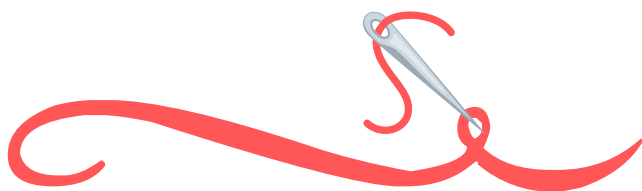


# THE MAKING OF A GOOD MANAGER



A collection of articles to help  
develop better leaders.

YVONNE PONCE  
FOUNDER OF "IMAGE IS ME"



# THE MAKING OF A GOOD MANAGER



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Yvonne Ponce is the Founder and CEO of “Image Is Me”, Professional Image Consulting Service. For over 20 years, Yvonne has been passionate about improving leaders, professionals and individuals’ overall professional performance and personal lives. In recent years, Yvonne took a special interest in improving managers/leaders’ approach to leading business – leading projects – leading people which birthed her blog “The Makings of a Good Manager”. Yvonne holds a Master’s Degree in Human Resources Management & Development and Graduate Certificate in Organizational and Executive Coaching including personal coaching theories and practices from New York University. Yvonne is known for her riveting facilitating and coaching style and fresh perspective that has been noted to transform lives.

# THE MAKING OF A GOOD MANAGER

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## Good Managers

By Yvonne Ponce

*Professional Leadership & Career Consultant/Coach*

Many people leave their jobs because they have ineffective managers oftentimes with abrasive and/or uninspiring leadership styles. Mr. Andre Lavoie CEO and Cofounder of the world's fastest-growing management building performance systems ClearCompany, seems to agree. He feels that many employees don't just "*quit their jobs, they quit their bosses.*" Years of data collected regarding management and employee relationships through Career Builder Surveys seem to confirm that employees leave or remain at their jobs based on their opinions of their boss' ability to lead and perform.

Further information seems to suggest that employees often leave a job and accept employment elsewhere even if the new job offers a lower salary. Working in an environment that is less toxic and stress-free outweighs the desire to make more money. It may sound crazy to some however, many employees feel that maintaining one's sanity is more important than a high salary. One colleague I know accepted a part-time job even though her previous job offered a full-time salary and benefits. When I asked her why she would leave for reduced pay, she said that she could no longer deal with her manager and needed to work in a less stressful work environment. The fact that she would make a move like that shed light on the role that managers have in the work environments and how they impact workers.

Over the years, I have observed many great people including myself become unmotivated because of working in environments that are run by ineffective managers. Some may argue that the term "bad management" is based on perception and one's own experience. There is, however, considerable evidence that proves that when managers provide support and give employees the attention they need, employees are happier. When employees are happier, they are more productive and there is a reduction in staff-turnover.

In this series of articles, I will share with you that I have compiled during my 35+ years of work experience including 15+ years as a manager. I have worked with and observed diverse managers in the corporate, educational, and social services sectors. These articles will focus on what effective leadership looks like, characteristics of effective managers, how to motivate employees, and keys to building happy and productive work-teams. I strongly encourage managers and future managers who want to build strong committed teams to read all the articles and apply the principles in them. It is my belief that the information in these articles will be extremely useful and help you build a thriving team that will help you reach your organization's desired outcomes.

## Good Managers Lead with Integrity

By Yvonne Ponce

*Professional Leadership & Career Consultant/Coach*

The Oxford Dictionary defines integrity as, “The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.” Integrity is an adherence to ethical values and moral uprightness. When managers lead with integrity, they exhibit many of the following traits as they conduct day-to-day business at the workplace - honesty, respectfulness, helpfulness, patience, decency, fairness, sincerity, and trustworthiness.

Good managers who lead with integrity are honest. If they say they are going to do something they do it. If they make a promise, they keep it. If they make a mistake, they admit it. Their word and reputation are important to them. Although there will be uncomfortable instances where telling the truth will hurt, good managers are always truthful. They will make the effort to be tactful and careful not to damage one’s reputation or image. Good managers who lead with integrity are mindful of how they treat people in any given situation. For example, if an employee is underperforming, a manager that leads with integrity would not disclose or publicly address their concerns in front of other employees but would discuss the matter privately.

Managers who lead with integrity want to ensure that their employees are equipped to perform at their best levels. They will go beyond their regular duties to ensure that their employees get the assistance they need. Good managers ensure that their employees are continually involved in activities that promote their growth and development. If they see a need for additional assistance, training, or even encouragement, they will seek ways to provide it. Good managers will make sincere attempts to provide necessary supports because those supports empower their employees.

Good managers who lead with integrity treat everyone the same. They contribute the same efforts that they require of their employees. They value their employees’ contributions. All contributions are important. Managers who lead with integrity exhibit the same behaviors and qualities that they expect from their staff. They become the kinds of people that others would want to work with. Employees are frequently reminded that there is, “*No Big I and Little You.*” They believe that each member is as equally important as the next and that everyone contributes to the success of the organization.

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Good leaders make it a priority to get to know their most valuable resources, their employees! They make a sincere effort to get to know what inspires them, what challenges them, and what motivates them. Good managers realize that employees are happiest and most productive when expectations are clear, when they feel respected, and when their work is recognized and valued.

Good managers who lead with integrity are positive role models because they “practice what they preach.” They lead by example. Good managers operate with qualities that they would like to see from their employees. Managers that want great employees must be great managers. This quote by Alison Levine from her book, *On the Edge: The Art of High-Impact Leadership*, summarizes the employee/manager relationship; “*How we treat people is always our choice, and if we choose not to be respectful, it can come back to bite us.*”

## Good Managers Are Loyal

By Yvonne Ponce

Professional Leadership & Career Consultant/Coach

Loyalty may be defined as a strong feeling of support or allegiance to someone or something. Characteristics of loyalty are dependability, reliability, trustworthiness, honesty, and commitment.

Managers who are loyal are committed to their employees and their company. They are willing to contribute their knowledge and expertise to help employees meet the organization's goals. Loyal managers will support their employees' efforts to perform well by providing training and opportunities for growth. They are committed to ensuring that employees are continually advancing. They take full responsibility for their progress. They are committed to ensuring that the organization is thriving.

Managers who are loyal, show appreciation for their employees by acknowledging their work and accomplishments. They do this publicly and privately. They share their successes regularly. Good managers foster a positive atmosphere where employees are recognized and rewarded for their contributions. Good managers are not intimidated by their employee's achievements. They realize that those achievements/successes will benefit everyone and ultimately contribute to the success of the organization.

Loyal managers are honest and will accept responsibility for all things that occur at the workplace. They realize that some things work well, and others do not. They work diligently with those employees who need additional assistance, being careful to rectify negative situations and circumstances immediately. Their employees trust their feedback. They realize that constructive criticism and encouragement can improve their job performance.

Managers who are loyal and committed to their employees are transparent. They are clear about protocol and expectations. They are honest about successes, challenges, and failures. Good managers make sure that all employees understand their importance in the organization. They are committed to cultivating a climate of mutual respect and loyalty even in adverse times. Glenn Llopis, President of the Glenn Llopis Group, a consulting firm that focuses on strengthening leadership within corporations, summed it up in this quote from Forbes Magazine, *"When leaders can be transparent, problems are solved faster; teams are built easier; relationships grow authentically; people begin to promote trust in their leaders and high-level performance emerges."*

To cultivate highly productive, cohesive, and loyal teams, managers need to be role model of what loyalty and integrity look like.

## Good Managers Are Respectful of Employees

By Yvonne Ponce

*Professional Leadership & Career Consultant/Coach*

Respect can be defined as admiration with regard and esteem. When we behave respectfully, we are expressing ways to show admiration and regard to someone or something. Being respectful is treating people in a dignified and positive manner based on admiration and regard for their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

Good managers are respectful of all employees. Managers who are respectful express appreciation for all employees. They show appreciation to all members regardless of titles or positions or even how long they have been with the organization. They realize that everyone's efforts and contributions have an impact on the success of the team.

Good managers understand the importance of showing respect to all members.

**R.E.S.P.E.C.T.** defines the employee and manager relationship at the workplace; **(R)**emembering **(E)**veryone's **(S)**ervice, **(P)**urpose, **(E)**fforts, **(C)**ontributions and **(T)**alents matter. They contribute to the success of the company. It simply means that everyone's work should be recognized and appreciated, and everyone is important. It means that all feedback matters. Every voice matters. It also means that every concern, question, and suggestion will be acknowledged. Managers that lead with respect realize the importance of finding ways to connect with their employees and make them feel needed and respected.

Not surprisingly, an article in the Harvard Business Review entitled, Motivating People written by Christine Porath, states that more than **54%** of employees do not feel respected by their managers. When these feelings are not addressed, employees will become disinterested, unfocused, unhappy, and less productive. Employee dissatisfaction contributes to increased absenteeism and high levels of staff-turnover which are both negative signals that something is wrong at the workplace. All too often people leave their jobs because they don't feel appreciated, seen, needed, or respected.

At the beginning of employment, many employees and their managers are excited about their future working together. Admiration and respect for what the new employees can contribute to their team is usually evident. Employees are usually excited about sharing what they know and how they will contribute to the team. As time goes by, that admiration and excitement start to wane. What changes? What causes the break-down? Oftentimes, the manager has not provided necessary supports for the new employees to be successful or hasn't shown appreciation. Employees want to feel admired and appreciated for what they do. A simple "thank you" or a "pat on the back" can have huge positive impacts on employees.



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Respect is a two-way street. If you want respect you have to give respect. Respectful managers will ensure that they continually strive to maintain a positive work environment where everyone's contributions are noticed and encouraged, and mutual trust and mutual respect are the norm. If you want your employees to bring their "A-Game" to work daily and stay fully engaged, you must respect their contributions, regardless of how big or small, as significant to the organization.

## Good Managers Are Flexible

By Yvonne Ponce

Professional Leadership & Career Consultant/Coach

Have you ever heard the phrase, “Insanity is doing and/or behaving the same way over and over again and expecting different results?” Managers who are successful realize that the ability to change and become flexible, are necessary in order to propel their organizations. Flexibility can be defined as the ability to bend easily without breaking. In an organization, this means that managers should be capable of shifting or changing course if the situation demands or requires it. The manager’s ability to shift and adjust easily will contribute to its success. Good managers foster a climate of flexibility and/or openness to change. They recognize how critical flexibility and willingness to change are to a company’s progression.

Why would a manager resist change even when there are clear signs that change is necessary? I suspect that many managers interpret a call for change as a personal reflection of their incompetence or inability to lead. They feel as though they are ineffective but in fact, it is quite the opposite. Good managers never, “stay the course” if something no longer works. Doing so would be detrimental to the organization. Good managers understand that there are times to “stay the course” and there are times to be flexible or change direction. They will sense when change is necessary and will easily shift course and make necessary adjustments if these signs of discontentment become evident:

- Employee turn-over or absenteeism increases.
- Employees become combative with one another and/or supervisors.
- Employees become reluctant to participate and cooperate.
- Employees become disengaged and unmotivated particularly those who were once high performers.
- Productivity declines and deadlines are not being met.
- The organization’s goals and benchmarks are not reached.
- The company is losing its competitive edge.

In summary, Victor Lipman, an author and contributor to Forbes Magazine says it best, “Rigidity is the enemy of progress.” If rigidity, as Lipman suggests is the enemy of progress, I suggest that flexibility is the catalyst for advancement and growth. Managers must not be afraid to shift the paradigm if or when necessary. They must prioritize the needs of the organization over their own agenda being careful not to allow their *egos* to negatively, (E)ffect, (G)rowth, (O)vertime.

## Good Managers Must Have Excellent Leadership Skills

By Yvonne Ponce

Professional Leadership & Career Consultant/Coach

Strong leadership skills are critical to the success of an organization. Business consultant and author of the article, [The Balance](#) Ms. Susan Ward states that, *"Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal."* Good managers are successful because they use their skills and abilities to guide and lead others to achieve their goals. They do so by inspiring and empowering their employees. Organizations that are thriving and/or successful, are usually led by managers with excellent leadership skills. Those leaders understand how to cultivate a functional and thriving team that is committed to achieving success. They take full responsibility for what occurs with their employees. They can efficiently and effectively manage their teams while focusing on a goal and the people that will help execute that goal. Good managers realize that all members are important and valuable to the success of the organization.

We cannot assume that all managers have excellent leadership skills, many do not. Dysfunctional organizations lack good leadership. Underdeveloped and/or poor leadership skills negatively impact the organization's growth and success. Managers must find opportunities to continually develop their leadership skills and improve their operational expertise. I strongly advocate for management on all levels to attend professional development and training. I remember working for a company where the management team and staff members were mandated to attend professional development training entitled, [Creating High Performing Teams](#). Several managers were inattentive and left the room often during the session. They missed the most critical components of the training. To no one's surprise, their organization was toxic and suffered the loss of several key players including me.

Managers that understand the importance of improving themselves must embrace the fact that their self-improvement will positively impact their teams and organizations. Indra Nooyi, CEO of Pepsi Cola, stated that, *"CEOs must not only draw on previous experiences and abilities they have developed, but also commit to lifelong learning as a process of continual self-improvement."* Good managers have a clear picture of their leadership styles, abilities, and challenges. They have self-awareness, regularly engage in self-assessment and practice self-management.

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**Self-Awareness** is the ability to recognize and monitor one's character, feelings, habits, motives, desires, emotions, actions, and challenges. Self-awareness is self-reflection. Studies show that managers who have a clear understanding of their character traits and personality, are better leaders. Good managers consistently and willfully take time to engage in self-awareness. They are cognizant of their strengths, weaknesses, and motivators. They can quickly adjust and/or correct their behavior when and where necessary so that their teams succeed. They take failures seriously and are good at refocusing. They are aware of consequences of their behaviors and how those behaviors and actions can impact the organization. They think critically to correct their mistakes and analyze systems that work and those that do not. They set realistic goals and are aware of obstacles that may impede them. They monitor their successes and challenges as they work to cultivate thriving and successful organizations.

**Self-Assessment** is the evaluation of one's actions and attitudes. According to BusinessDictionary.com, self-assessment is, "*the continuing process through which managers at all levels evaluate the effectiveness of their performance in all areas of responsibility, and determine what improvements are required.*" It is a tragedy for managers to consistently come to work with bright eyes and bushy tails ready for the team to execute a list of goals and demands without noticing that their team is disgruntled and demotivated. The culprit for a demotivated and disgruntle team could be a poor management style. Good managers should regularly assess themselves and evaluate their effectiveness. They learn from failures and successes. Self-assessment is vital for a thriving team.

Managers and employees who are looking to move into management roles should be required to complete a comprehensive assessment that measures their leadership abilities and competence prior to becoming a leader. One assessment tool that I would recommend is, *The Leadership Intelligence 360 Degree Feedback Survey*. It is a system where employees, peers, colleagues, and organization leaders anonymously enter information in an online format, about an employee. The person receiving feedback also completes a self-rating survey with the same questions. The questions represent a broad range of work-related situations and behaviors that are critical for effective leadership and success. The information is then tabulated and the employee who was rated, receives feedback with suggestions. It is a great tool used to assess a person's ability to be an effective, successful leader. Studies have shown that an organization's successes or failures are directly linked to its leadership.

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**Self-Management** is the governance of self. It is the ability to control or regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behavior in varied situations. Good managers readily embrace self-management. Examples of self-management skills are goal setting, time management, and accountability. Good managers willfully change behaviors, adjust attitudes, and alter management styles if necessary, for the good of the organization and employees. These changes will positively impact and contribute to the success of the organization. If managers are going to "*drive the people*," they must be willing and able to master self-managing skills or they will be ineffective as leaders. Over the years, I have observed ineffective management create hostile and unproductive work environments filled with dissatisfied and miserable workers which have led to the department and team demise. I strongly suggest managers who refuse to manage their attitudes and check their emotions be retrained or risk elimination from their leadership role.

In short, leadership is an ongoing process that includes years of learning, developing, and evolving; refining their ability to lead a team. Therefore, good managers would never deceive themselves into thinking that they have arrived at all they could be as a leader.

### **Epiphany**

I propose that there is a key difference between a great manager and good manager: A great manager usually reflects a leader that leads an organization to consistently achieve their optimal success in accomplishing their bottom line. A good manager usually reflects a leader that places emphasis on the value of the people that are responsible for executing the bottom line.

## Insights from Experts

*“I believe one of the best qualities of a manager is accountability. From my experience as an employee and manager, a good team has a manager that can justify actions or decisions; and take responsibility for his/her team. When you know your manager has your back, you will go above and beyond to meet the requirements of any assignment.”*

**Deveter Brown**

**Integrated Marketing Director & C.E.O. of Leah Simone Designs**

*“Good managers care about the people who do the job and not just the job that is done by the people. The attributes of a caring manager are priceless and sometimes outweigh monetary benefits. Good managers have manners. They say hello and good morning. They make eye contact, they acknowledge their staff, they smile and say thank you. They have a vested interest in seeing their employees succeed.”*

**Vernelle Scott**

**Former Assistant Manager of JP Morgan Chase Bank**

**30+ years of Branch management & Operations**

*“One of the main things that works for me is that I teach the importance of teamwork. I role up my sleeves and get in the trenches with my team. You must show your team members that you appreciate them and the work they do. Also, you must be organized with all tasks at hand.”*

**John Townes**

**Manager for 30+ Years**

*“A leader must possess so many positive qualities. When I reflect on my journey as Assistant Principal/Principal for 17 years, I know that it was respect and leading by example that was key to my success. I can still hear what was in my heart and what my staff often articulated. They would say, that I was fair and that I listened to their concerns. Therefore, I truly believe that is the essence of, leading by example.”*

**Vangela Kirton**

**Retired Principal**

*“A good manager understands what motivates people and takes an interest in the career growth of his employees. He works with his employees to set goals and expectations, while giving them the autonomy to complete the tasks that help them complete their goals. A good manager is not a micro-manager but he is available for support and guidance in the event his employee needs the backing to get the job done.”*

**Jake Clark**

**Director of Reporting and Analytics**

*Cont'd.*

*"Three words describe the essence of true leadership: vision, inspiration, and growth. A good leader clearly sees a goal and inspires people to accomplish it, and through this synergistic process—created by the leader—the organization, the people, and the leader learns and grows."*

**Robert J Rochford**

**Arch-Bishop 40 + Years of Leadership**

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