



August 2020

THE BUSINESS NEWSLETTER FROM AUSWILD & CO
PO Box 527 Kogarah NSW 1485
Chartered Accountants and Business Consultants

Website: www.auswild.com.au
Telephone: (02) 9588 0100
Facsimile: (02) 9588 7865

WHAT MAKES A GREAT MANAGER?

Since its founding in 1998, Google has become one of the Big Four technology companies alongside Amazon, Apple and Microsoft. And yet, 20 years ago, you probably would have laughed if someone said your life would one day be irrevocably changed by a company called Google.

Google has spent the last 12 years studying the habits of its effective managers. Now, based on its robust internal research and employee feedback on what makes a great manager, Google has identified ten behaviours of its best managers.

It is no secret that a good manager can make all the difference in how happy your team is and how well it performs. So why not learn from one of the most successful data-driven companies out there?

Here are the 10 traits of Google's best managers –

1. “Is a Good Coach”

Employees need and appreciate a manager who takes time to coach and challenge them. They guide and share insights at the right time, letting their team gain valuable experience along the way, and not just when they are behind. Every employee needs to be managed – star performer or not – and simply leaving some employees to do their jobs without any type of feedback or guidance is detrimental to their career development.

2. “Empowers Team and Does Not Micromanage”

Micromanaging is a common mistake managers make without even realising it, one that discourages and frustrates employees. Google's research found that its best managers do not micromanage, instead offering the right balance of freedom and advice, to enable their direct reports to explore new ideas, to experiment, and to develop and adapt their own working style.

3. “Creates an Inclusive Team Environment, Showing Concern for Success and Well-Being”

In Google's first list, this was described as “expresses interest in and concern for team members' success and personal well-being.” Later, this was updated to reflect research on psychological safety that allows for risk-taking. As Google puts it – in a team with high psychological safety, teammates feel safe to take risks around their team members. They feel confident that no one on the team will embarrass or punish anyone else for admitting a mistake, asking a question, or offering a new idea. It is not enough just to have a diverse team, good leaders and managers strive to create an inclusive environment every day.

4. “Is Productive and Results-Oriented”

Employees don't want to work for a lazy boss. They would rather be part of a team that is productive and successful, and that is hard to do if the leader doesn't set the tone. As a manager, you will be looked upon as a role model. You can't expect people to give their best at work if they don't see you doing it, so be sure you're always on your “A” game – that means putting in the effort and getting results.

5. “Is a Good Communicator—Listens and Shares Information”

Communicating effectively is one of the basics of being a good manager (or a good employee for that matter). But it is also important to remember that great managers prioritise listening – this enables understanding. When you listen to people, they feel personally valued. It signals commitment. They also share what they can, realising transparency is beneficial for the team as a whole. They share sincere and specific praise, early and often. But they also don't hold back from giving necessary (negative) feedback, making sure to frame it in a way that is constructive and easy to learn from.

6. “Supports Career Development and Discusses Performance”

Google recently added the “discusses performance” component to this behaviour. The company pointed to research from Gallup that found only half of employees know what expectations they should be fulfilling at work. “To free employees to take initiative and inspire high performance,” Gallup concluded, “managers need to set clear expectations, hold employees accountable for meeting them and respond quickly when employees need support.” In other words, managers should not only help their team develop skills and advance their careers, but also be clear about expectations and give honest feedback about performance.

7. “Has a Clear Vision/Strategy for the Team”

Great managers know where they are going, and they make sure the whole team knows, too – rather than keeping them in the dark. They are also careful to communicate “scope,” realistic expectations as to what specific actions are needed to execute a strategy, and each team member's role in delivering. A clear and shared vision can and will help members of your team work well together.

8. “Has Key Technical Skills to Help Advise the Team”

Great bosses understand a job well and are skilled at the work they oversee. If an effective manager is brought into a new department, they take time in the beginning to familiarise themselves with their people's everyday work and challenges. This earns them the respect of their team.

9. “Collaborates Across Google”

Effective cross-organisation collaboration and stronger decision-making were important to Googlers. Whether you are at a large corporation, an early-stage start-up, or a non-profit, managing your team and leading it to success can depend at least in part on how well you can work with other teams.

10. “Is a Strong Decision Maker”

While it is important for a manager to listen and share information, employees also appreciate one who can make decisions. Managers should tell their teams not only what decision they have made, but also why they have made it. The small extra effort will help the team understand context and priorities, improve their own future decision-making, and stay engaged as well as informed.

This month's newsletter was adapted from an article entitled “10 Traits of a Great Manager” by Stav Ziv published in The Muse.com. Stav studied history and dance at Stanford and later journalism at Columbia. Before joining The Muse, Stav was a staff writer at Newsweek.

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*Birthday greetings for very special birthdays go to **Kevin Booth** of Booth's Motor Group Gosford and **Norm Aldridge** of Lugarno. We wish you both a very **Happy Birthday**, and may there be many more.....Our very best wishes for success go to **Angus Terry** on the opening of his Anytime Fitness Gym in Robina, Queensland.....Our very best wishes for speedy recoveries from surgery go to **Marie Lai** and **Darrell Gaukroger**.....Our deepest condolences to **Graeme, Chris, and Robert Parker** of Colac and their families on the passing of their father, **John Parker**.*

Important: This is not advice. Clients should not act solely on the basis of the material contained in this bulletin. Items herein are general comments only and do not constitute or convey advice per se. Also changes in legislation may occur quickly. We therefore recommend that our formal advice be sought before acting in any of the areas. This bulletin is issued as a helpful guide to clients and for their private information. Therefore it should be regarded as confidential and not be made available to any person without prior approval.