them on effective delegation techniques such as:

- Matching tasks to team members' interests, strengths, and bandwidth
- Setting clear objectives
- Monitoring progress without micromanagement
- Holding team members accountable to their results

Setting and Tracking Goals —

Managers need to set and track goals for their teams. Ask managers probing questions like, *"What do you want your team to achieve this year? What would success look like for your team*

this month? What can your team deliver by X date?" Or, "How will you measure your team's progress?"

Also, equip managers with training on how to set **S.M.A.R.T** goals—or, goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based.

Giving Feedback —

Managers need to be able to evaluate their team's work and give both positive and constructive feedback. Effective feedback is specific and behaviour-based and given regularly. Make sure that managers know how to deliver feedback that's actionable and motivating, rather than feedback that's vague, insulting, or demoralising. Some strategies that you can use to help managers in this area include:

- Reviewing the manager's team project together, and then asking the manager, *"What do you think? What did your team do well? How could they improve? What feedback would you give them? How will you bring it up and what would you say?"*
- Joining the manager in meetings with team members who are demonstrating more serious performance or behavioural issues at work.
- Talking to managers about performance expectations or criteria for success. What is the standard that managers should hold their teams accountable to? What factors should managers consider while evaluating their team's work?

Communication —

Communication challenges are the root cause of most people problems and project breakdowns. Managers need to facilitate open, regular, and accurate communication with their teams. Coach managers on topics such as:

- Working with people who have different communication styles
- Navigating disagreements
- Having difficult conversations
- Establishing effective team communication systems or processes

- Making sure that team members' ideas feel heard and valued
- Getting team members to communicate proactively and effectively with their manager and with each other
- Communicating change

Leading and Motivating Others

Finally, managers must learn how to get things done with and through *others*. Just like you are leading and coaching them, they need to learn how to lead and coach individual team members. Here's what you can do to help:

- Talk to managers about specific coaching strategies—such as the GROW model of coaching
- Invest in leadership and training opportunities for managers
- Encourage managers to get to know what motivates their team members and help them to brainstorm ideas for increasing motivation

There are a few other ways that you can help managers assess and develop these key competencies. For example, you can **observe** the manager while they're managing. Sit in on a meeting that they're leading, and then debrief how it went afterward. You can collaborate on ideas to solve a problem, refine a process, or develop a strategy for a new project or initiative. You can also **model** best practices. For example, you might lead a meeting announcing major company changes to show a manager how you approach it. You can talk to the manager about the strategies you used so that they can do it the next time. Finally, you can **evaluate** a team's results. Since managers are responsible for their team's outcomes, evaluate the team's performance to inform your feedback or goals for the manager.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Best Practices for Managing Managers



Managing other managers is a delicate balance. You need to give them the autonomy and authority to manage their teams how they see fit. But you must also give them the direction and strategies they need to continue to improve and succeed in achieving company goals. Follow these best practices to keep the balance and manage other managers effectively:



Give them space, and follow their lead. While you should ask managers regularly if they have any questions, are facing any challenges, or need any support from you, trust that they'll take the lead from there. Don't step in where you're not needed. Listen to what they want help with, and focus your efforts there. Otherwise, give them the space, trust, and confidence to do their thing.



Find opportunities to collaborate. Embrace opportunities where you and a manager can work together on a project or strategy. You can talk them through what you're doing and how you're thinking, and observe them in action. The more they see how you handle projects or approach problems, the more strategies they'll learn to employ with their own team. Also, use the opportunity to give them immediate feedback.



Set clear expectations. It's always important to set clear expectations, but it's especially crucial when managing other managers. A miscommunication with managers can have a ripple

effect on multiple projects throughout the company. Be specific and crystal clear when communicating timelines and vision, and describing requirements for a project's success. Ask managers if they have any questions about expectations before sending them off.



Ask for their input. Managers will have a better understanding of how their team operates, responds to change or challenges, and what their biggest risks and motivations are. Ask for their input before making decisions that will affect them or their teams. Get their feedback on how an idea or a change might be received.



Focus on alignment. It's extremely important that you and your managers are aligned on company goals, values, priorities, and even your approaches to communication, performance management, discipline, and motivation. Discuss these matters regularly to ensure that everyone's decisions and actions are based on a shared understanding.



Conduct one-on-ones and give feedback regularly. Conduct regular one-on-ones to touch base with managers, talk about their career aspirations and development, and give feedback or provide coaching or mentoring.

Check Your Understanding

True or false. As a manager of other managers, it's up to you to coach frontline managers and tell them how to overcome team challenges and best manage their teams.



True



False

SUBMIT



Complete the content above before moving on.

Summary



Managers require a different style of leadership and coaching. It's impractical—and ineffective—to have your hand in every project or every team that your managers oversee. You have to learn how to delegate, provide feedback, give advice, and communicate objectives from a higher level. Let your managers be your ears and eyes for how things are going and what their teams need. Let *them* figure out how best to deliver on your objectives or solve a problem that you've identified. That will free up your time to focus on the big picture items—like keeping the different teams aligned, making sure all of the moving pieces are heading in the same direction, and coaching managers on the key competencies they need to become effective leaders.



Don't criticise managers in front of their teams. Instead, help managers boost their credibility with direct reports by giving constructive feedback privately and looking for opportunities to compliment them or show confidence in their work and ideas publicly.

CONTINUE

Course Summary



Effective performance management happens when managers and teams connect regularly for constructive and actionable feedback. Consistency is the key. You and your team know exactly what to expect from each other—and the reward is success for team members, management, and the company.

Key Takeaways

- Annual reviews are a year-round affair. Nix surprises and last-minute scrambling by giving feedback frequently, keeping notes on your discussions, and adopting the motto, *“When you see it, say it.”*
- Focus on specific behaviours and make goals simple so your team members are clear on how to implement them.
- Try meeting with your team members weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually—and make objectives clear for each frequency type.
- When performance falls below par, differentiate between *“I can’t”* and *“I won’t”* behaviours and choose your motivation tactics accordingly.



Use Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) as an aid to address recurring issues— not as a disciplinary measure.



Don't forget your high performers! Left to their own devices, they may walk out the door. However, you must adjust your approach to their unique needs.



Similarly, managing other managers requires a different, coaching-style approach. Act as an advisor to help them set goals, align priorities, and *lead their own team*.



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successfully completed the
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