



New Manager Playbook

You're a new manager - now what?

How to set the right tone and make your first few weeks count

Free Workbook Available

THINKINGFOCUS



LEAP into Management

Congratulations, you are a new manager. Whether it's your first managerial role or managing a new team, this mini-guide will set you up and help you make the best possible start to your new role.

Once the euphoria of your promotion has passed, your thoughts will likely turn to what this means for you. Understandably, you will have a range of emotions, these might include:

- Concerns about Competence: "Am I ready for this? Can I really lead a team effectively?"
- Fear of Failure: "What if I make a wrong decision? How will it impact my team and career?"
- Eagerness to Prove Myself: "I need to show that I am capable and can bring positive changes."
- Learning and Growth: "What new skills do I need to learn? How can I grow into this role?"
- Building Trust: "How can I earn the trust and respect of my team?"

As a new manager, one must shift from focusing on individual achievements to leading a team. This transition requires a mindset that values collaboration, delegation, and empowerment of others.

In the guide, you will find four phases that will set you up for success:

Learn

You're entering a new situation, so your priority is understanding the reality of the situation. That means spending some time with your boss to understand what is expected of you, your goals, standards and behaviours. Use this time with your boss to lay out the ground rules for your relationship and how you can get the best from each other.

Evaluate

So, you have established a solid foundation with your boss, and you know what's expected of you. It's now time to evaluate your team and their performance. Is your team working on the right things in the right way at the right time? Do you have a team that is capable and willing to deliver your team goals?

Adjust

So, you have assessed your team, and you now must ensure they are clear about what you expect of them and what they expect of you. You need robust goals and a way of measuring if your people are doing the right things at the right time in the right way. You should seek to understand what is getting in their way, preventing them from achieving their goals.

Perform

So, your people are clear about what you expect of them. It's time to develop a cadence that allows you to review, reflect and adjust based on your team's performance.

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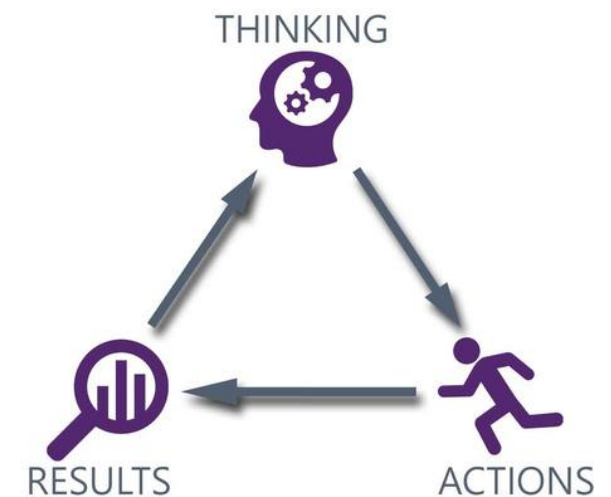
Success begins with the right mindset

Your mindset is the foundation for everything you do in life.

Have you ever noticed that some people seem to effortlessly achieve their goals and enjoy success in all aspects of life, while others seem to struggle despite their best efforts?

The difference often lies in their mindset.

Your mindset is the lens through which you view the world and interpret events around you. It shapes your beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, ultimately determining your success and fulfilment.

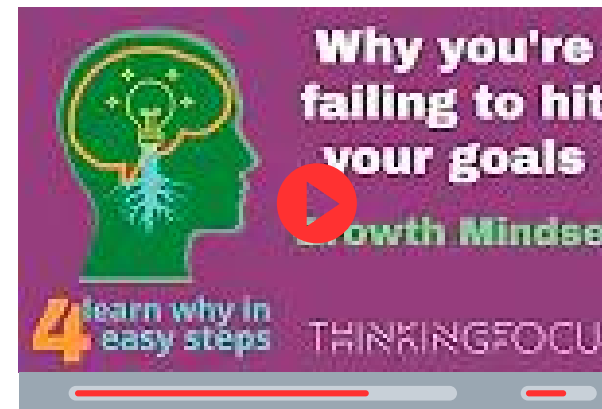


With a helpful mindset, you can overcome challenges and setbacks and find opportunities for growth and development in every situation. A growth mindset allows you to embrace learning and strive for improvement rather than becoming discouraged by failure.

On the other hand, an unhelpful or fixed mindset will hold you back and limit your potential. It can lead to self-doubt, fear, and a lack of motivation, ultimately preventing you from achieving your goals and living your best life. This impact is why we believe mindset is the bedrock.

As a new manager, you must be mindful of what you are thinking and how that seeps out to your team. A helpful, solution-focused mindset is not the problem; unless your team have unhelpful thoughts, the problem-focused air can lead your team into thinking you lack the confidence in the belief that you can do what's needed to succeed.

You're a new manager and need to be mindful of what you're thinking and what your people are thinking. Consider how you could create an environment where your people feel safe to share their unhelpful thinking yet feel empowered to find solutions.

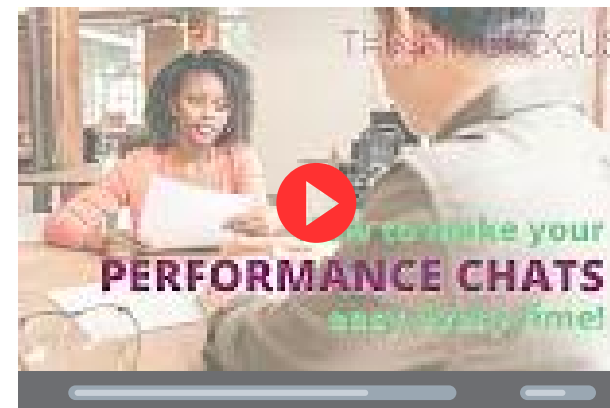


LEARN

About You

Your first step is to spend some time with your new boss and understand what is expected of you. What are your goals and objectives, what standards are you expected to meet, and what behaviours will you be assessed against?

Any new line manager relationship should start with agreeing on what you expect from each other. This is a two-way process that forms a psychological contract for how you get the best from each other. It will include not just what you want from each other, like support, challenge and guidance, and perhaps not being micro-managed. These expectations should also agree on what happens when either of you falls below the agreed levels. How will you let each other know? What form will it take? How quickly will the feedback come, and in what context - public or private?





About Your Team

Getting to know your team is essential; without them, you will find it hard to deliver your goals and objectives. To find out who's who, who knows what, and who does what. Uncover what they are working on and what challenges they currently face or foresee.

Next, look at the team's goals: how are you performing? Are your team members working on the right things that will advance you to your goals?

If your team are not working on the right things, you have a potential quick win, getting them focussed on the right stuff. If they are working on the right stuff, your task is to assess how well the team is performing and assess what gaps exist. You will delve deeper into the team performance by looking at your team members - how are they performing against their goals? Are they the right goals? If not, redefine and align their goals with the team's goals. If they are the right goals, are they on track or off track?

About the Situation

Typically, there are three reasons why you have got the role: someone left or got fired due to poor performance, someone was promoted, or, less commonly, it's a brand new team. Your goal here is to establish what you are walking into. If you are following someone successful, find out what made them successful. You could reach out to the person you're replacing, talk to the team, and, of course, talk to your boss. If someone left under a cloud, you will want to talk to your boss to understand what challenges, issues, or problems led to the change.

EVALUATE

Purpose

Purpose is vital for new managers as it offers clear direction and clarity in decision-making, enhancing team motivation and engagement. It fosters a cohesive team culture, improves communication, and builds resilience and adaptability in facing challenges. Embracing purpose-driven leadership not only aids personal development but also plays a crucial role in employee retention and attraction as modern workforces increasingly seek meaningful engagement in their roles. Therefore, understanding and conveying purpose is a fundamental aspect of effective management.



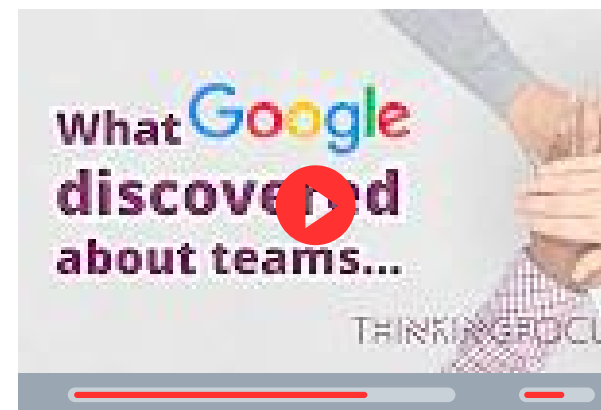
Clarity

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Team

Having gained clarity, you can now assess your team's capability and willingness to deliver your team's goals. Typically, when people underperform, it comes down to one of four factors: they lack knowledge, skills, or the tools to do their job, or it comes down to the wrong attitude. You will only know if they have what they need to deliver for you when you have assessed them against their role and goals—standards and expectations you have of them. During your assessment, you should look for interference. Interference is the limiting factor that makes doing the job harder than it needs to be. This might be bloated processes, slow systems or organisational constraints like overbearing and outdated policies. There could also be self-limiting beliefs and confidence issues in your team, causing them to do things in a particular way or avoid steps entirely.



ADJUST

Clarity

It makes sense that for any team to perform they need to know it is they need to deliver. The secret in providing a holy trinity of clarity and that means your people knowing exactly what is expected of them, why it's important and having the confidence that they can do what is asked of them.

Defining clear goals is essential and SMART enables you to focus or refocus your people on the right things. SMART helps to eliminate ambiguity that limits or stalls performance. Too many goals fail due to different interpretations of what was expected.

Your goal as a new manager is to develop, coach, support, and manage your team to do the right things at the right time and in the right way. To this they need clarity.



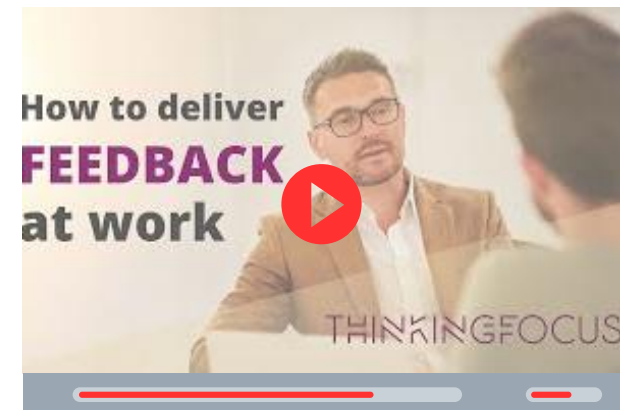
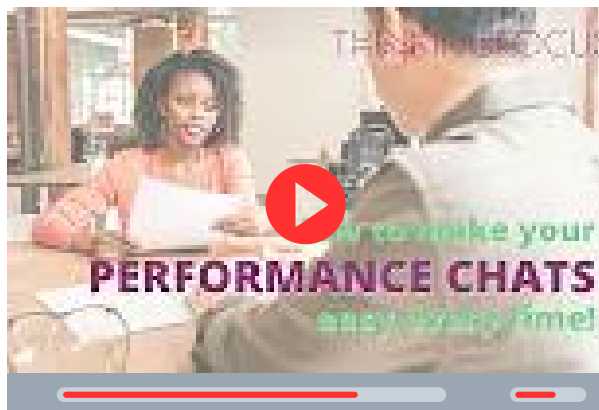
Team

In the same way you agreed expectations with your line manager you should do the same with your team members. This establishes permission for you give each other constructive feedback when necessary and address performance issues in a way that enables you to move forward.

Undertake a goals review with each team member, take each goal in turn and test them against the team goals, do they align to the team purpose and are they contributing to the success of the team. Are they focused on the right things? Do they need redefining?

Your team's confidence comprises two components: their belief in themselves and their belief that what is being asked of them is achievable. As a new manager, encourage your people to share their confidence; this will flush out potential risks to your future success. Use a 1-10 score as an easy way to assess belief levels. Anything five or less, is a red flag that could impact your goal, this is your cue to explore the reasons behind the score.

Most teams learn to normalise ways of working, systems and processes. The challenge is that when they are detrimental or limiting your success, your team can rarely see it. This 'interference' prevents you from performing to your potential, invite your team to share their frustrations, concerns and ways they would improve their role. This will flush out three buckets of thoughts: there are givens that can't change, things they complain about but don't necessarily care about and finally, those they do care about; this final bucket is an area to focus on. Invite your team to define goals for a better future state; they will be motivated to address the issues, and eliminating or mitigating them will make the team more cohesive and unlock hidden potential.

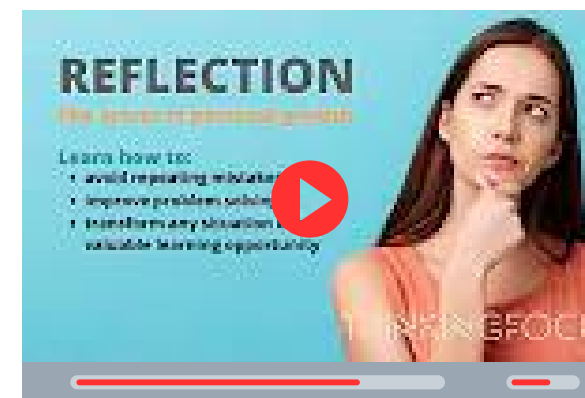




Reflection

Taking time to reflect ensures you keep learning, when done properly it will help you to identify what works, what doesn't work and what needs to change to move you towards your goals.

- What did we learn?
- What does that mean for me/the team?
- What will change/be different?



Performance Management

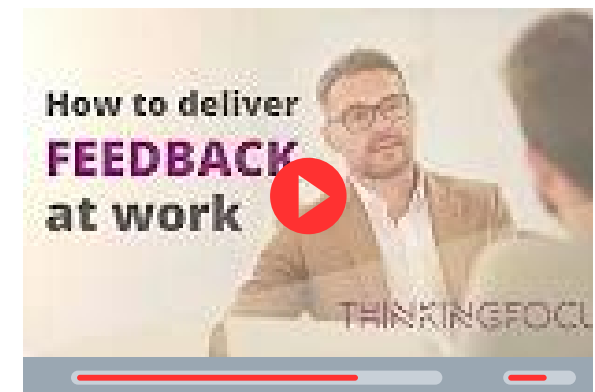
There is a common misconception that performance management only happens when people are not doing what is expected of them. It's seen as a formal process that places people on a performance improvement plan or disciplinary. Let's be clear a manager's raison d'être is to manage performance every single day, that means mobilising the people and resources at their disposal to achieve company goals.

As a minimum your people need:

- **Clarity** - they need to know what is expected of them and what good looks like, eliminate ambiguity.
- **Purpose** - they need to know why what they do matters to them, you, the team and the company.
- **Confidence** - they need to believe they can do what is asked of them, you need to know if they don't!

No one expects everything to go smoothly all the time, but they do expect you to know what's going on and take action where appropriate. There are several strategies that will serve you well:

- Address performance issues and poor behaviours immediately,
- Give feedback as soon as possible and in line with what was agreed in your expectations chat.
- Coach - ask questions that cause your people to think, learn and grow, everyday.
- Not all meetings are the same, confusing meeting purpose will cost you time and focus.
 - **Daily stand-up** - 30 second update per person - share wins and support needed
 - **Weekly Tactical** - 45 minutes - wins, blockers and support needed
 - **Monthly Review & Refocus** - 60-90 minutes - review wins, address issues as a team, refocus





NEW MANAGER CHECKLIST

LEARN

- I know what is expected of me.
- I have agreed how best to work with my line manager.
- I know who is in my team, what they do and challenges they face.
- I understand the current reality of my team and their.

ADJUST

- My team each know what is expected of them and they of me.
- My team each know their goals, why they're important and have the belief they can
- My team are working on the right things at the right time in the right way.
- My team and I know what is preventing us from delivering at the next level.

EVALUATE

- I know why we exist as a team and the value we bring to the organisation.
- I know what we are trying to achieve and the value it adds to the business.
- I know where my team gaps are - knowledge, skills, tools and mindset.
- I know what is preventing us from delivering at the next level.

PERFORM

- I reflect regularly to aid my learning and growth.
- I provide timely feedback and coach my team to continually improve.
- I hold disciplined and focused meetings to drive my team forward.
- I hold people to account, addressing performance issues quickly.

About Thinking Focus

At Thinking Focus, we believe that teams and business units underperform, not by choice but often because of organisational or self-imposed constraints.

Recognising that interference, real or perceived, is the key to unlocking a company's true potential. By enabling people to think and work differently by defining a clear and shared vision, Thinking Focus unlocks productivity, implements change and delivers sustainable results.

Thinking Focus works with teams and business units in organisations worldwide, helping them achieve breakthroughs by enabling them to think differently. Our clients range from medium-sized enterprises to divisions of blue-chip multinationals.

Working with teams on a specific issue or across a business unit to drive productivity, we tailor the approach to deliver the desired outcome. We challenge teams to deliver accelerated behavioural change and performance improvements.

We understand the importance of a helpful, possibility mindset. So, we offer resources and support to help you cultivate the mindset you need to succeed. We develop practical tips and strategies from programmes, breakthrough workshops, coaching, and even gamification. We take complex theories and develop mental models that can be applied simply yet impactfully in the workplace.



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THINKINGFOCUS

So, what do we bring to the table?

The short answer - we will unlock the potential within your company. We partner with you to develop a high-performance environment and provide the tools to create change and drive success. While it is often hard to measure ROI, it is critical to our mutual success.

Not only do we work to recapture our client's initial investment, our clients consistently see returns on that investment many times over.

We:

- Engage, equip and enable you to achieve the personal and business outcomes you want.
- Empower your team by transferring knowledge, skills and a robust toolkit...allowing you to continue to deliver time and time again, long after we're gone.
- Challenge you to be better.
- Partner with you and own your goals whilst we are engaged with you.

Remember, your mindset is the cornerstone for everything you do or try to do. With the right mindset, you can achieve anything you set your mind to.

So, let us help you build a positive, growth-oriented mindset and unlock your full potential!

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