

THE **POCKET BOOK** OF

MANAGEMENT

HACKS



OVERCOMING

THE **25** MOST COMMON

MANAGEMENT

OBSTACLES



☰ When I Work



INTRODUCTION

Ask anyone in management “What’s the hardest part of your job?” and the answer is almost always “the balancing act.” As a manager, it’s your job to make sure that you keep all the pieces straight and moving; otherwise, things might fall to pieces. Below, we address 25 of the most common management obstacles you’ll need to juggle, the common bumps that will try to offset them, and specific suggestions for keeping you centered. Use these hacks to help you maintain your sense of balance.

RESOURCE/MONEY MANAGEMENT

OBSTACLE

Managers get so caught up with the daily activities that demand their attention—managing personnel, interacting with customers, scheduling, advertising, and so forth—that they unintentionally neglect one of the less glamorous duties: accounting. But, if you disregard the responsibility of handling your business’ finances and budgeting, the fabric of your company may begin to unravel as the money floats by without your knowledge.

SOLUTION

To stop subconsciously avoiding the drudgery of accounting, make the process an easy and regular thing. Long gone are the days of needing to stare into the prison cell bars of an Excel sheet for hours on end. Instead, download one of the affordable programs available online (such as the 3 listed below) to make playing with your money more of a planning and learning experience—and thus, one that’s more enjoyable than painful. Create a rough monthly budget for yourself, gather spending data (that is, keep track of where your money’s going), and alter your behavior accordingly to match your budget. In doing this, you might be surprised to find a large percentage of your money is being spent on things you never intended to buy in that quantity or that frequency.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

In addition to using any of these programs, be sure to read their literature for more thorough advice on how to best manage your money.

- *You Need a Budget (YNAB)*
- *Mint*
- *Expensify*

INSPIRATION

“IF YOU WISH TO
GET RICH,
SAVE
EARN MONEY,
BUT IT TAKES A
WISE MAN TO
SAVE & DISPOSE
OF IT TO HIS OWN
ADVANTAGE”
— A FOOL CAN —
WHAT YOU GET.
BRIGHAM YOUNG

“..... WHAT GETS
MEASURED
..... GETS
MANAGED”
PETER DRUCKER



HIRING EMPLOYEES

OBSTACLE

When an applicant's resume gives you an idea of a potential employee's past experiences, it doesn't give you a thorough idea of his or her future goals. Simply because he's always done Human Resources work in the past doesn't mean you should automatically slot him into an HR role within your company. Doing so will likely cause him discontent with the job and annoyance with you for not paying attention. Alternately, if an employee doesn't know what she wants out of working with your company, there's a 99% chance you won't be able to provide it for her.

SOLUTION

When interviewing, ask applicants what they desire in a career to see if (and how) their goals align with your company's. If they have answers already prepared, then you should be able to tell fairly quickly if the applicant would fit well with your company. If the applicant is unsure of what they want, you should be wary about hiring them, since an employee without any internal direction is likely not going to thrive at any company. No matter how much they profess to love the work a company does, they won't be able to find their places within the larger operation.

INSPIRATION

“ DO NOT
HIRE A MAN (OR WOMAN)
WHO DOES YOUR WORK FOR
FOR MONEY, BUT HIM (OR HER)
WHO DOES IT FOR
THE LOVE OF IT ”
HENRY DAVID THOREAU
“LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE”

“ IF EMPLOYEES
DON'T KNOW WHAT TRULY
MOTIVATES THEM,
THEIR LEADERS HAVE NO
VIRTUALLY NO
CHANCE OF MOTIVATING THEM ”
IAN HUTCHINSON, CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER,
LIFEBYDESIGN.COM.AU AND AUTHOR OF PEOPLE GLUE

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “Why Employee Happiness Matters,” *When I Work*
- “5 Hiring Mistakes Most Business Owners Make,” *When I Work*
- “The 7 Cs: How to Find and Hire Great Employees,” *Forbes*



FIRING EMPLOYEES

OBSTACLE

Ever heard the phrase “It isn’t you, baby; it’s me” in any stereotypical teenage love story? Well, surprisingly, the phrase may have some validity in the workplace. As a manager, you’ll cross paths with a lot of employees, some you’ll jive well with, and others you won’t. However, just because your mindset and an employee’s aren’t perfectly aligned doesn’t mean said employee automatically does bad work.

SOLUTION

Before you swing the swift hammer of employer justice, consider the legal, moral, and performance implications of firing this person. First, look inward and ask yourself a few key questions. Are you targeting this person for actions not related to work? Is this a personal discrepancy that has no bearing on the employee’s ability to complete his job? Could you have done anything more to exhibit proper work at your company? Second, see if the employee has any protections or claims of mistreatment by the company, as you never want them to retaliate against the company if you let them go. Third, if you conclude there’s no possibility for a rapid turnaround and that the employee is only costing your company, then make sure you have proof of this before striking the firing match. Sometimes there are just bad fits for your company culture, and once you’ve concluded it’s time to let them go, it’s best to let them go quickly.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “How to Deliver Uncomfortable Employee Feedback,” *When I Work*
- “12 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Letting An Employee Go,” *When I Work*

INSPIRATION

“ IT'S BETTER TO SPEND MONEY ON A REALLY GOOD ATTORNEY THAN A REALLY BAD EMPLOYEE. YOU'RE BETTER OFF FIGHTING THEM ON THE OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMPANY THAN FROM INSIDE YOUR COMPANY.”

LARRY WINGET



TIME MANAGEMENT

OBSTACLE

As we all know, only a finite number of hours exist in the work day. And while we all get busy managing a bunch of people, product, and paper, it's quite easy to get caught up in the thick of a task. But as a manager, you need to parse out your time surveying the various parts of the whole operation to make sure they're all running smoothly, and then correct them when they aren't.

SOLUTION

There are many tips on how to manage your time better, but the most immediately applicable one is to work in unison with your body and mind, as opposed to fighting or forcing them. For most people, the human attention span waxes and wanes in periods of about 20 minutes. After that, we have a much harder time focusing on our work or the information we need to process. Use the Pomodoro Technique and Timer (or any basic kitchen timer) to help you manage your time so that you take a short break or switch tasks every 20 minutes. That way, you maximize on your natural productivity without wasting a single second.

INSPIRATION

“DON'T BE **FOOLED** BY THE CALENDAR. THERE ARE ONLY **AS MANY DAYS** AS YOU **MAKE USE** OF. ONE MAN GETS **ONLY A WEEK'S** **VALUE** OUT OF A YEAR WHILE **ANOTHER** MAN **GETS A FULL YEAR'S** **VALUE** OUT OF A WEEK”
 CHARLES RICHARDS

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “10 Ways to Manage Your Time Better,” *When I Work*
- “The 4-Hour Work Week,” (article, by Tim Ferriss) *CNN Money*
- *The Pomodoro Technique and Timer*



CUSTOMER SERVICE/ EXPERIENCE & LOYALTY

OBSTACLE

Unless the customer is blatantly wrong and trying to take advantage of your company or one of your employees, it's safer to assume the customer is without fault. With modern technology, the customer has the ability to reach millions of other potential customers rapidly through social media and email, and you never want them to have a bad experience to associate with your company, no matter what.

SOLUTION

The well-known business phrase “the customer is always right” should tell you two things about attracting and keeping customers: ¹⁾ keep the focus on them and ²⁾ make sure you always do right by them. Maintain regular contact and correspondence with your customers, even if it's about things that aren't directly related to your sales. Their loyalty to your brand should deepen over time, and the next chance they have to choose your products over your competitors', they'll remember your effort to attract them and come to you instead—maybe even bringing in a few of their friends as well. Like all people, your customers want to be treated with respect and consideration, so remember to treat them as people and not as dollar bills, and you'll create lifelong customers.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “6 Ways to Build Customer Loyalty,” *Entrepreneur*

INSPIRATION

“ IT IS NOT THE
EMPLOYER
WHO PAYS
THE WAGES
EMPLOYERS

ONLY HANDLE
THE MONEY.

IT IS
THE
WHO
PAYS
THE
CUSTOMER
WAGES”
HENRY
FORD



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT & PRICING

OBSTACLE

From your perspective, your customers only have two main options when it comes to buying a product (or service) in your market sector—your product or your competitors' product. The trick is to get the customer to pick and purchase your product, and then enjoy using it for the duration of the product's lifespan.

SOLUTION

Help your customers make the right choice (which is obviously buying your product) by putting something on the market that's notably distinguishable from all your competitors' products. Do this by figuring out who your customers really are and then asking what they really want from a product, rather than just assuming or guessing. After that, with some assistance from your marketing team, help your customers develop their individual, perceived value of your product. After all, perception is reality, and the more they perceive your product as unique and valuable, the more they'll be willing to pay for it and continue to invest in it.

INSPIRATION

“**SURE,** WHAT WE DO HAS TO MAKE **COMMERCIAL SENSE,** BUT **NEVER** THE STARTING POINT. WE START WITH THE **PRODUCT** & THE **USER EXPERIENCE,”**

STEVE JOBS

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “Pricing a Product? Read This First,” *Entrepreneur*



DEALING WITH COMPETITION

OBSTACLE

Your main competitor across town just ran a new product promotion that blew yours out of the water. They crushed it in sales for that week, and you're starting to feel that your tight grip on the market is beginning to slip. You don't want to lose customers, but you also don't want to copy your competitors' ideas either.

SOLUTION

Most importantly, always remember that healthy competition is a good thing. It drives innovation and prevents any company from getting comfortable enough with their past successes that they rest on their laurels and price gouge their customers. Beyond that, study your competitors, just as a professional sports team watches tape before a game. Determine their strengths and weaknesses, and then differentiate your company and products as the smarter/better/faster/ stronger/sleeker/cheaper alternative to your competitors. Just keep in mind that they're probably trying to do the same thing, so always be on the lookout for ways to improve and distinguish your company.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- "No Competition? Chances Are There's No Business Either.," *Inc.com*
- "How Competition Strengthens Start-ups," – *Harvard Business Review*

INSPIRATION

“ I’VE BEEN
UP AGAINST
**TOUGH
COMPETITION**
ALL MY LIFE
I WOULDN’T
KNOW
HOW TO GET
ALONG **WITHOUT IT.** ”
WALT
DISNEY



MARKETING & SALES STRATEGY


OBSTACLE

You've used all the tried-and-true marketing and sales tactics handed down to you by your old bosses. You've studied up on the ad men of lore, but little of it seems to be working anymore. The desires of the buyers have shifted, and they're becoming increasingly annoyed with marketers who only bother them when they're hard up for a sale, and then only push the transaction incessantly, forgetting that they're more than just an ATM.

SOLUTION

Content marketing is your new best friend. You're trying to build a trustworthy relationship early on with your customers so that, when it comes time to buy, they immediately think of you rather than someone else. And they do this because they already know you as a company that provides value for smaller things, so they'll assume you'll do the same for larger ones. Yes, this is harder and more time consuming than buying an ad with a movie star holding your product, but the end result is that you'll have happier and more loyal customers.

INSPIRATION

“ FOCUS ON THE  PUT OUT
CORE PROBLEM **LOTS** OF
YOUR BUSINESS **& ENTHUSIASM & IDEAS**
SOLVES & ABOUT HOW TO **SOLVE** THAT **PROBLEM** ”
LAURA FITTON,
FOUNDER OF ONEFORTY.COM

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “Marketing Strategies for the Future,” *Entrepreneur*
- “4 Principles of Marketing Strategy in the Digital Age,” *Forbes*



PRODUCT OR SERVICE FULFILLMENT

OBSTACLE

Your new company is taking off and getting awarded some larger sales contracts. However, you're worried about your capacity to deliver the full orders on time, every time. And unless you rapidly and suddenly expand your operation (which is unlikely) or change something soon, you'll have to start compromising the quality of your work, which you never want to do.

SOLUTION

Fulfillment is where you make good on your promises, and it can either be the breaking point or the last needed hook for gaining a loyal customer. First, remember to keep your sales guys in check. You never want to overpromise and underdeliver, as doing so will ruin your company's credibility and reliability. Second, make sure you have a plan in place far in advance for handling order fulfillment. You never want to be caught off guard if suddenly a large number of new sales show up on your doorstep demanding to be fulfilled ASAP. Third, outsource if necessary. Let the experts in shipping/logistics/fulfillment do what they do best, thus freeing you up to continue doing what you do best.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- "New Order Flow Paths Make Omni-Channel Initiatives Tricky," *Forbes*
- *Shipwire Fulfillment Services*

INSPIRATION

“

WHEN I'M IN MANAGEMENT MEETINGS WHEN WE'RE DECIDING

MY FUTURE

THOSE DECISIONS

ARE LEFT UP TO ME. ←

I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO GO OUT

FULFILL ALL THESE OBLIGATIONS, & SO I SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHOOSE

WHICH ONES I DO OR NOT. THAT'S THE PART OF MY LIFE WHERE I FEEL

MOST IN CONTROL” TAYLOR SWIFT



GROWTH

OBSTACLE

While personal learning and growth is always a great thing for individuals, expansion isn't always the best option for all businesses. With new markets come new problems—such as, new people to hire and manage (possibly in satellite fashion), new/more startup costs to incur, and new demographics to research. You don't want to put in all this extra time, money, and effort just to make a small profit in the end.

SOLUTION

Know your niche, know your customers, and know what they want. If you can meet their needs as well as the demands of the folks in this new market, then try for it, but always remember that it's quality over quantity. Nonetheless, have a plan in place for the reasonable growth and scaling of your company. Drawing out a roadmap ahead of time will give you direction; just remember to recognize when you've arrived at your intended destination. Growing too fast and too far can quickly backfire and take the entire company down with it. Keep the Roman Empire in mind as a cautionary tale of trailblazers hell bent on expansion.

INSPIRATION

“GROWTH FOR THE SAKE OF GROWTH
IS THE IDEOLOGY OF THE CANCER CELL”
EDWARD ABBEY,
AMERICAN AUTHOR &
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “How to Develop a Business Growth Strategy,” *Inc.com*



SCHEDULING

OBSTACLE

As manager, you're responsible for keeping track of a bunch of on-site shift workers, off-site employees, freelancers, and traveling executives all at the same time. This is far from an easy feat, as meeting both your customers' needs and accommodating your employees' availabilities are often competing demands.

SOLUTION

Find a system that works for you and your company, and then stick to it. Being consistent with when, where, and how you assign and distribute shifts and tasks will make it easier for your employees to pencil them into their own calendars. But, be understanding of your workers' personal lives interfering with their work lives, because no matter how much we try to keep them separate, they inevitably overlap from time to time. And try to diversify your workforce by hiring folks with a variety of availabilities (days, nights, weekends, etc.) so that there's never a large gap to fill when someone's unable to show up for a shift.

INSPIRATION

“A
SCHEDULE
DEFENDS FROM
CHAOS & WHIM.
IT IS A
NET FOR
CATCHING
DAYS, IT IS A
SCAFFOLDING
ON
WHICH
A WORKER
CAN
STAND &
LABOR WITH
BOTH
HANDS
FOR
SECTIONS OF
TIME.”

ANNIE DILLARD

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- *When I Work*
- “Easy Solutions to the Most Common Scheduling Problems,” *When I Work*
- *The Franklin Planner Website*
- *The Franklin Planner Calendar System Explained* (video)



DEVELOPING/IMPLEMENTING NEW SYSTEMS

OBSTACLE

You've just been informed by your higher-ups that the company will soon be going through a large overhaul. Your boss then hands you a large stack of papers outlining the new system and says that you're responsible for executing the implementation of it with your team.

SOLUTION

When managers put well-designed systems into place, they help people work more efficiently and productively. However, simply throwing the book at your employees will do nothing but discourage and overwhelm them. Instead, breakdown the larger tasks into smaller goals and provide less-ambiguous objectives with benchmarks and feedback along the way. Having smaller goals under their belts will encourage and enable your employees to attain the larger achievement.

INSPIRATION

“ AN ORGANIZATION'S ABILITY TO LEARN, & TRANSLATE THAT INTO ACTION IS THE ULTIMATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE ”

JACK WELCH

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “The 7 Steps to Implementing Change in Business,” *Small Business Chronicle*



EMPLOYEE RETENTION & ENGAGEMENT

OBSTACLE

Employees want to feel they're appreciated for what they bring to the table and that their unique sets of skills are being tapped by their managers. They also want you to recognize their potential for growth and make the most of it.

SOLUTION

Show your employees that you care. Make time to ask what their unique skills are and then assign them tasks that utilize these skills. And don't assume that just because they have past experience in one type of work they want to continue doing it for ever. Beyond that, give your employees options for growth and opportunities for advancement within your company. The more you show that you're investing in them, the more they'll genuinely engage in completing your company's work.

INSPIRATION

“AS FAR AS
ENGAGEMENT GOES
THE FISH ALWAYS
ROTS
FROM THE HEAD.
PEOPLE LEADERS
NEED TO BE THE CATALYST
TO IMPROVING
PRODUCTIVITY &
PERFORMANCE,
BUT THEY CAN'T
IF THEY'RE
NOT FIRST **ENGAGED**”

IAN HUTCHINSON,
CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER,
LIFEBYDESIGN.COM.AU
AND AUTHOR OF PEOPLE GLUE

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “7 Great Employee Retention Strategies,” *When I Work*
- “5 Tips for Managing Millennials,” *When I Work*
- “Can You Keep a Good Employee From Quitting?,” *When I Work*



CLIENT/CUSTOMER RETENTION

OBSTACLE

As you review your company's portfolio from the last quarter, you notice your rate of attrition has increased. Even worse, a number of your regular customers haven't been returning lately for repeat business.

SOLUTION

Communicate with your customers regularly, not just when you need a sale. And when you reach out to them, ask for their opinions. Send them simple surveys that are designed to help you improve your company's offerings, get feedback on a recent customer experience, and let them know that you want and care about their input and plan to change based on their comments and advice. Doing this makes your customers feel like active participants in the company's evolution, and they'll likely stick around to watch the changes unfold.

INSPIRATION

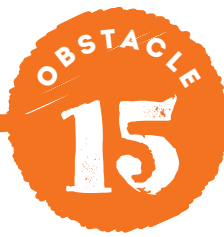
“ THERE IS ONLY
ONE BOSS. THE CUSTOMER. AND HE CAN
FIRE EVERYBODY
IN THE COMPANY
FROM THE CHAIRMAN ON DOWN, SIMPLY BY HIS MONEY
SPENDING SOMEWHERE ELSE ”

SAM WALTON

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “5 Secrets to Increasing Customer Retention – and Profits,” *Entrepreneur*
- “5 Customer Retention Tips for Entrepreneurs,” *Forbes*
- “22 Ways to Reduce Churn with Growth Hacking,” *Sixteen Ventures*, Lincoln Murphy





CHANGE

OBSTACLE

You work for a company that ascribes only to the tried-and-true method of doing business—which means it rarely ever changes its business strategy. However, being the smart guy or gal you are, you know that this willing ignorance will eventually cripple the company, as a stagnant company blind to the changing market is as vulnerable as a sitting duck with the hunter a breath away from pulling the trigger.

SOLUTION

Continue to embrace change, as it will almost always improve you, and find others in the company who are willing to do so as well. While there are many factors to keep in mind when trying to sell others on the idea of change, the two most important are that you ¹⁾ convince the company of your thoroughness and ability to usher in this change, and ²⁾ explain the “WIIFM” (What’s In It For Me) to each and every one of the big players at the company, showing them exactly how this change will improve their lives, jobs, profits, and so forth.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “The 5 Most Effective Ways to Sell Change,” *Forbes*

INSPIRATION

“ THE WORLD
HATES
CHANGE
..... YET
IT IS THE ONLY THING
THAT HAS BROUGHT
PROGRESS. ”

CHARLES KETTERING



TECHNOLOGY

OBSTACLE

The strange thing about technology is that it has this inherent duality of being both a help and a hindrance. And which one it becomes to the person using it simply depends upon the individual. The truth of the matter is technology is increasingly a part of our everyday lives and work. Those who refuse to adopt that reality and adjust will eventually be left behind, and you never want to be that person.

SOLUTION

Invest some time learning how to best interact with the technology you're using on a regular basis. The more familiar you are with your tools, the better you'll know how to use them—and the faster you'll get your work accomplished—when you need to get down to business. To quote from the resource article listed below, “Technology has made business simpler, less expensive, and infinitely customizable,” so you might as well leverage all these benefits to your own advantage. Just keep in mind that modern man is only as good as his machines, but machines are only as good as their makers and users.

INSPIRATION

“ THE FIRST RULE OF ANY TECHNOLOGY USED IN A BUSINESS IS THAT **AUTOMATION** APPLIED TO AN EFFICIENT OPERATION WILL MAGNIFY THE EFFICIENCY

THE SECOND IS THAT **AUTOMATION** APPLIED TO AN INEFFICIENT OPERATION WILL MAGNIFY THE INEFFICIENCY ”

BILL GATES

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “Tech Tools All Managers Need,” *When I Work*
- “Wearable Gadgets Transform How Companies Do Business,” *The Wall Street Journal*
- “7 Ways Mobile Will Change Business in 2014,” *Forbes*



WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA, & ONLINE ADVERTISING

OBSTACLE

No matter what product or service your company provides, it needs a web presence, even if it's just a simple landing page. Without one, your company is undoubtedly missing out on sales. And if you don't have a social media presence yet, you're robbing yourself of another great platform for communicating with your customers.

SOLUTION

As a modern business, you need a website; that's just a no-brainer these days. Before you launch face first into the pools of social media and online advertising, take a step back and formulate a strategy. Consider your target demographic and compose all your future outreach to them (that is, social media posts) in a voice that will resonate with them most. And encourage interaction with your brand, as they are far more important than mere impressions. Turning a customer into a brand evangelist for you is like getting a lot of in-person marketing for free.

INSPIRATION

“ DEVELOPMENTS IN
**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
& GLOBALIZED MEDIA**
MEAN THAT
THE MOST **POWERFUL** MILITARY IN THE
HISTORY OF THE WORLD
CAN **LOSE A WAR,**
NOT ON THE
BATTLEFIELD OF DUST & BLOOD,
BUT ON
THE **BATTLEFIELD** OF
WORLD OPINION. ”

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “Capitalizing on Social Media to Grow Your Business,” *The Guardian*
- “10 Surprising Social Media Statistics that Will Make You Rethink Your Social Strategy,” *Fast Company*
- “Gary Vaynerchuk’s Secrets to Social Media,” *Inc.com* (video series)
- Social Media Management and Scheduling Tools: • *Buffer* • *HootSuite*



INDUSTRY REGULATIONS

OBSTACLE

So you're a new, but proficient player in providing your particular service or product. And now that you've proven yourself to a larger customer base, more entities, such as the government, are starting to take notice of your rapid growth and prominence. However, with more money comes more problems.

SOLUTION

While there are opposing views on the utility and futility of industry regulations—and the call to increase or decrease them—the fact is that they're here to stay. So research your specific industry and make sure your business practices aren't violating any trade or governmental laws, as you never want your company to be fined, blacklisted, or shut down because of an oversight. This is an annoying and cumbersome part of the managerial role, but it's a necessary one if you want your business to keep producing and growing.

INSPIRATION

“ IF WE WANT
OUR REGULATORS **TO DO** **BETTER,** WE HAVE TO **EMBRACE**
 A **REGULATION** **ISN'T AN OBSTACLE** **TO** **THRIVING** **FREE MARKETS;** **IT'S A** **”**
VITAL PART **OF THEM**

JAMES SUROWIECKI

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “We Need More Government Regulation of Business... Not Less,” *The Huffington Post*
- “To Help Small Business, Cut Regulation,” *Entrepreneur*



EDUCATING & INVESTING IN EMPLOYEES

OBSTACLE

Your employees are becoming listless because they feel they've outgrown your company and your wisdom as their manager. However, at the same time, you feel they're underperforming in the workplace only because you can recognize their individual and collective potentials. Worst of all, this disconnect is beginning to decrease the productivity of your company.

SOLUTION

In any sort of educational system, the more preparation and care a teacher puts into teaching his students, the more his students will learn and thrive. Additionally, the more a student is proactive about her education, no matter the source from which it springs, the more she'll gain from the teaching. So exhibit to your employees the wisdom and knowledge you have yet to share with them, and as you teach them, push them to apply it in the workplace. Give them feedback as they implement your advice. Remind them that there's always room for improvement, no matter how much they think they've already learned and grown.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- "The Ultimate Guide to Workplace Motivation," *When I Work*
- "Give Employee Feedback that Actually Makes a Difference," *When I Work*

INSPIRATION

“THE
GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT
OF PEOPLE IS THE
**HIGHEST
CALLING
OF LEADERSHIP**”

HARVEY S. FIRESTONE



BEING A GREAT LEADER

OBSTACLE

There are many key differences between being a boss and a leader. While both management strategies may get work accomplished, the leader will do so in a way that's far more agreeable to the employees and beneficial for the company in the long run. But right now, you're not quite sure which type of manager you are.

SOLUTION

Right off the bat, you can easily name five great leaders. These men and women have become renowned because they possess (and have honed) a unique set of skills that inspires others to aspire to greatness. Research those five people and learn from their exemplary management styles. Moreover, read the articles below to pinpoint your own management style and then adjust it to become more of a leader and less of a boss. Yes, being a great leader is difficult, as it requires a delicate balance of both soft skills and hard skills, as well as the wisdom of knowing when to assert them and when to remain stoic. However, the value of a great leader is enormous.

INSPIRATION

“A LEADER IS BEST WHEN PEOPLE BARELY KNOW HE EXISTS, WHEN HIS WORK IS DONE, HIS AIM FULFILLED, WE DID IT OURSELVES”

LAO TZU

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “How to Be the Manager Your Employees Want to Work For,” *When I Work*
- “Former Police Chief on How to Inspire Employees,” *Fast Company*
- “My Boss is a Jerk! 3 Reasons Why Leaders Succeed and Bosses Fail,” *Forbes*



FUNDING, LOANS, INVESTMENTS

OBSTACLE

As you've likely heard for all your business life, money makes the world go 'round. However, when you don't have cash flowing in, and you don't know how to increase the funds, then the gears stop spinning.

SOLUTION

First and foremost, research all your possible funding options (debt/loans, equity, angel investors, venture capitalists, crowdfunding, etc.) as well as the best ways for obtaining them. Knowing where your next paycheck could possibly come from is far better than bemoaning the fact that you don't have one. With all your information gathered, rank the funding options in order of best fit for your business venture, and then go get the money in hand. Many folks will look at your business proposal and like the idea, or promise you money with a handshake agreement, but keep in mind that it's not until they've handed you a check or signed on the dotted line that they've actually contributed funds to the cause. (For more in-depth tips on how to best pitch to these potential investors, check out the TED talk video below.)

INSPIRATION

“SUCCESSFUL
INVESTING IS
ANTICIPATING
THE ANTICIPATIONS
OF OTHERS”

JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “5 Means of Funding a Small Business: How to Get Your Piece of the Pie,” *Forbes*
- “8 Mistakes Entrepreneurs Make When Pitching to Investors,” *Forbes*
- “David S. Rose on Pitching to VCs,” *TED Talks* (video)



ORGANIZATION

OBSTACLE

In the hustle to get your business off the ground, you haven't really had the time to establish any real company organization or structure. But, if you hope to grow and sustain a legitimate business, one that's requires the work and knowledge of more people, then you'll need to stop and do this now before it becomes a gigantic, workflow-stopping problem in the future.

SOLUTION

Formalize your company's work structures and processes to give employees a sense of reliability and stability when working for your company. Moreover, make the organization and management of all work orders, products, tasks, and so forth, simpler, less frustrating, and more visibly productive, so you create a work environment your employees won't run from. Organized employees are happy and efficient employees, which is mutually beneficial for everyone involved.

INSPIRATION

“ AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS STRONG & STABLE
& IS READY TO COMMIT TIME, MONEY, & PATIENCE WILL BE MORE APT TO REAP REWARDS
THAN THE QUICK-HITTING OPPORTUNIST. ”

RICHARD MILLER

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “How to Create Organization Habits that You'll Actually Stick To,” *Fast Company*
- “How to Increase Organization in the Workplace,” *Small Business Chronicle*



LEGAL & TAXES



OBSTACLE

You had a banner year with your company because you were able to successfully navigate and hack all the main issues most managers face on a regular basis. Well, all but one – the quiet taxes that somehow slipped your mind because they didn't really bother you until early April.

SOLUTION

Research the commercial tax codes for your county, state, and country to ensure you're not committing some violation and are suddenly accused of corporate tax evasion. (Even better, consult with a CPA to do it, especially if you have no experience or training in this arena.) Yes, it's a painful, tedious, and costly process, but the alternatives are hefty fines and prison, so you might as well choose the lesser of the two evils. And remember that earlier tip about saving your receipts and expenses and tracking your spending? Well, picking up that habit is going to benefit you here as well. Rather than having to sift and sort through a shoebox of paperwork every April, you'll already have all the information organized and easily shareable with your new CPA.

INSPIRATION

“
 LIKE **MOTHERS,**
 TAXES ARE 
 OFTEN
MISUNDERSTOOD,
 BUT  **SELDOM**”
FORGOTTEN.

LORD BRAMWELL,
 19TH CENTURY ENGLISH JURIST

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “Five Common Legal Issues Faced by Businesses,” *Business Dictionary*
- “9 Regulatory Issues that Will Affect Small Business in 2014,” *Business News Daily*
- “2014 Small Business Taxes: Advice from the Experts,” *Business News Daily*



IT & CLOUD DATA SECURITY

OBSTACLE

You've got your basic package of Norton Antivirus software running on your 5-year-old operating system and you're humming along until you open up your laptop to find that all your financial and client data has been compromised.

SOLUTION

So much transactional information is transmitted over the Internet and other networks these days. If a malicious hacker really wanted to access all your information, he more than likely could with enough effort. Thus, in the age of information, you should really have at least one IT guy on staff. Think of him as your tech defender. While remote tech support is nice, sometimes you need someone on call who's more familiar with your company, its needs, and your devices to discover the problem quickly and solve it permanently. If this is unfeasible at the moment, at least pay for a legitimate company to properly install quality programs on all your computers to protect your network and company information from hackers or innocent workers who may accidentally compromise the security of your data without even knowing how they did it.

INSPIRATION

“ COMPANIES SPEND ON MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FIREWALLS, ENCRYPTION AND ITS MONEY BECAUSE NONE OF THESE MEASURES ADDRESS THE WEAKEST LINK IN THE SECURITY CHAIN ”

KEVIN MITNICK

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “How to Keep Your Online Business Information Secure – Some Basics,” *The Wall Street Journal*
- “What the Small Business Owner Needs to Know About Cyber Security,” *Forbes*
- “How to Prevent Becoming the Next Target,” *Forbes*
- “Top Security Companies on the 2013 Inc. 5000,” *Inc.com*



COMMUNICATION

OBSTACLE

When you have an office full of people to manage and communicate with, you're inevitably going to end up with different personalities who want to be addressed and spoken to differently. But while you're learning the best ways to deal with all these individuals, you still have to get things done and convince people to work together.

SOLUTION

Say what you need and mean to say. Be direct, but polite and logical. Convey your thoughts with clarity and simplicity. Then ask the folks to whom you're speaking for a response, and actually listen to what your employees and coworkers have to say. Don't just hear what you want to hear either. Your employees like to know that communication is a two-way street, and they'll both respect and comply with you more because of it.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- "How to Increase Communication in the Workplace," *Small Business Chronicle*
- "Successful Business Communication: It Starts at the Beginning," *Forbes*
- "12 Unexpected Tips for Business Communications," *PR Daily*

INSPIRATION

“ WE HAVE TO
WONDER WHETHER
DIGITAL RATHER
TECHNOLOGY, THAN
EASIER TO COMMUNICATE,
IS ACTUALLY
DOING THE OPPOSITE.
WE NOW
SIT ALONE
AT A KEYBOARD, FIRING OFF
ZEROES
& ONES INTO
THE ETHER
OFFICES ARE SILENT.”

TOM HODGKINSON



BONUS

ACCOUNTABILITY

OBSTACLE

Increasingly so in today's workforce, few folks are eager to claim their mistakes and receive the consequences of their actions—whether it's a stern talking to, a rule or process to be retaught by the manager, or even a dock in pay. Instead, many workers would rather keep quiet and blame other people or external factors for their shortcomings, and thus, they neither learn from their failures nor improve upon their faults.

SOLUTION

To alter this environment of lacking accountability, share with your employees that accountability works both ways in your company. Workers should take pride in the things they've done well, and accordingly receive praise, benefits, and perhaps a raise or promotion for a job well done. But on the flipside, they should also be encouraged to own up to their mistakes, without fear of excessive repercussion—no man who's in constant fear of losing his job is ever going to admit to any mistake. Be sure to frame an employee's admission of a mistake as a teachable moment, one in which you help the employee improve his actions at work, thank him for his honesty, and let him know that he's always welcome to seek advice and counsel from you.

INSPIRATION

“ IT IS NOT ONLY
WHAT WE DO,
BUT ALSO
WHAT WE DO NOT DO,
FOR WHICH WE ARE
ACCOUNTABLE.”
MOLIERE, FRENCH ACTOR,
PLAYWRIGHT, AND WRITER

“ A DUTY DOGDED
IS LIKE A DEBT UNPAID;
IT IS ONLY DEFERRED.
AND WE MUST COME
BACK &
SETTLE THE ACCOUNT
AT LAST.”
JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

“ IF YOU THINK
SOMEONE OR SOMETHING
OTHER THAN YOURSELF
IS RESPONSIBLE
FOR YOUR HAPPINESS OR
SUCCESS, I'D GUESS
YOU'RE NOT THAT HAPPY
OR SUCCESSFUL.”
ROB LIANO

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- “Four Tips for Building Accountability,” *Harvard Business Review*
- “7 Ways to Build Accountable Organizations,” *Forbes*



CONCLUSION

While there is no single trick for becoming a great and respected manager—or a panacea for fixing all of a company’s managerial issues—these management hacks will certainly start you on the right path. The main thing to remember, though, is that you’ll need to keep all of these managerial duties in mind, almost all of the time, so that none of them fall to the wayside long enough to become problematic or disrupt the workflow. It may feel like you’re just a jester juggling too many balls from time to time, but while you’re juggling, you’re also enabling your employees to do good work. And though this constant vigilance and balanced tending may prove tiring, your company will thrive as a result.

