

The 12 ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

Feeling like something isn't going well in your daily efforts to manage your organization? Maybe you don't have enough of one or more of these essential management competencies. If that's the case, you're blocking your road to success. Further, you can bet this issue is holding back company growth too.

According to Bradford Smart, author of *TOPGRADING*, persons in management positions need 50 competencies to do the job right. Yes, 50! That's a lot of skill. And—that's why many "managers" aren't making the grade. That's why many "managers" really shouldn't be in that corner office. That's why many "managers" won't be there doing the same things five years from now.

Of the 50 competencies, 12 are absolutely critical. Performing poorly in even one of these can result in termination, demotion, or just plain daily struggle and chronic frustration. Let's take a look at each of the 12:

SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH "A" PLAYERS

If you allow yourself to continue to put up with "B" and "C" team players, you are settling for second and third best. Why? Is it because shedding those mediocre folks and hiring top notch employees requires more effort than you want to expend? How many "A" players do you have now? If 90% of your staff isn't composed of "A" players, you've got a big problem. If you choose to ignore this, the fallout reflects on YOU.

PASSION

If you lack drive, motivation, and focus, you lack passion. Others can see it and feel it even if you try to hide it. Having little or no passion sucks you dry. Day after day you ride a treadmill that merely drains your energy. Know that you cannot inspire a fly to do anything if you move through life like a robot. What would it take for you to restore your passion for what you do?

INTEGRITY

Integrity is about who you are at the core. It's not something you can fake, but it is something you can develop. How often do you engage in gossip, tell lies, break promises, push boundaries, and breach confidences? Doing even one of these diminishes your personal integrity. Having shining integrity is truly priceless. Avoid compromises in this area.

AMBITION

While people admire a certain amount of ambition, they don't like steamrollers. On the other hand, door mats aren't appealing either. This is one of those competencies which has to be balanced somewhere between the two extremes. If you exhibit too much ambition, you run the risk of turning off lots of people. If you present yourself as lazy, you won't get anywhere in your career.

POLITICAL SAVVY

This is an art that requires knowledge, keen insight, sound judgment, and sensitivity. It requires you to be observant, on your toes at all times. Yet it also demands honesty. Utilized wisely, this competency can serve you and your organization well. This is not at all about backstabbing, dirty pool, or being a slippery politician. True political savvy has absolutely no sleaze mixed in it.

ADAPTABILITY

You are adaptable if you can take any set of circumstances and deal with them appropriately. While you're aware of your feelings and preferences, you don't let them hold you back from doing whatever is necessary. Adaptability takes flexibility and trust in yourself. It means you can embrace complexity and challenge rather than resist them.



TEAM BUILDER

One of your primary responsibilities as a manager is to build high functioning teams, not silos. If you fear the power of a team, you are insecure in yourself. A secure manager works to empower others in appropriate ways, creating a win-win situation. Know that personal and departmental narcissism is obsolete. If this is where you're stuck, maybe management isn't for you.

TEAM PLAYER

You and your team need to interface regularly with other departments within your company in order for the best overall work to occur. In fact, organizational viability and sustainability depend on such dialogue. Are you encouraging it or shutting it down? You can't be in the middle on this one. Either you have such a mindset or you don't. Where you stand reveals how open you are to creative opportunity.

TRACK RECORD

Your personal historical track record determines the kind of present you are experiencing as well as the future you will create. If others know you as someone people can count on, you are halfway "home". How do folks see you? You can't put a price tag on a sterling record. This means you've got to deliver what you promise—on time—every time.

INTELLIGENCE

Excelling in management takes two types of intelligence: intellectual or academic and emotional. One without the other won't work for you. You need to be a quick study AND be able to read other people. Brilliant strategists and planners who can't see that the stakeholders are upset won't go far. So, if you consider yourself to be bright, which kind of "bright" are you?

LIKEABILITY

To be likeable, you have to shed any trace of arrogance, narcissism, ego, superiority, sarcasm, mockery, and demonstrations of a condescending attitude. Yes, all of them need to go into the trash can. If people seem to pull away from you, even sometimes, scrutinize your approach with them. Is your behavior drawing them towards you? Or do you exude vibes that tell others you find them unworthy of your attention, time, and investment?

RESOURCEFULNESS

Of all the essential competencies, this one is the mega competency. Without the ability to be resourceful hour by hour, you cannot succeed in management. It's that simple. Resourcefulness takes different faces: delegation, problem-solving, and opportunity creation. Often it means making lemonade out of lemons. Your employees and peers know if you are a resourceful person. They observe evidence of it—or lack of it—every day.

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