DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Leaders and managers need to take the time to articulate and implement a consistent set of management standards for themselves and every manager and supervisor in the company. This checklist should detail the specific practices expected of every manager and supervisor. For example, it should clarify how managers assign decision-making responsibilities, how often they meet with staff, how they set performance expectations, and how often they provide performance feedback.

Management standards create consistency and eliminate much of the "background noise" and gossip that consumes managers' time. Consistent management standards enable employees and managers to operate seamlessly across the organization, knowing what to expect.

Managers should be regularly evaluated on their performance in upholding the standards. Ideally, this is done through a 360-feedback process in which the manager's direct reports, peers and managers provide input.[1]

Here's an alphabetical set of categories, accompanied by a suggested set of "best practices" and management standards. Feel free to modify the language in each category. But be sure that each category is addressed.

Category	Management Standards
Communication	- Orient yourself so that you share all the information you have with the people you manage or supervise. - Hold a meeting at least once a week with the people you supervise. - Share all of the performance information you receive from your manager. - Make yourself accessible to all shifts and all employees you manage. If this means working the graveyard shift once a month, then do it. - Understand that communication *is the work* of a learning organization. It's not something you do when everything else is done.
Company procedures	- Ensure everyone you supervise is familiar with all company regulations, rules and procedures (it's not good enough to hand people the policy manual) - Review company procedures at least once a year.
Company values	- Ensure everyone you supervise knows the organization's values and sees how those values connect to their own performance objectives. - Hold regular forums to discuss the company's values and how they translate into day-to-day behavior.

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[1] Leading Resources Inc. provides 360 assessments of managers. Please send an inquiry to info@leadingresources.com

Compensation and benefits	▪ Ensure people are clear about their pay, their bonus structure, and benefits. ▪ Hold a meeting at least every six months where people can ask questions about compensation and benefits.
Conflict resolution	▪ Don't tolerate "triangulation." Ensure that people address conflicts with one another directly (If they can't resolve it themselves, then they can go to their boss – but only if they go together). ▪ Anticipate conflicts. Ask for help early on. A problem does not grow better with time.
Crisis management	▪ Discuss potential crisis scenarios and prepare systems to deal with them. ▪ Prepare crisis response "modules" to implement as necessary.
Customer service	▪ Respond to all requests from internal or external customers as quickly as possible – no less than within 1 business day. ▪ Treat all customers and all customer requests with a high level of respect. ▪ Constantly look to ways to manage customers' expectations by communicating what's going on – even if it's "no progress yet."
Ethical behavior	▪ Be honest and trustworthy. ▪ Be respectful. ▪ Assume responsibility for mistakes. ▪ Conduct yourself at all times in a way that serves the company's interests.
Hiring	▪ Provide detailed job descriptions for all positions. ▪ List key factors of success for all positions. ▪ List exactly how performance bonuses will be awarded. ▪ Use behavior-based interviewing i.e. focus on how candidates have achieved the key factors of success for their potential job in prior roles. ▪ Interview at least two qualified applicants before making a hiring decision.
Incentives and awards	▪ Tie bonuses to a combination of team performance and individual performance. ▪ Note every success; be a cheerleader.
Meeting management	▪ Hold staff meetings at least once a week (see communication above). ▪ Ensure an agenda for every meeting – and distribute it in advance when possible. ▪ For regular meetings, establish meeting ground rules and follow them. ▪ Facilitate the meeting – keep it focused on important stuff that warrants people's time. ▪ Ensure a written summary is distributed to all relevant people. ▪ Spend five minutes at the end of each regular meeting asking what went well and what could be improved.
Mentoring and coaching	▪ Ensure you spend time with every employee once a quarter talking about their development and what they need to learn. ▪ Identify reasonable opportunities for growth. ▪ Be a mentor to at least one other individual. ▪ Find a mentor for yourself.

Performance improvement	▪ Make sure the people you manage or supervise operate under a set of well-understood performance metrics and targets.
	▪ Build "learning loops" – weekly forums where people share performance data and discuss steps to improve performance.
	▪ Share information about the company performance – and your department's performance – on an immediate basis.
	▪ Provide individual performance reviews annually. Focus on what is working well and how the individual can improve.
	▪ Conduct "post-mortems" on major projects and decisions to enable people to discuss how to improve performance next time.
Problem solving	▪ Make sure people define the problem before they solve it.
	▪ Train people in using a data-based approach to solving problems.
	▪ Provide people the technical tools for problem solving.
	▪ Enable people to appreciate and work with different decision making and problem solving styles.
Recognize people	▪ Celebrate successes. Communicate your appreciation for every example of good performance.
	▪ Focus on team performance. Celebrate examples of teams working effectively together to achieve company goals and objectives.
Quality control	▪ Tie measurable outcomes to every project.
	▪ Collect data on internal and external customer satisfaction.
	▪ Provide copious examples of work that meets expectations of quality.
	▪ Illustrate with specific examples where quality needs to be improved.
	▪ Ensure every major project is followed by a performance review.
	▪ Avoid "micro-managing," but stay involved to a greater or lesser extent based on the employee's experience and skill.
Roles and responsibilities	▪ Communicate in writing the specific expectations and outcomes for every task and project assigned.
	▪ Define the nature of the decision-making process. Clarify who has responsibility for each decision.
	▪ Use the five types of decisions. For example, is it a consultative decision or consensus decision?
	▪ Keep checking to make sure people understand their roles and responsibilities. Once is not enough.
	▪ View yourself as a manager of decision processes – as much as a decision-maker.
	▪ Hold weekly check-ins with project managers to assess progress and address questions.
Setting expectations	(See roles and responsibilities)
Strategic direction	▪ Discuss the strategic plan – and the company's performance in achieving its strategic goals – with everyone you manage at least once per quarter.
	▪ Establish performance objectives (metrics and targets) linked to the strategic plan for the parts of the organization you manage.
	▪ Enable teams of people to hold honest conversations about success and failure in achieving the strategic objectives.

Team development	- Ensure teams have specific missions. - Ensure teams develop "operating principles" consistent with our management philosophy and values. - Construct teams so they have a balance of personalities and skills.
Training	- Provide training in at least one of these topics to the employees you manage every quarter. - Provide technical training as needed.

LRI's expert consultants can guide you through practices and processes that will result in effective performance management.
Please call us for a free consultation at 800-598-7662 or email info@leadingresources.com.