

7 Simple Management Maxims

Management philosophies are a lot like following a diet. We all know what we should do, but often struggle with the follow through. Keeping things simple is one way to improve success. Recently the Northwest Entrepreneur Network invited Brian McAndrews, managing director at Madrona Venture Group, to share his seven management maxims at Entrepreneur University.

Brian dedicated years to refining these simple yet powerful principals as he blended teams and cultures together at numerous companies. Prior to Madrona, he was Senior Vice President at Microsoft, where he successfully integrated aQuantive, Microsoft's largest acquisition into the organization. Earlier he worked at ABC and also served as a product manager at General Mills, Inc. These are the seven simple principals he used to unite teams and deliver results.

Set clear objectives, hold people accountable, then get out of the way.

This involves delegation, a trouble spot for many. Remember, it's not a leader's job to do the work. A leader should set clear, achievable goals, support the team in achieving them, and reward the success. This requires being able to find, hire and retain great talent. Order taker types need not apply. They will fail miserably. Instead seek out those who thrive on running a business. This improves success because it enables decision making to be pushed down the chain of command. Creating profit and loss centers further empowers staff. As your teams grow and they begin hiring their own talent, your role as a leader shifts. Help your team attract great talent by providing feedback on the candidates, but let the hiring manager decide to hire or not. This creates accountability for their team's success or failure.

Micro-management does not scale.

It's common for entrepreneurs to be very involved in every detail of a start up. However as the business grows leaders

Executive Insights



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need to let go to attract more leaders. A culture of micro management can stagnate leadership development. In fact, it produces the opposite effect. When middle managers take their cues from micro managing leaders it spreads like a virus, eventually permeating the entire organization and disabling leadership. Letting go can be a struggle because it forces a leader to redefine their own role—a critical step at each phase of a company's growth.

It's more important to be respected than to be liked.

It's human instinct to want to be liked. However, when being liked drives a leader's decision making, it's a sign that they will make a poor manager. This happens because decisions are based on pleasing others instead of doing what's right. Taking on a management role means that you will often be caught in the middle of conflict. You will need to see both sides of an issue--the business reasons and employee's issues. A leaders job requires being able to look someone in the eye, treat them with respect by understanding their issues, and explain the business reasons driving the decision. Respect comes when you make decisions for the right reasons, have compassion and take the time to explain why.

Give employees the right to be wrong.

The truth is that innovation and growth come from taking risks. It follows that if

employees aren't making mistakes, they aren't taking risks. The one caveat to this rule are mistakes of integrity. To ensure trust in your leadership and a strong culture, any lapses in integrity demand strong, swift and consistent consequences, regardless of position or excuse.

No jerks, period.

The message here is to never underestimate the impact of a jerk, even if they're a top performer. Jerks can wreak hidden havoc on a team. Who is leaving because of them? What is their impact on projects or customers? Skip level reviews are a great way to ferret out jerks. They also provide an opportunity to build an environment of candor.

Have a bias for action.

Teddy Roosevelt said, "In any moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing." The point is to have the courage to make the decision and align it with responsibility and accountability.

Live or die by your values.

Values are worthless if a leader doesn't live by them. The trick to living by your values is to create a short and simple list of values that you communicate widely. With a short and simple list it's easier to make your values memorable. Communicating values helps build the foundation of the culture you want to create.

These seven simple maxims for management can be the start of creating a solid foundation for motivating and challenging employees that want to take risks. Even better, they will help strengthen your employee's relationship to customers. When decisions are made

closer to the customer they feel even more appreciated.

These “Executive Insights” are based on monthly presentations provided by leading entrepreneurs at the Northwest Entrepreneur Network (NWEN.org), a non-profit organization dedicated to helping entrepreneurs succeed. The column is written by Cheryl Isen, founder of Isen & Company, a strategic marketing and public relations firm that helps emerging companies increase corporate

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