



8 characteristics of a rockstar manager

episode 002

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TIPS TO MASTER THE 8 CHARACTERISTICS

1) Cultivate and Demonstrate Respect

- Make space for all voices in your meetings. Have people write down ideas and share round-robin style.
- Be fully engaged in active listening. Ask questions and seek understanding before responding.
- Avoid sending emails after 10pm or before 7am. Do not contact someone while they're on vacation unless it's critical and urgent.
- When one person interrupts another, call it out by saying something like "Hey, Jim, let's let Karen finish her thought and then you can be next."

"Great managers ensure each person on their team feels respected, not only by them but by every member on the team."

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2) Provide Autonomy

- Have clear goals and milestones that allow people to work whenever and wherever they want, as long as they deliver high quality work on time.
- If you struggle with micro-managing, give clear instructions or parameters in writing and then step back. Set up regular check-ins to 'course correct' if needed.
- Ask each colleague how they'd like to work, what their preferences are for hours, location, process, etc. and experiment with giving them additional autonomy in whatever form is possible. Set clear expectations and metrics to enable you both to assess whether it's working.

“Balance the form of autonomy that matters to each team member with what the job or environment allows.”

3) Do you ask for and integrate feedback?

- Say hello or send greetings to your colleagues, especially those who work remotely. If you're comfortable, mix it up by sending a giphy or your bitmoji.

- Find moments to ask about your colleague's weekend, hobbies, kids, etc. Write down what you learn to help you remember and reference it later. (To avoid it feeling like prying, offer your experience first e.g. my son was in the school play last night. I loved theater when I was a kid. Do you enjoy theater?).
- Host an after hours, out of office social event. Consider a dinner, bowling, a picnic with families or any other low pressure environment which will allow people to get to know each other.

“Build relationships that establish trust so team members can talk openly with you without fear of what you might think.”




4) Show Appreciation

- Say “thank you” or “nice work” accompanied by a very specific description of why you are thankful or what the individual did that was particularly fantastic.
- Write a handwritten note, give a relevant book or other small token of appreciation that shows you went the extra mile to be thoughtful and intentional.
- Speak with each of your team members about how they prefer to be acknowledged for their contributions. Share an article on the topic to establish shared language and a framework for the conversation.
- Incorporate moments of appreciation into your daily or weekly routine. At the end of your weekly meetings, ask your colleagues to share a ‘shout out’ of appreciation to acknowledge one another.

“When you understand how each of your employees prefers to be appreciated, you can say thank you in big and small ways that are meaningful to them.”

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5) Foster Enjoyment

- Ask each team member about their aspirations, what work they enjoy doing and want to do more of, and what they may want to try in the future.
- Reflect on the current atmosphere of your team. Is it one in which each team member feels connected and comfortable? If not, start by envisioning the culture or qualities you desired for this team.
- Offer projects and opportunities for team members to lean into their strengths and really shine.
- Engage your team in a discussion about team values and how you can collectively create an atmosphere that fosters enjoyment.


“Finding enjoyment in work typically comes from both feeling engaged in the work itself and comfortable in the environment.”

6) Communicate Effectively

- Before calling a meeting, consider if another form of communication may be better suited, such as an email or shared document.
- Be thoughtful about who needs to be engaged before a meeting to gather their input, who needs to participate in the meeting, and who needs to be informed of the outcomes afterward.
- Be straightforward and explicit about your expectations.
- Give clear, actionable feedback and guidance. Consider using the Radical Candor model by Kim Scott.
- Ask questions and listen actively to your colleagues. Invite their feedback so you can improve how you work and manage.

“It’s your responsibility to share the right information at the right time, in the ideal format with the right people so that everyone can do their best work.”

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“When you invest in someone’s growth and success, you build goodwill while building capability.”

7) Invest in Your People

- Position learning as part of the job. Consider introducing a practice to your team of spending 1 hour each week on professional development.
 - Provide stretch assignments that allow someone to learn by doing. Offer additional support to develop their skills to help them succeed.
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- Identify mentors, books and articles, and other resources to help your team members grow. Recommend development opportunities such as workshops and trainings, help secure budget for them, and/or offer time off for them.
 - Consider hosting lunch-n-learns or starting a team book club to foster learning within in the team as a whole.

8) Put the Team First

- Reflect on your management style. Do you adjust your management approach based on each individual and his/her goals and needs? If not, consider how you can alter your behavior to help each team member be most successful.
- Invest in growing your own capabilities to be a better team leader, to be able to better support the individuals and the team as a whole.
- Ask yourself, ‘what does my team member need to be successful with this’ and then help set them up to succeed.
- Ask for resources, stand up for your team, and do your best to remove roadblocks or minimize bureaucracy so your team can get their work done.

“Remove roadblocks, shield the team from unnecessary stress, and view success as a result of the team’s work.”