Never blame anyone in your LIFE, Good people give you happiness, BAD people give you experience, the WORST people teach you lesson while the BEST people give you memories.

THE ALL WEATHER MANAGER

AMITAVA GUHA THAKURTA

BlueRose ONE.com
Stories Matter
NewDelhi • London

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS
India | U.K.

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NewDelhi • London

For permissions requests or inquiries regarding this publication,
please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS
www.BlueRoseONE.com
info@bluerosepublishers.com
+91 8882 898 898
+4407342408967

ISBN: 978-93-7825-986-9

Cover Design: Ajay Dhyani
Typesetting: Sagar

First Edition: May 2026

This book is lovingly dedicated to my parents Dr. Tapan Kumar Guha Thakurta and Mrs.Sreela Guha Thakurta, without whom this journey would not have been possible.

The All-Weather Manager *is crafted for young individuals stepping out of school, as well as emerging and mid-level professionals globally.*

Foreword

The All-Weather Manager is an attempt to connect with young and mid-level professionals across the globe, offering practical insights into becoming a successful leader and manager in today's dynamic world.

This is not a traditional, theory- heavy textbook, nor a conventional management handbook meant only for reference. Instead, it is a deeply personal and experience-driven narrative drawn from over three decades of my professional journey across diverse industries, including hospitality, entertainment, food & beverage and retail.

Throughout this book, readers will discover real-life situations, practical lessons, and actionable insights that go beyond abstract concepts. Each chapter is designed to be engaging, relatable, and grounded in reality - allowing readers to see reflections of their own professional challenges and aspirations.

The aim is simple - to make learning meaningful, practical, and applicable. I hope that every reader not only enjoys the journey through these pages but also finds ideas and perspectives that can be applied immediately in their own careers.

Over the years, I am fortunate enough to meet and collaborate with various leaders and professionals, and each had its unique methodology and leadership qualities to lead various teams, business and assignments.

I have also worked with leaders who appeared unpredictable in their decision-making during critical moments. However, what distinguished them was their unwavering conviction. Even when some decisions seemed questionable, their determination to commit fully and make those decisions work is what truly established their leadership.

This book is a tribute to the leaders who have shaped my journey over the years. Their guidance and influence have inspired me to share these insights with the next generation.

Contents

Chapter I -

Foundation - Self-Awareness and Personal Assessment

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom." – ***Aristotle***

Understanding your strengths and weaknesses

'True growth begins when you gain clear awareness of your strengths to build upon and your weaknesses to overcome'.

We often chase "success" without realising what it actually means, and that is where many people lose direction.

Success is not a one- size fits all destination; it is a personal journey shaped by individual purpose and perspective.

At a surface level, society tends to define success through visible markers - wealth, position, power, recognition, or status. A senior designation, a luxury lifestyle, or public acknowledgment often becomes the default benchmark. But these are external measures, and while they may bring temporary satisfaction, they don't always guarantee fulfilment.

It is extremely important to **know oneself** in order to achieve success. But before we go further, a fundamental question arises - **what is success?**

Success is deeply personal. It varies from individual to individual. My understanding of success will never be equal to someone else's. Each of us is shaped by our own **goals, dreams, needs, desires, and life experiences**, and accordingly, we design our path.

Every individual possesses **self-consciousness**, the ability to reflect and determine their direction in life. Setting **short-term goals** is always advisable, and a structured **three year plan** can act as a strong foundation to move steadily toward one's aspirations.

However, once we lay down our path and begin the journey with full commitment, we inevitably encounter **external forces** - circumstances, challenges, people, and unexpected disruptions that try to push us off course.

I strongly believe that **luck does play a role** in success, but success is never built on luck alone.

"To achieve professional success, one must consistently apply effort, much like coal, which transforms into a diamond under sustained pressure over time."

It is our **agility, resilience, and self- determination** that guide us along the path we truly wish to travel.

Along this journey, we interact with a wide spectrum of individuals - **peers, supervisors, subordinates, and external stakeholders** - each with different beliefs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. Amidst this diversity, it becomes crucial to **stay focused and grounded**, without losing sight of our goals.

Talent alone is not enough to achieve success. If it were, everyone talented would reach the pinnacle. Yet, we often see many capable professionals unable to reach the zenith of their careers. This clearly indicates that **success depends on multiple factors - discipline, consistency, attitude, adaptability, and perseverance**.

The journey to success is long and, at times, unpredictable. There are phases when momentum shifts unexpectedly, sometimes even working against our progress. During such moments, patience and clarity become essential.

Many professionals are tempted to take **shortcuts** to achieve their dreams. However, not all shortcuts lead to success.

In fact, most shortcuts are **unknown paths**, and decisions to take them are often made abruptly.

Imagine you are driving on a busy city road and suddenly get stuck in heavy traffic. In frustration, you decide to take an unfamiliar side lane, hoping to reach faster. But since you do not know the route, you may end up facing more obstacles or even getting stuck again.

This is exactly how shortcuts in life work.

Therefore, success is **not about shortcuts**. It is about **staying focused, being consistent, and continuously grooming oneself**.

Learning is a never-ending process. Every day presents a new opportunity to **rebuild, refine, and rediscover ourselves**.

This chapter is a guide to help you develop **self-awareness and personal growth**, enabling you to navigate your journey with clarity, purpose, and resilience.

A manager who knows their strengths and weaknesses can navigate challenges with clarity, while develop themselves continuously, and lead teams more effectively.

A successful manager begins with self-awareness, the ability to recognize one's strength and weakness objectively. Understanding these facets is critical because it forms the foundation of personal growth, effective leadership, and strategic decision-making. Without self-awareness, a manager risks overestimating abilities or underestimating areas that require improvement, both of which can have costly consequences for teams and organizations.

1. Identifying Strengths

Strengths are the skills, attributes, and qualities that allow a person to perform consistently at a high level. Identifying these strengths requires reflection, feedback, and honest evaluation. Some common methods include:

- **Self-reflection:** Think about tasks or situations where you excel and feel confident.
- **Feedback from peers and supervisors:** Others often notice strengths we may take for granted.
- **Performance metrics:** Review past achievements, targets met, and areas where you consistently outperform.

Recognizing your strengths allows you to leverage them strategically. For instance, a manager with strong communication skills can inspire teams and handle conflict effectively, while someone with analytical strength can drive data- driven decisions.

2. Acknowledging Weaknesses

Equally important is recognizing weaknesses. Weaknesses are areas where performance can be improved or skills that require development. Ignoring weaknesses can lead to recurring mistakes, lower confidence, and reduced team efficiency.

- **Common signs of weaknesses:** Repeated errors, difficulty in certain tasks, low confidence in specific areas, or feedback highlighting areas of improvement.
- **Examples:** A manager may struggle with time management, delegation, or public speaking. A junior professional may find problem- solving under pressure challenging.

Acknowledging weaknesses is not a sign of failure; it is a path to growth. A manager who is aware of personal limitations can plan better, seek support when necessary, and work systematically to overcome them.

3. Actionable Steps to Address Weaknesses

- **Skill Development:** Attend workshops, online courses, or mentoring sessions to improve in specific areas.
- **Practice and Exposure:** Regularly expose yourself to situations that challenge your weak areas. For example, if public speaking is a challenge, volunteer for presentations.
- **Seek Feedback:** Continuous feedback helps track progress and identify blind spots.
- **Leverage Strengths:** Use your strengths to compensate temporarily while developing weaker areas. For example, strong analytical skills can support a weakness in verbal communication when preparing written briefings.

4. Benefits for a Manager

Understanding strengths and weaknesses empowers managers to:

- Develop teams that are both balanced and enriched by complementary skills.
- Delegate tasks effectively by aligning team members' strengths with responsibilities.
- Develop a growth mind set, continuously improving personal and team performance.
- Build credibility and trust by being authentic about capabilities.

5. Real-Life Illustration

A young chef working in a hotel. He excelled in culinary skills but struggled with communication, which limited his ability to interact with guests and management. By acknowledging this weakness, he started reading journals, practicing daily conversation, and seeking guidance from mentors. Over time, he improved his communication skills, enabling him to climb the career ladder successfully.

This story reflects a key principle: self-awareness and the willingness to address weaknesses while leveraging strengths are central to becoming an effective manager.

Strength	**Weakness**	**Action plan**
Skills or qualities where you excel consistently	Areas that need development or limit performance	Steps to improve or address weaknesses systematically

Example: Strong communication skills	Example: Weak public speaking	Example: Take online course, practice presentations weekly
Example: Analytical thinking	Example: Time management	Example: Use a prioritization tool and delegate tasks
Example: Team leadership	Example: Technical knowledge gap	Example: Seek mentor guidance, cross-training

"Your strengths give you the edge, your weaknesses give you direction, and self-awareness turns both into action".

To be an effective manager, one must first develop a clear understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Self-awareness forms the foundation of strong leadership, as it enables a manager to leverage their strengths while consciously working to improve areas that may limit their effectiveness.

Recognizing strength helps build confidence and ensures consistent performance. At the same time, acknowledging weaknesses fosters growth, humility, and a willingness to learn. A manager who understands himself is better equipped to make balanced decisions, seek the right support when needed, and lead others with authenticity and clarity.

It is equally important to acknowledge one's weaknesses and actively work towards improving them. While this may sound theoretical, in practice it delivers significant returns and long-term benefits for both personal and professional growth.

For instance, an individual may struggle with presenting ideas confidently in group discussions. This hesitation can impact visibility and the ability to convey thoughts or influence decisions effectively.

However, with consistent practice and a positive mind-set, one can gradually build confidence and overcome these challenges.

Unfortunately, many individuals hesitate to confront their weaknesses and, as a result, fail to progress. Even a small step towards self-awareness, combined with deliberate practice, can help build confidence and unlock greater potential.

In today's digital era, we are fortunate to have access to advanced communication tools and world- class learning platforms that enable continuous development. The key lies in choosing the right resources and using them effectively to align with our goals and aspirations.

Ultimately, self-awareness is not a one-time exercise but a continuous journey. Managers who invest in understanding and improving themselves are better prepared to lead, adapt, and succeed in an ever-evolving professional landscape.

Sharing an experience:

Early in my career, I met Ravi. He was always confident on the operations floor; however, the moment an MS excel sheet was mentioned, that confidence would quietly fade away.

Numbers confused him, formulas intimidated him, and he often relied on others to prepare reports. It was not that he lacked intelligence - he simply avoided what he did not understand.

One day, during a monthly review, his manager asked him a simple question about sales trends. Ravi had the data, but he could not explain it clearly, because he had not prepared the sheet himself. That moment stayed with him. It was not embarrassment- it was a realization.

That evening, instead of avoiding Excel again, Ravi opened his laptop and began with the basics. The first few days were frustrating. Cells did not align, formulas returned errors, and he almost gave up. But he stayed consistent learning one function a day, watching tutorials, and practicing with real work data.

Weeks turned into months. Slowly, the same tool he feared began to make sense. He discovered shortcuts, created simple dashboards, and even started analysing trends rather than just reporting numbers.

Six months later, in another review meeting, Ravi did not just present data, he told a story with it. He highlighted patterns, suggested improvements, and answered questions with confidence. His manager smiled and said, "This is impressive, Ravi."

What was once his weakness had become his strength and not because Excel changed, but because Ravi did.

And the biggest lesson he learned was simple sometimes, the things we avoid the most are the ones that can transform us the most.

This story reminds us that true growth begins with self-awareness. Strengths give us an advantage, but it is our willingness to work on weaknesses that defines our progress.

Personality assessments and its applications

"Personality assessments are mirrors that, when applied wisely, transform self-awareness into purposeful action and better decisions."

1. Introduction

In today's dynamic workplace, technical expertise alone is not enough to succeed. Organizations increasingly recognize that **how people think, behave, and interact** plays a decisive role in performance, leadership, and culture. This is where personality assessments come into play. They provide structured insights into individual behavioural tendencies, helping managers make more informed decisions about hiring, development, and team dynamics.

Personality assessments are not about labelling individuals- they are about **understanding patterns**. When used responsibly, they become powerful tools for building self-awareness and enhancing organizational effectiveness.

2. What Are Personality Assessments?

Personality assessments are standardized tools designed to measure characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. These tools are typically based on psychological frameworks and are used across industries for various purposes.

They aim to answer questions such as:

- How does a person respond to stress?
- What motivates them?
- How do they interact with others?
- What work environments suit them best?

3. Types of Personality Assessments

a. Trait-Based Assessments

Research and development summarises and measure personality across key dimensions. One widely recognized model is the **Big Five Personality Traits**, which also known as OCEAN:

- Openness
- Conscientiousness
- Extraversion
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism

This model is often used in corporate settings due to its reliability and predictive validity.

b. Type-Based Assessments

These categorize individuals into distinct personality types.

What Are Type-Based Assessments?

Type- based assessments answer questions like:

a) Do you gain energy from people or from solitude?
b) Do you make decisions based on logic or emotions?
c) Do you prefer planning or flexibility?

Based on responses, individuals are placed into specific personality types. ***No type is better than another, each has its own strengths and challenges.***

c. Behavioural Assessments

Behavioural assessments focus on how a person actually behaves in real-life situations rather than what they think or feel. For professionals preparing for careers, these assessments are very useful as they reflect practical skills needed in academics, internships, and jobs.

A professional may have good theoretical knowledge but struggles to work in a team. Through behavioural assessment, this gap is identified, allowing the student to improve collaboration skills.

Behavioural assessments help to understand how they act in real situations. By improving behaviour, communication, and attitude, students can become more confident and job-ready in today's competitive environment.

4. Applications in the Workplace

a. Recruitment and Selection

Personality assessments help organizations identify candidates who are not only skilled but also culturally aligned. For example, a customer-facing role may require high extraversion and emotional stability.

b. Leadership Development

Effective leaders understand themselves before they lead others. Personality assessments enable leaders to:

- Recognize their leadership style
- Identify blind spots
- Adapt their approach to different team members

For instance, a highly task-oriented leader may learn to develop empathy and communication through such insights.

c. Team Building and Collaboration

Teams often struggle not because of incompetence, but due to differences in working styles. Personality assessments help teams:

- Appreciate diversity in thought and behaviour
- Reduce conflicts
- Improve communication

A balanced team combining planners, executors, innovators, and communicators tends to perform better.

d. Performance Management and Coaching

Managers can tailor feedback and coaching styles based on individual personalities. For example:

- Analytical individuals may prefer data-driven feedback
- Creative individuals may respond better to flexible, idea-oriented discussions

This alignment improves engagement and accelerates development.

e. Career Development and Succession Planning

Understanding personality helps individuals choose roles that align with their natural strengths. It also assists organizations in identifying future leaders by evaluating traits like resilience, adaptability, and decision-making ability.

5. Benefits of Personality Assessments

- **Enhanced Self-Awareness:** Individuals gain clarity about their strengths and areas of development
- **Improved Communication:** Teams understand each other better
- **Better Hiring Decisions:** Reduced mismatch between role and candidate
- **Stronger Leadership Pipeline:** Data-driven development planning
- **Conflict Reduction:** Awareness reduces misunderstandings

6. Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Despite their advantages, personality assessments have limitations:

- **Not Absolute:** They indicate tendencies, not fixed truths
- **Risk of Misuse:** Relying too much on it can lead to stereotyping.
- **Cultural Bias:** Some tools may not be universally applicable

- **Privacy Concerns:** Sensitive data must be handled responsibly

Managers must ensure that assessments are used ethically, transparently, and as part of a broader evaluation framework.

7. Best Practices for Managers

To maximize effectiveness:

- Use validated and reliable tools
- Combine assessments with interviews and performance data
- Ensure employees are not labelled or restricted to predefined roles.
- Provide proper feedback and debrief sessions
- Focus on development, not judgment

8. The Future of Personality Assessments

With advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics, personality assessments are becoming more sophisticated. Modern tools integrate behavioural data, real-time feedback, and predictive analytics to offer deeper insights.

However, the human element remains irreplaceable. The role of a future-ready manager is to **interpret insights with empathy and context**, not just rely on scores.

9. Conclusion

Personality assessments are powerful enablers of organizational success when used thoughtfully. They bridge the gap between **who people are and how they perform**, helping individuals and teams unlock their full potential.

For the future-ready manager, mastering the application of personality assessments is not just a skill— it is a strategic advantage.

Identification of values and alignment

"True fulfilment comes when your actions consistently reflect the values you deeply believe in."

1. Introduction

In the journey toward becoming a future-ready professional manager, few elements are fundamental, yet as frequently neglected as values. While skills may open doors and performance may bring recognition, it is your values that shape your consistency, build your credibility, and define your character over time.

Values act as an internal compass. They guide decisions when rules are unclear, shape behaviour when no one is watching, and determine how individuals respond under pressure. For organizations, aligned values create culture; for individuals, they create identity.

2. What Are Values?

Values are the core beliefs that shape our priorities, guide our decisions, and influence our actions. They reflect what we truly consider important in both our personal and professional lives.

Examples of personal values include:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Empathy
- Innovation

Organizational values may include:

- Customer centricity

- Teamwork
- Transparency
- Agility

Values are not just words displayed on walls they are reflected in everyday decisions and behaviours.

3. Why Values Identification Matters

a. Clarity in Decision-Making

When individuals are clear about their values, decision-making becomes faster and more consistent. Even in ambiguous situations, values provide direction.

b. Authentic Leadership

Leaders who understand their values lead with authenticity. This builds trust and credibility within teams.

c. Personal Fulfilment

When actions are aligned with values, individuals experience deeper satisfaction and a stronger sense of purpose. Misalignment, however, often results in stress and disengagement.

d. Organizational Culture

Values are the backbone of any culture. When employees align with and live these values, it builds unity and drives high performance.

4. The Process of Values Identification

Identifying values is an introspective and continuous process. The following steps can help:

Step 1: Reflect on Peak Experiences

Think about moments when you felt proud, fulfilled, or deeply satisfied.

- What were you doing?

- What values were you honouring?

Step 2: Identify Triggers

Consider situations that caused frustration or discomfort.

- What value was being violated?
- Why did it matter to you?

Step 3: Prioritize Your Values

List 5 -10 values and then narrow them down to your top 5 core values.

These should be non-negotiable principles that guide your behaviour.

Step 4: Define What Each Value Means

For example, "Integrity" for one person may mean honesty, while for another it may include transparency and fairness. Define it in your own context.

Step 5: Test through Action

Observe whether your daily actions align with your identified values. Adjust as needed.

5. Values Alignment: Individual and Organizational

a. What Is Value Alignment?

Value alignment refers to the degree to which an individual's personal values match with the values of the organization they work for.

b. Importance of Alignment

For Individuals:

- Increased engagement and motivation
- Better job satisfaction
- Stronger sense of belonging

For Organizations:

- Higher employee retention

- Improved teamwork
- Consistent customer experience

c. Signs of Misalignment

- Frequent ethical dilemmas
- Lack of motivation
- Feeling disconnected from the organization
- High stress and dissatisfaction

In industries like hospitality or QSR, where service quality depends heavily on employee behaviour, misalignment can directly impact customer experience.

6. Applications in the Workplace

a. Recruitment and Hiring

Organizations increasingly assess candidates not just for skills but for values fit.

Hiring individuals whose values align with the organization ensures cultural consistency.

b. Leadership and Management

Managers play a critical role in translating organizational values into everyday actions.

- Demonstrating fairness
- Encouraging open communication
- Recognizing value-driven behaviour

c. Performance Management

Values should be integrated into performance reviews.

Employees should be evaluated not only on ***WHAT*** they achieve but also ***HOW*** they achieve it.

d. Training and Development

Workshops and coaching sessions can help employees:

- Understand organizational values
- Align personal goals with company vision
- Develop behaviours that reflect shared values

e. Conflict Resolution

Many workplace conflicts arise from differences in values.

Understanding these differences can help managers resolve issues more effectively.

7. A Practical Illustration

A restaurant manager in a high-pressure environment faced a situation where a guest complained about a billing error that favoured the restaurant.

Two choices emerged:

- Ignore the error and retain revenue
- Acknowledge the mistake and refund the guest

The manager chose to correct the bill immediately, even though it meant a financial loss.

Why? Because the core value of **integrity** outweighed short-term gain.

The result:

- The guest became a loyal customer
- The team witnessed value-based leadership
- The brand reputation strengthened

This illustrates how values alignment drives long-term success.

8. Challenges in Values Alignment

- Diverse workforce with varying personal values

- Pressure to meet short-term targets
- Lack of clarity or communication of organizational values
- Leadership inconsistency

Addressing these challenges requires continuous effort and strong leadership commitment.

9. Best Practices for Managers

- Clearly communicate organizational values
- Lead by example— walk the talk
- Recognize and reward value-driven behaviour
- Encourage open dialogue about ethics and values
- Regularly revisit and reinforce values through training

Let me share an incident that illustrates this concept more clearly:

Mamata was part of the housekeeping team at a large multiplex- a role often unnoticed, yet essential to the experience of every guest who walked through its doors. For her, cleaning was not just a task; it was a responsibility she carried with quiet pride.

One Sunday evening, after a packed show, Mamata entered Screen 3 to prepare it for the next audience. Popcorn tubs were scattered, cups lay under seats, and the usual rush to reset the hall had begun. As she moved row by row, her broom suddenly nudged against something unusual beneath a recliner seat, a sleek leather wallet.

She picked it up and opened it just enough to identify the owner. Inside were several credit cards, a thick bundle of cash, and an ID belonging to a well-known corporate executive. For a moment, she froze. No one had seen her pick it up. The hall was empty, and her team was busy at the other end.

But Mamata had grown up with a simple belief ***"What is not yours should never stay with you, even if the world gives you a chance."***

Without a second thought, she walked straight to the Duty Manager's office and handed over the wallet, documenting the find as per protocol. The manager immediately contacted the guest, who had already left the premises and was in distress after realizing his loss.

From that day on, Mamata was no longer just seen as a housekeeping staff member. She became a symbol of trust.

10. Conclusion

Values identification and alignment are not one-time exercises, they are ongoing journeys. For a future-ready professional manager, the ability to align personal values with organizational goals is a key differentiator.

In a world of constant change, values provide stability. They anchor decisions, shape culture, and define legacy. When individuals and organizations operate in alignment, they do not just achieve success—they sustain it with integrity and purpose.

Creating your personal mission statement

"A personal mission statement is the compass that aligns your purpose with your actions and keeps you moving in the direction that truly matters."

Creating a personal mission statement is a powerful exercise in self-awareness and personal assessment. It serves as a clear declaration of your purpose, values, and the direction you want your life and career to take. In a fast-paced and often demanding professional environment, having a well-defined mission statement helps you stay grounded, focused, and aligned with what truly matters.

A personal mission statement is not just a set of words; it is a reflection of your beliefs, strengths, and aspirations.

It answers fundamental questions such as: ***What do I want to achieve?*** What values guide my decisions? What kind of professional and individual do I want to become? By taking the time to reflect on these questions, you create a roadmap that guides your actions and decisions.

For managers and professionals, a strong mission statement brings clarity in goal-setting, consistency in decision-making, and confidence in leadership. It acts as a compass during challenging situations, helping you remain aligned with your principles rather than being influenced by external pressures.

The process of creating a mission statement begins with self-reflection understanding your strengths, acknowledging your weaknesses, identifying your core values, and defining your long-term vision.

It should be simple, meaningful, and realistic, so that it can be applied in your daily life. Over time, as you grow and evolve, your mission statement can also be refined to reflect your changing aspirations.

Ultimately, a personal mission statement is not just a statement; it is a commitment to yourself. It empowers you to act with clarity, lead with purpose, and create a meaningful and successful professional journey.

In a fast-paced world filled with choices, distractions, and constant change, one question often remains unanswered: ***What am I truly working toward?***

A personal mission statement answers this question. It is a clear, concise expression of your purpose, values, and direction in life. For a future-ready professional manager, it serves as a guiding light- helping you stay focused, make aligned decisions, and lead with clarity and intent.

1. What Is a Personal Mission Statement?

A personal mission statement is a written declaration of your core purpose and the impact you want to create in your personal and professional life.

It answers three fundamental questions:

- Who am I?
- What do I stand for?
- What do I want to achieve and contribute?

Unlike goals, which may change over time, a mission statement is rooted in your values and remains relatively stable.

2. Why Is It Important?

a. Provides Direction

It acts as a compass, helping you navigate decisions and opportunities.

b. Enhances Self-Awareness

The process of creating a mission statement forces deep reflection about your strengths, passions, and values.

c. Improves Decision-Making

When faced with choices, you can evaluate whether they align with your mission.

d. Builds Consistency and Credibility

Leaders who act in alignment with their mission earn trust and respect.

e. Drives Motivation and Resilience

A clear purpose helps you stay committed even during challenges.

3. Key Elements of a Personal Mission Statement

A strong mission statement typically includes:

- **Purpose** – Why you do what you do
- **Values** – What principles guide you
- **Strengths** – What you are good at
- **Impact** – The difference you want to make

4. Steps to Create Your Personal Mission Statement

Step 1: Reflect on Your Values

Identify what truly matters to you.

Ask yourself:

- What principles do I refuse to compromise on?
- What motivates me beyond money or recognition?

Step 2: Identify Your Strengths and Talents

Consider:

- What do people appreciate about me?
- What tasks energize me?

Step 3: Define Your Purpose

Think about:

- What kind of work gives me meaning?
- What legacy do I want to leave behind?

Step 4: Visualize the impact you aspire to create

Ask: How do I want to influence others? What difference do I want to make in my organization or society?

Step 5: Write Your Statement

Combine your reflections into a concise statement (2–4 sentences).

It should be:

- Clear
- Authentic
- Inspiring
- Action-oriented

Step 6: Refine and Revisit

Your mission statement is not static. Review it periodically and refine it as you grow.

5. Examples of Personal Mission Statements

Example 1 (Leadership-Focused):

"To lead with integrity and empathy, empowering my team to perform at their best while cultivating a culture built on trust and ongoing development."

Example 2 (Service-Oriented):

"To create meaningful guest experiences by delivering exceptional service, while developing people and building strong, value-driven teams."

Example 3 (Growth-Oriented):

"To continuously learn and evolve, using my skills to create positive impact in my organization and contribute to the growth of others."

6. Application in Professional Life

a. Career Planning

Your mission statement helps you choose roles and opportunities aligned with your purpose.

b. Leadership Development

It shapes your leadership style and how you influence others.

c. Performance and Goal Setting

Goals become more meaningful when aligned with your mission.

d. Decision-Making

When faced with dilemmas, your mission provides clarity.

7. A Practical Illustration

A young restaurant manager was offered a promotion that promised higher pay but required compromising on staff welfare practices something he deeply valued.

He reflected on his personal mission: ***to lead with fairness and develop people.***

Despite the attractive offer, he declined the role. Instead, he chose to stay in an environment aligned with his mission. Over time, his consistency earned him recognition, and he was later promoted to a leadership role where he could influence culture positively.

This demonstrates how a personal mission statement is not just a document, it is a decision- making tool.

8. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Being too vague** (e.g., “I want to be successful”)
- **Trying to impress others instead of being authentic**
- **Making it too long or complex**
- **Not living by it**

Remember, a mission statement is meaningful only when it is practiced.

9. Tips for Future-Ready Managers

- Write it down and keep it visible
- Share it with mentors or team members
- Align your daily actions with it
- Use it as a filter for opportunities
- Revisit it during major life or career transitions

10. Conclusion

Creating a personal mission statement is one of the most powerful exercises in self-leadership. It brings clarity to your journey, aligns your actions with your values, and strengthens your ability to lead with purpose.

For a future-ready professional manager, success is not just about achieving targets—it is about creating meaningful impact. Your mission statement ensures that every step you take moves you closer to that purpose.

Chapter 2 –

Communication and Influence

*"Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively."- **Swami Vivekananda***

The Manager's communication toolkit

"A manager's communication toolkit is the bridge that turns ideas into understanding and intent into action."

Effective communication is one of the most critical skills for a professional manager. It is not just about speaking or sharing information—it is about influencing people, building trust, and driving results. A manager's communication toolkit consists of a set of essential skills and techniques that help in connecting with individuals and teams in a meaningful way.

The first and most important tool is **clarity of thought and expression**.

A manager must be able to convey ideas in a simple, structured, and precise manner. Clear communication reduces confusion, avoids errors, and ensures that expectations are well understood.

The second key tool is **active listening**.

Listening is often more important than speaking. By giving full attention, understanding concerns, and responding thoughtfully, managers build trust and demonstrate respect for their team members.

Another important element is **emotional intelligence**.

Understanding the emotions, tone, and mind-set of others helps a manager communicate in a way that is appropriate to the situation. This is especially important while handling conflicts, giving feedback, or motivating team members.

Non-verbal communication also plays a significant role. Body language, eye contact, tone of voice, and facial expressions often communicate more than words. A confident and positive presence can strengthen the impact of any message.

A manager must also develop the ability to **influence and persuade**. This involves presenting ideas logically, supporting them with facts, and aligning them with the interests of the audience. Influencing is not about authority—it is about credibility and trust.

Finally, **feedback communication** is an essential tool. Providing constructive feedback helps individuals grow, while receiving feedback with openness allows managers to improve themselves. Effective feedback should be timely, specific, and balanced.

A well-equipped communication toolkit enables a manager to handle diverse situations—team discussions, client interactions, conflict resolution, and decision-making—with confidence and effectiveness. Ultimately, strong communication is what transforms a manager into a true leader who can inspire, guide, and influence people toward shared goals.

Tool / Skill	**Purpose**	**When to Use**
Active Listening	Build trust and understanding	Always
Trust Equation	Build long-term influence	Stakeholder management
Storytelling	Inspire and persuade	Presentations, team meetings
EQ Awareness	Manage emotions effectively	High-pressure situations

Let me share an experience in Clear Communication to make us understand it better:

During one of the busiest weekends at a multiplex, the footfall was exceptionally high, and every department was under pressure to deliver. The food and beverage counter was witnessing long queues, and the team was struggling to manage the rush efficiently.

The manager on duty instructed one of the supervisors, “Please ensure the counter is handled properly and customers are attended quickly.” The instruction sounded reasonable, but it lacked clarity. The supervisor interpreted it in his own way and asked the team to focus only on speed, ignoring coordination and order accuracy.

Within a short time, the situation worsened. Orders were mixed up, customers became frustrated, and complaints started increasing. The team was working fast, but not effectively.

Observing this, the manager stepped in again , this time with clear and specific instructions. He said, “Let’s divide responsibilities. One person will take orders, one will handle billing, and two will focus only on preparing and delivering orders. Ensure every order is repeated back to the customer before processing.”

This time, the message was precise, actionable and measurable. The team quickly reorganized, coordination improved, and within minutes, the flow became smooth. Customers were attended to efficiently, and the pressure was brought under control.

This incident highlights a simple yet powerful lesson: communication is not just about giving instructions - it is about giving clear, structured, and actionable directions. When communication is vague, it creates confusion. When it is clear, it drives results.

Key Takeaways for the Reader

- Communication is your **managerial skill** — everything else depends on it
- Great managers **listen more** than they speak
- Clarity, empathy, and consistency are the **three pillars** of a trusted communicator
- Influence is built over time through **trust, not title**

- Every difficult conversation avoided today becomes a **bigger problem tomorrow**

Active Listening and Clarity

"Active listening builds understanding, and clarity turns that understanding into meaningful action."

Effective communication is not just about speaking well, it is equally about listening with intent and expressing ideas with clarity. For a professional manager, mastering both active listening and clear communication is essential to build trust, avoid misunderstandings, and drive results.

Active listening goes beyond simply hearing words. It involves giving full attention to the speaker, understanding the message, and responding thoughtfully. In a busy work environment, managers often listen with the intention to reply rather than to understand. This leads to gaps in communication, missed details, and sometimes conflict. Active listening requires focus, patience, and genuine interest in the speaker's perspective. Simple practices such as maintaining eye contact, avoiding interruptions, asking relevant questions, and summarizing key points can significantly improve listening effectiveness. When employees feel heard, they become more engaged, confident, and open in their communication.

Equally important is **clarity in communication**. A manager must be able to convey thoughts in a simple, structured, and precise manner. Vague or ambiguous instructions can lead to confusion, errors, and inefficiency. Clear communication ensures that expectations are well understood and tasks are executed correctly. It involves organizing thoughts before speaking, using simple language, being specific about outcomes, and confirming understanding when necessary.

Active listening and clarity are closely interconnected. Listening helps a manager understand the situation accurately, while clarity ensures that the response or instruction is meaningful and actionable.

Together, they create a strong communication loop where information flows effectively, reducing errors and improving collaboration.

In leadership roles, these skills become even more critical. Whether it is conducting meetings, giving feedback, resolving conflicts, or guiding teams, the ability to listen actively and communicate clearly sets apart an average manager from an effective one. It builds credibility, strengthens relationships, and enhances overall team performance.

Ultimately, communication is not about how much you say, but how well you understand and how clearly you convey. A manager who listens with intent and speaks with clarity creates an environment of trust, efficiency, and mutual respect.

The Bhagavad Gita explains it-

The importance of active listening and clarity in communication is beautifully illustrated in the Bhagavad Gita.

At the start of the dialogue, Arjuna is confused, emotionally overwhelmed, and uncertain about his role and responsibilities. Instead of acting impulsively, he chooses to pause and express his doubts openly. More importantly, he listens with full attention to Lord Krishna's guidance. This act of surrendering to listen without interruption or ego is a powerful demonstration of active listening. It shows that true understanding begins when we are willing to listen with patience and openness.

On the other hand, Lord Krishna's communication is a perfect example of clarity. He does not overwhelm Arjuna with vague or abstract ideas. Instead, he presents his teachings in a structured, logical, and progressive manner, addressing Arjuna's confusion step by step. His clarity helps transform doubt into understanding and confusion into decisive action.

The connection between listening and clarity is evident here - Arjuna's willingness to listen creates the space for Krishna's clarity to have an impact. Without listening, even the most profound message loses its value; without clarity, even attentive listening may not lead to understanding.

For modern managers and professionals, this timeless lesson is highly relevant. Effective communication is not about speaking more, but about listening deeply and responding with clarity. When managers listen with intent and communicate with purpose, they enable better understanding, stronger relationships, and more confident decision-making.

Thus, the Bhagavad Gita teaches us that clarity in action arises from clarity in thought and true clarity in thought begins with the ability to listen.

Sharing an experience: The Cost of Not Listening

Many years ago, in a Kolkata hotel, I was deputed in IRD (In-Room Dining), more commonly referred to as Room Service.

It was around 9:00 pm, peak dinner time. The hotel was running at high occupancy, and we were fully occupied managing a surge of orders. The atmosphere was busy, fast-paced, and slightly chaotic—as dinner services often are.

Amidst this, the **Room Service Order Taker (RSOT)** received a call from a guest requesting a bowl of rice. The order was promptly punched into the system.

A few moments later, I happened to glance at the **KOT (Kitchen Order Ticket)**. Something didn't feel right.

I walked up to the RSOT and asked,

"Are you sure about this order? Just rice?"

She confidently replied, "Yes, sir."

However, when I checked the order register, I noticed that the same guest had earlier ordered a **60 ml Scotch whisky**. That raised a question in my mind.

I thought to myself -

Could the guest have ordered food from outside and just needed rice?

But considering the guest profile, a South Korean, the possibility seemed unlikely.

Still, since the order was confirmed, we proceeded.

The Twist

Kamal, one of our service associates picked up the tray and delivered the order to the room.

Within a few minutes, he rushed back, this time with a confused and slightly amused expression.

I asked, "What happened?" And that's when we realized the mistake.

The guest had not ordered **RICE**...

He had ordered **ICE**.

What Went Wrong?

The issue was simple but critical:

- The RSOT did not repeat the order to reconfirm.
- She did not cross-check the order sheet, which clearly indicated a Scotch whisky order.
- While taking the order, she did not suggested for a main course dish.
- A simple logical question —*"Would you like ice with your drink?"*— could have clarified everything

One missed step in the process led to a completely wrong delivery.

Impact on the Guest Experience

From the guest's perspective:

- He was expecting ice for his drink

- Instead, he received a bowl of rice
- His experience was interrupted and likely frustrating

In hospitality, such moments matter deeply.

A small error can dilute the guest experience and affect the hotel's goodwill.

The Lesson This incident reinforced a powerful lesson:

Listening is not enough —active listening is essential.

A simple practice could have avoided the situation entirely:

- Hear carefully
- Repeat the order
- Confirm with the guest

Closing Thought

In service industries, excellence lies in the smallest details.

A missed word —rice instead of ice —may seem minor,

but it clearly shows how **process, attention, and presence of mind** define the difference between **service delivered** and **experience created**.

Influencing without authority

"True influence does not come from authority, but from trust, credibility, and the ability to inspire others to act."

In today's professional environment, influence is no limited to position or hierarchy. Many situations require managers to get work done through people over whom they may not have direct authority - peers, cross-functional teams, clients, or even senior stakeholders. In such scenarios, the ability to influence without authority becomes a critical leadership skill.

Influence without authority begins with **credibility**. People are more likely to listen to and follow individuals who demonstrate competence, consistency, and reliability in their work. When a manager is known for delivering results and maintaining integrity, their words carry weight, even in the absence of formal power. Credibility is built over time through actions, not titles.

Another key element is **building relationships**. Influence is rooted in trust, and trust is built through genuine connections. Taking the time to understand people, respecting their viewpoints, and showing empathy creates a strong foundation for collaboration. When individuals feel valued and understood, they are more open to ideas and suggestions.

Effective communication plays a central role in influencing others. A manager must present ideas clearly, logically, and confidently. Using structured communication methods—such as presenting the conclusion first, followed by supporting points—helps in gaining attention and driving alignment. It is equally important to listen actively, as understanding the concerns and motivations of others allows you to tailor your message more effectively.

Understanding mutual benefits is another powerful approach. Influence is not about imposing ideas; it is about aligning your objectives with the interests of others. When people see how a decision or action benefits them or the organization, they are more likely to support it. This requires a shift from "my idea" to "our shared goal."

In many cases, **emotional intelligence** becomes the differentiating factor. Being aware of the emotional dynamics in a conversation—tone, timing, and reactions—helps in navigating sensitive situations. A calm, respectful, and composed approach enhances acceptance and reduces resistance.

Persistence and consistency are also important. Not every idea will be accepted immediately. Influencing without authority often requires patience, repeated engagement, and the ability to reinforce your message without being aggressive or forceful.

A practical example can be seen in cross-functional projects, where a manager needs support from another department. Without direct control, the manager must rely on clear communication, relationship-building, and alignment of goals to ensure cooperation. By explaining the importance of the project, addressing concerns, and demonstrating mutual benefit, the manager can successfully influence outcomes.

Ultimately, influencing without authority is about shifting from control to collaboration. It is about earning respect rather than demanding compliance. Managers who master this skill are able to drive results, build strong networks, and create a positive impact across the organization.

In a world where teamwork and collaboration define success, the ability to influence without authority is not just a skill—it is a necessity for every professional manager.

The Influence Spectrum Chart

Level	Type of Influence	How It Works	Example
1	Informational	Sharing knowledge or data that changes someone's view	Presenting research that reshapes a decision
2	Relational	Leveraging trust and goodwill built over time	A colleague says yes because they trust your judgment
3	Expert	Drawing on recognized skill or experience	Team follows your lead because your track record speaks
4	Visionary	Inspiring through a compelling picture of the future	People buy into a direction because it excites them
5	Reciprocal	Building influence through giving before asking	Helping others so they are naturally inclined to help back
6	Structural	Using processes, systems, or coalitions to enable change	Building consensus across departments before a proposal

Running Effective Meetings

"An effective meeting is not measured by time spent, but by the clarity achieved and actions driven."

Meetings are one of the most common tools a manager uses to communicate and influence outcomes. Yet, many meetings waste time, cause frustration, and fail to achieve objectives. Running effective meetings requires a combination of **clear communication, active listening, and strategic influence**.

1. Define Purpose and Objectives

Every meeting should start with a clear purpose. Whether it is to make a decision, share updates, or brainstorm solutions, the objective must be communicated in advance. Sending an agenda helps participants prepare, ensures focus, and demonstrates respect for everyone's time. A manager who clearly states the "why" of a meeting sets the tone and influences participants to engage meaningfully.

2. Structured Communication During the Meeting

A professional manager should communicate in a structured way - start with the key point, provide supporting context, and conclude with actionable steps. Techniques like **BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front)** can help capture attention quickly. Avoid long-winded explanations, ambiguous instructions, or digressions, as these reduce influence and clarity.

How to Write a BLUF

- **Draft first:** Write the entire message.
- **Find the bottom line:** Identify the main conclusion, question, or request.

- **Move it to the top:** Place that crucial information at the very beginning.
- **Add context last:** Provide necessary supporting details after the main point.

3. Active Listening and Engagement

Meetings are two way communication platforms. Active listening ensures that all voices are heard, questions are answered, and concerns are addressed. By acknowledging ideas, paraphrasing inputs, and asking clarifying questions, a manager fosters trust and encourages participation. Engaged participants are more likely to support decisions, which increases your influence.

4. Facilitate Participation and Collaboration

Effective meetings are not about dominating discussions—they are about guiding them. Encourage contributions from quieter members and manage dominant voices tactfully. Using open-ended questions, summarizing key points, and building consensus strengthens collaboration and creates shared ownership of outcomes.

5. Focus on Actionable Outcomes

A meeting's success is measured by what happens afterward. Every discussion point should conclude with clear next steps, responsibilities, and timelines. Summarizing decisions at the end of the meeting reinforces clarity and ensures accountability. Communicating outcomes in writing after the meeting also extends your influence by providing a reference point for follow-up.

6. Influence Without Authority

Even in meetings where you may not have formal authority, you can influence through preparation, credibility, and structured communication. Present data, align suggestions with team or organizational goals, and anticipate objections. Influence grows when participants see that your guidance is logical, fair, and focused on mutual benefit.

Running meetings effectively is more than managing time—it is about **communicating purposefully, listening actively, and guiding the group toward actionable outcomes**. Managers who master these skills not only save time and reduce frustration but also strengthen their ability to influence, motivate, and lead teams.

The Real Cost of Poor Meetings

Before learning how to run great meetings, every manager must first understand the true cost of running poor ones. The damage is far wider than lost hours on a calendar.

- A 1-hour meeting with 8 people = 8 hours of combined organizational time.
- If that meeting had no clear outcome = 8 hours completely wasted.
- If a manager runs 4 such meetings per week = 32 hours of team time lost every single week.
- Over a year = 1,664 hours of wasted human potential.

That is equivalent to ONE full-time employee's entire annual working hours — gone.

<table>
<tr><th>Level 1</th><th>Level 2</th><th>Level 3</th><th>Level 4</th></tr>
<tr><td>Chaotic</td><td>Passive</td><td>Structured</td><td>Powerful</td></tr>
<tr><td>No agenda</td><td rowspan="2">Agenda exists but ignored</td><td>Clear agenda</td><td rowspan="3">Strategic Agenda full engagement</td></tr>
<tr><td>No Purpose</td><td>Purpose stated</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dominated by one voice</td><td>One way broadcast</td><td>Participation</td></tr>
<tr><td>No Decision</td><td>Vague</td><td>Encouraged</td><td>clear outcome</td></tr>
<tr><td>No Follow up</td><td>Outcomes</td><td>Decision made same follow up</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Over time	Under time	On time	Ends Early
Result:	Result:	Result:	Result:
Frustration	Boredom	Clarity	Energy

THE MEETING FILTER TEST:

ASK YOURSELF:

1. What is the specific purpose of this meeting?
   (If you cannot answer in one sentence - don't meet)
2. What decision or outcome must come from this?
   (If the answer is "just an update" - send an email)
3. Does this require real-time interaction?
   (If no - use asynchronous communication instead)
4. Who genuinely needs to be there?
   (If more than 7 people - reconsider the scope)
5. Would a 10-minute call replace a 60-minute meeting?
   (If yes - make the call)

When to Meet vs. When Not to Meet

Situation	**Meet**	**Better Alternative**
Complex decision requiring group input	✅ Yes	–
Sensitive conversation needing human presence	✅ Yes	–
Creative brainstorming session	✅ Yes	–
Conflict resolution between team members	✅ Yes	–
Project kick-off requiring alignment	✅ Yes	–
Sharing a weekly status update	✕ No	Written update or email

One-way information broadcast	✕ No	Video message or document
Simple question needing one answer	✕ No	Quick message or call
Approval of something already decided	✕ No	Email with clear ask
Checking in on someone's progress	⚠ Sometimes	A-sync check-in first

Incidents of Two Meetings: One Failed, One Effective

Angshuman is the Business Manager and wanted his team to work better, so he called a meeting on Monday morning.

The Failed Meeting

At 10:00 AM, everyone entered the meeting room. But Angshuman had no agenda. He simply said, “Let start the meeting and discuss things today.”

People looked confused. One person asked, “What topic should we discuss?”

Angshuman replied, “We will see as we go, but let’s start”.

The meeting started late because Angshuman was waiting for two people who had not arrived. When they came, he repeated everything again.

Then everyone started talking at the same time. Some discussed sales, some talked about leave requests, and others spoke about office coordination problems.

One employee tried to share an idea, but nobody listened.

Another checked emails on his laptop. One person quietly left for another appointment.

After one hour, Angshuman said, “Okay, we will meet again next week.”

Someone asked, “ So what did we decide today?”

Nobody knew. People walked out frustrated. Time was wasted, and no action was taken.

The Effective Meeting-

The next week, Angshuman learned from his mistake.

This time, he sent an agenda one day before the meeting.

Agenda:

- Review last week’s sales
- Solve delivery delays
- Finalize festival promotion plan

The meeting started exactly at 10:00 AM.

Angshuman welcomed everyone and said, “We have 30 minutes. Let us stay focused.”

He invited each person to speak one by one.

When discussion moved away from the topic, Angshuman gently said, “Let us come back to the main point.”

The team shared useful ideas. They quickly found the reason for delivery delays and assigned work to fix it.

Before closing, Angshuman said:

- Anita will contact suppliers by today.
- Rohan will update the promotion design by Wednesday.
- Sales team will submit reports by Friday.

He ended on time and thanked everyone. People left the room clear, motivated, and happy.

The Take away-

A failed meeting wastes time and energy.

An effective meeting has:

- Clear agenda
- Right people present
- Start and end on time
- Focused discussion
- Everyone gets a chance to speak
- Clear decisions and action points

Good meetings create good results.

Managing up, across, and sideways

"Great managers don't just manage down – they create alignment and influence in every direction."

Managing Up (Influencing Your Boss & Senior Leaders)

Goal: Build trust, alignment, and credibility

Managing up is not about pleasing your boss , it's about enabling better decisions and outcomes.

Key Principles

a. Understand Their Priorities

- What matters most to them? (results, speed, risk, innovation)
- Align your communication with their goals

b. Be Solution-Oriented

Never go with just problems—always bring options:

"Here's the issue, and here are two possible solutions."

c. Communicate Proactively

- Share updates before being asked
- Highlight risks early
- Avoid surprises

d. Adapt to Their Style

- Some prefer data; others prefer summaries
- Some want detail; others want key points

Common Mistakes

- Overloading with unnecessary details
- Hiding problems

- Being reactive instead of proactive

Managing Across (Working with Peers & Cross-Functional Teams)

Goal: Collaboration without authority

You cannot "control" peers—you must **influence through relationships and mutual respect**.

Key Principles

a. Build Trust First

- ✓ Deliver on commitments
- ✓ Be reliable and consistent

b. Create Win-Win Situations

Understand:

- ✓ What do they need?
- ✓ How can your goals align with theirs?

c. Communicate Clearly

- ✓ Define roles and expectations
- ✓ Avoid assumptions

d. Handle Conflicts Constructively

- ✓ Focus on issues, not people
- ✓ Stay calm and objective

Effective Behaviours

- ✓ Involve peers early in decisions
- ✓ Acknowledge their contributions
- ✓ Be open to feedback

Common Mistakes

- ✓ Competing instead of collaborating
- ✓ Poor coordination

- ✓ Ignoring stakeholder needs
- ✓ Over confidence

Managing Sideways (Influencing Without Formal Authority)

Goal: Build influence through credibility and relationships

This includes:

- ✓ Senior stakeholders outside your reporting line
- ✓ Support functions
- ✓ Informal influencers

Key Principles

a. Build Credibility

- ✓ Be knowledgeable
- ✓ Deliver consistently

b. Leverage Relationships

- ✓ Invest time in networking
- ✓ Build goodwill before you need it

c. Use Influence, Not Authority

- ✓ Persuade through logic and trust
- ✓ Use data, stories, and impact

d. Be Visible and Reliable

- ✓ Show up prepared
- ✓ Follow through on commitments

Effective Behaviours

- ✓ Help others proactively
- ✓ Share credit
- ✓ Stay approachable
- ✓ Positive frame of mind

Common Mistakes

- ✓ Trying to force authority where you don't have it
- ✓ Ignoring informal influencers
- ✓ Being transactional rather than relational
- ✓ At times over confident

Narrating an incident: The Dinner Rush That Could Have Broken operation

Let me take you into a busy Saturday evening at a QSR outlet inside a bustling mall, one of those peak days when every second counts and every decision matters.

It was the festive season, and we were expecting one of the highest footfalls of the year. The team was prepared, inventory was stocked, and promotions were in full swing. By 7:00 PM, the queue had started building, online orders were pouring in, and the kitchen was operating at full capacity.

Then, things took a sudden turn.

The POS system slowed down due to a network glitch, causing delays in order processing.

At the same time, one of the key kitchen stations handling the fastest moving items faced equipment failure.

Orders began piling up, customers grew impatient, and delivery timelines started slipping.

In a QSR setup, speed is everything—and we were losing it.

Managing Up

Manager of the unit, Rohit immediately informed the Regional Manager. But instead of simply reporting the issue, he shared a clear action plan - switching to manual order-taking temporarily, limiting the menu to high-efficiency items, and reallocating staff to critical stations. This reassured leadership that the situation was under control. Rather than constant follow-ups, he was trusted to handle the crisis on the ground.

Managing Across

Next, he coordinated with different support teams. Rohit worked with the IT team to prioritize the network issue, connected with maintenance for urgent equipment repair, and aligned with the supply chain team to ensure backup stock for fast-moving items. There were constraints - everyone had competing priorities—but clear communication and urgency helped align efforts quickly.

Managing Sideways

The biggest challenge, however, was on the floor.

The crew was under pressure as orders were delayed, customers were frustrated, and the pace was overwhelming. Rohit stepped into the kitchen and front counter, reassigned roles, and simplified processes.

"We focus on speed and consistency. One order at a time. No panic."

He empowered team leaders to make quick calls—whether it was handling customer complaints, offering quick substitutions, or managing delivery partners. He stayed visible, supported the team, and kept morale high.

Gradually, the chaos turned into controlled movement.

The Outcome

Within an hour, the system stabilized, the equipment was back online, and the team found its rhythm again. While we could not avoid delays entirely, we managed customer expectations with honesty and speed. Many customers appreciated the transparency and effort.

By the end of the night, we had not only managed the rush but also protected the brand experience.

The Lesson

That evening reinforced a simple but powerful truth in QSR operations:

- M*anaging up* builds trust and gives you the space to act.
- M*anaging across* ensures that no function works in isolation.
- M*anaging sideways* empowers your team to deliver under pressure.

In a fast-paced QSR environment, success does not come from working harder alone—it comes from working **together, in every direction**.

Conclusion-

Managing up, across, and sideways is the hallmark of a **future-ready manager**.

It requires, strategic communication, emotional intelligence, strong relationships, consistent credibility and agility and adoptability

Your ability to influence in all directions determines your real leadership power.

True leadership is not defined by position.....but by the ability to influence, connect, and create impact in every direction.

Chapter 3 –

Planning, Execution, and Delegation

"Most of our troubles are due to poor implementation, wrong priorities, and unattainable targets." – ***J.R.D. Tata***

Goal setting - SMART goals and OKRs

"Goal setting turns vision into direction and intention into measurable progress."

Goal setting is the foundation of effective management. Without clear goals, planning becomes directionless, execution loses focus, and delegation becomes ineffective. Professional managers use structured frameworks like SMART Goals and

OKRs (***Objectives and Key Results***) to ensure clarity, alignment, and measurable outcomes.

1. SMART Goals: Precision in Planning

SMART is an acronym that helps managers define goals that are:

S – Specific: Goals should be clear and precise. Instead of "Improve team performance," say "Increase customer satisfaction scores by 10% in three months."

M – Measurable: Goals should be quantifiable so progress can be tracked. Metrics ensure accountability.

A – Achievable: Set realistic goals considering available resources and capabilities.

Overambitious targets can demotivate teams.

R – Relevant: Goals should align with organizational objectives and the individual's role.

T – Time-bound: Deadlines create urgency and focus, preventing tasks from stretching indefinitely.

Application in Management:

SMART goals guide planning and execution by providing a clear target. For delegation, they define responsibilities, set expectations, and create accountability. Every team member knows what to achieve, by when, and how success will be measured.

2. OKRs: Driving Alignment and Execution

While SMART goals define individual tasks, OKRs focus on alignment and results at a team or organizational level:

O – Objective: A clear, ambitious goal describing what you want to achieve. For example, "Become the top-rated F&B outlet in the city."

K-R – Key Results: Measurable milestones indicating progress toward the objective. Example: "Increase online reviews rating to 4.8/5," "Reduce order preparation time by 15%," "Train staff on customer engagement standards."

Application in Management:

OKRs encourage cross-functional alignment and allow managers to track progress at multiple levels. Delegation becomes more effective as team members clearly understand how their work contributes to larger objectives.

3. Integrating Goal Setting with Planning, Execution, and Delegation

Planning Use SMART goals to break down objectives into actionable steps. Map timelines, assign responsibilities, and allocate resources.

Execution: Track progress against Key Results. Regular check-ins ensure that actions are on course and adjustments are made when necessary.

Delegation: Clear goals allow managers to assign tasks confidently. Each team member knows the expected outcome, reducing ambiguity and enhancing accountability.

THE FIVE GOAL SETTING FAILURE PATTERNS

FAILURE 1 - VAGUE GOALS

"We want to improve customer satisfaction."

There is no measure, no deadline, no definition of success.

Result: Everyone interprets it differently. Nothing changes.

FAILURE 2 - TOO MANY GOALS

Setting 15 goals for a quarter spreads, attention and energy across everything meaning nothing gets the focus it needs to actually move.

Result: Partial progress everywhere. Full progress nowhere.

FAILURE 3 - NO OWNERSHIP

Goals belong to everyone in theory and no one in practice.

Without a named owner, accountability evaporates.

Result: At review time, everyone contributed. No one failed.

FAILURE 4 - SET AND FORGOTTEN

Goals are set in January and reviewed in December.

No check-ins, no adjustments, no visibility in between.

Result: The goal becomes irrelevant long before it is missed.

FAILURE 5 - NO CONNECTION TO MEANING

Goals are handed over as numbers with no explanation of why they matter or how they connect to something bigger.

Result: Teams comply without committing.

A Complete **SMART Goal** — Built Step by Step

Building it through **SMART:**

Filter	Question	Answer
Specific	What exactly?	Reduce attrition rate of employees
Measurable	By how much?	From 20% to 15%
Achievable	Is it realistic?	Yes — industry average is 10% - 15% and we have a new process in place
Relevant	Why now?	Employees are key to revenue generation and plays a vital role. We must initiate action now and get ready for the season.
Time-bound	By when?	By 30th September this year

Final SMART Goal:

"Reduce employee attrition rate from 20% to 15% by 30th September, through implementation of the new dedicated support process and quarterly business review program."

SMART GOALS vs. OKRs — FULL COMPARISON

DIMENSION	SMART GOALS	OKRs
Primary Purpose	Precision and accountability	Direction and alignment
Nature	Specific and realistic	Ambitious and aspirational
Best Used For	Individual targets, operational tasks, personal development	Team and organizational direction
Tone	Conservative —100% achievement expected	Bold - 70% is success
Timeframe	Any — flexible	Quarterly or annual cycles
Motivation Style	Clarity and structure	Inspiration and meaning

Review Frequency	As needed	Weekly check-ins quarterly review
Output	Task completion and compliance	Outcome achievement

Takeaway Line

"A goal without a plan is a wish; SMART goals and OKRs turn wishes into measurable results."

Prioritization Frameworks:

"Prioritization frameworks empower you to focus not on everything, but on what truly moves the needle."

In a fast-paced professional environment, managers are constantly faced with multiple tasks, competing deadlines, and limited resources. The ability to prioritize effectively is what separates productive managers from overwhelmed ones. Prioritization ensures that time, effort, and resources are focused on activities that create the highest impact.

One of the most widely used tools is the **Urgent vs Important Matrix**. Tasks are categorized into four quadrants - urgent and important, important but not urgent, urgent but not important, and neither urgent nor important.

Effective managers focus primarily on important tasks that drive long-term results, rather than being consumed by urgent but low-value activities. This framework helps in planning by identifying what truly matters and avoiding unnecessary distractions.

The **ABCDE Method** is a simple yet powerful prioritization technique.

A (most important),

B (important),

C (good to do),

D (delegate), and

E (eliminate)

This method is particularly effective for delegation, as it clearly identifies which tasks should be handled personally and which can be assigned to others. Delegation, when aligned with prioritization, improves team productivity and allows managers to focus on strategic responsibilities.

Prioritization also plays a critical role during execution. Managers must continuously reassess tasks based on changing situations, deadlines, and business needs. What is important today may not be as relevant tomorrow. Therefore, flexibility and adaptability are essential to maintain focus and effectiveness.

In delegation, prioritization ensures that the right tasks are assigned to the right people at the right time. Clear communication of priorities helps team members understand expectations and align their efforts accordingly. When priorities are well defined, teams work with clarity, confidence, and purpose.

Ultimately, prioritization is not about doing more — it is about doing what matters most. Managers who master prioritization are able to plan effectively, execute efficiently, and delegate intelligently, leading to better results and reduced stress.

This quick and simple method makes sure you use your time more effectively by considering the 5 D's in time management namely ˜ Delete, Delegate, Defer it, Do it, and Discipline.

The first category requires learning how to filter through your task list.

An event to describe Prioritization in Action

During one of the peak weekends at a multiplex, the operations team was handling back-to-back shows with almost full occupancy. The pressure was high across all departments—housekeeping, food & beverage, and Box Office ticketing.

The manager on duty (MOD), faced with multiple competing priorities at the same time.

At that moment, the key tasks include preparing the auditorium for the next show within a strict turnaround time, managing long queues at the food counter, addressing a customer complaint, and ensuring staff availability for the upcoming shows. Instead of reacting to everything at once, he applied prioritization.

Using the **Urgent vs Important framework**, the MOD identified that preparing the auditorium was both urgent and important, it directly impacted the next show and customer experience. This task was given immediate attention. Simultaneously, he delegated the food counter operations to a capable supervisor, with clear instructions to manage the queue efficiently and maintain service quality.

The customer complaint, although important, was not as time-critical as the show turnaround. He acknowledged the concern and assured the customer of a resolution shortly, thereby managing expectations while focusing on immediate priorities.

For execution, he broke down responsibilities clearly: the housekeeping team focused only on quick turnaround cleaning, the F&B team handled service flow, and one team member was assigned to assist with crowd movement. This ensured that everyone was aligned and working towards specific outcomes.

Once the urgent tasks were stabilized, he returned to address the customer complaint in detail, ensuring satisfaction and closure. By structuring the situation through prioritization and delegation, what initially appeared chaotic was brought under control efficiently.

This example highlights a simple but powerful lesson: prioritization is not about doing everything at once, but about doing the right things at the right time, and trusting your team to handle delegated responsibilities effectively.

The art and discipline of delegation

"Delegation is the art of trusting others with responsibility and the discipline of ensuring outcomes without losing accountability."

The word *delegation* often carries a sense of authority. It comes with both power and responsibility. However, in many professional environments, the true essence of delegation is misunderstood and frequently misused.

In practice, delegation is often reduced to simply passing on tasks or instructions to the next level. Managers tend to forward emails, relay messages received over phone calls, or assign actions discussed in meetings without much thought or structure.

For instance, a manager may receive an email and forward it to a subordinate for action, or pass on instructions from a meeting without clearly defining expectations. Over time, such practices become routine and are often mistaken as effective delegation.

While this passing of information may appear correct on the surface, it lacks the discipline and structure that true delegation demands. Delegation is not merely about transferring work—it is about ensuring clarity, ownership, and accountability.

Without proper guidance, follow-up, and alignment, such "delegation" can lead to confusion, inefficiency, and lack of ownership within the team.

Effective delegation requires a cohesive line of engagement. A manager must not only assign tasks but also define the objective, provide context, set timelines, and monitor progress. It involves creating a clear flow of communication and ensuring that responsibilities are understood and executed as intended.

In many workplaces, what is often seen is abrupt and unstructured delegation, where tasks are passed down without clarity or follow-through. This approach weakens both execution and team development.

Therefore, it becomes essential to understand that delegation is both an art and a discipline. The art lies in empowering people, while the discipline lies in ensuring structure, clarity, and accountability.

In the following section, let us explore how managers can practice effective and structured delegation to achieve better results and build stronger teams.

Delegation is both an **art which** requires emotional intelligence, trust, and judgment and a **discipline** which demands structure, consistency, and accountability.

It is a critical leadership skill that transforms managers from individual contributors into scalable leaders, improving productivity and fostering team growth.

Delegation is one of the most essential skills for a professional manager, yet it is often misunderstood. Many managers either hesitate to delegate or do it ineffectively. The art of delegation lies in trusting others and empowering them, while the discipline ensures that tasks are completed with accountability and desired outcomes.

At its core, delegation is not about passing on work, it is about **transferring responsibility with clarity and purpose**.

A manager must first identify the right tasks to delegate. Routine, repetitive, and operational tasks are ideal for delegation, while strategic and critical decisions should remain under the manager's direct supervision. Effective delegation begins with selecting the right person based on their skills, experience, and potential.

Clarity is the foundation of successful delegation. A manager must communicate expectations clearly- what needs to be done, by when, and what the desired outcome looks like. Ambiguity leads to errors and rework. Providing context, setting timelines, and defining measurable results ensures that the team member understands the task fully.

Trust is equally important. Delegation fails when managers micromanage every step. Once a task is assigned, the manager must allow the individual the space to execute, while remaining available for guidance. This balance between support and independence is what builds confidence and ownership within the team.

However, delegation also requires discipline. Regular follow-ups, progress checks, and feedback are necessary to ensure alignment. Monitoring should not be intrusive but should focus on outcomes and progress. Constructive feedback helps individuals learn and improve, making them more capable for future responsibilities.

Delegation at the same time is also a powerful tool for team development. It allows team members to learn new skills, take ownership, and grow professionally. A manager who delegates effectively creates a strong, capable team that can function efficiently even in high-pressure situations.

In practical terms, consider a busy operation where multiple tasks demand attention simultaneously. A manager who tries to handle everything alone will quickly become overwhelmed. In contrast, a manager who delegates effectively assigns responsibilities based on strengths, communicates clearly, and monitors progress ensuring that all tasks are completed efficiently.

Ultimately, delegation is both an art and a discipline. The art lies in trusting people and empowering them; the discipline lies in ensuring accountability and results. Managers who master delegation not only improve their own efficiency but also build stronger, more capable teams.

The Core Elements of Delegation

Successful delegation relies on a structured, often cited "5-step":

1. **Define Tasks (What & Why):** Identify tasks that are repetitive, time-consuming or development opportunities for others, rather than those requiring your unique expertise. Use the **SMART** framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to define the desired result.
2. **Select the Right Person (Who):** Match tasks to team members based on their skills, career goals, and capacity, not just their availability.
3. **Provide Resources and Authority (With What):** Equip them with the necessary tools, information, and, crucial, the authority to make decisions.
4. **Establish Clear Communication (When):** Agree on check-in points to monitor progress without micromanaging.
5. **Ensure Accountability (Results):** The manager remains ultimately responsible, but the employee is accountable for the execution.

The Art of Delegation (The Skill)

1. **Letting Go (Trust):** The biggest barrier is "I can do it better/faster" mind-set. Effective leaders know that delegation is an investment, not a loss of control.
2. **Empowerment vs. Dump and Run:** True delegation is empowering and provides context, whereas "dumping" is handing over a task with no support or explanation.
3. **Encouraging Autonomy:** Allowing team members to decide *how* to achieve the outcome, even if they use a different method than you would.
4. **Creating a Safe Environment:** Allowing for mistakes as a learning opportunity rather than a reason to stop delegating.

The 5 Levels of Delegation

Leaders often progress through different stages of delegating, ranging from low to high trust:

1. **Task-based:** Assigning specific, simple tasks.
2. **Instruction-based:** Giving detailed instructions on what to do.
3. **Process based:** Sharing the approach/method, allowing judgment in execution.
4. **Goal based:** Setting the desired outcome, leaving the "how" entirely to the team.
5. **Medium based (clear seeing):** The team understands the leader's thinking so well they proactively act as the leader would.

Here let me narrate an incident on delegation:

During a peak holiday weekend at a busy city hotel, occupancy was at its highest, and every department was under pressure to deliver flawless service. The lobby was crowded with check-ins, the restaurant was running full capacity, and housekeeping was racing to prepare rooms for arriving guests.

The Front Office Manager, eager to ensure everything ran smoothly, initially tried to manage every detail personally. He was handling guest check-ins, responding to complaints, coordinating with housekeeping, and even assisting with room allocations. Despite his efforts, the situation became chaotic. Guests had to wait longer, the team looked confused, and small errors started creeping into operations.

Realizing that his approach was unsustainable, he decided to step back and apply effective delegation. He quickly gathered his team and reassigned responsibilities with clarity. The senior front desk executive was given complete ownership of guest check-ins and queue management. A guest relations officer was assigned to handle VIP arrivals and complaints. Coordination with housekeeping was delegated to another experienced team member, with clear instructions on room readiness and communication timelines.

The manager ensured that each team member understood their role and expectations. He remained present but did not interfere unnecessarily, allowing his team to take ownership while he focused on overall supervision and critical decision-making.

Within a short time, the situation improved significantly. The check-in process became faster, guest complaints were handled efficiently, and coordination between departments improved. The team operated with confidence, and the manager was able to maintain control without being overwhelmed.

This experience reinforced a powerful lesson in the hospitality industry, where timing and service are critical, effective delegation is the key to smooth operations. A manager's role is not to do everything, but to ensure that everything is done through the right people.

True delegation builds trust, develops teams, and transforms pressure into seamless service delivery.

Time Management for Managers

Turning Time into Results

"You will never find time for the important things. You must make it."

Time is one of the most valuable and limited resources available to a manager. Unlike other resources, time cannot be stored, borrowed, or recovered once lost. Effective managers understand that time management is not about being busy, it is about being productive and focused on what truly matters.

In a typical work environment, managers are constantly pulled in multiple directions —meetings, emails, operational issues, team coordination, and unexpected challenges. Without a structured approach, the day can easily be consumed by low-value activities, leaving little room for strategic thinking and leadership. Therefore, time management begins with prioritization ,identifying what is important versus what is merely urgent.

One of the most effective approaches is to categorize tasks based on their impact. High-impact tasks that contribute directly to goals and outcomes should receive maximum attention. Managers must avoid the trap of spending excessive time on routine or administrative work that can be delegated. This shift in focus allows managers to operate more strategically rather than reactively.

Planning plays a crucial role in managing time effectively. Starting the day with a clear plan, listing key priorities and expected outcomes , provides direction and structure. Breaking down larger tasks into smaller, manageable actions helps maintain momentum and reduces the risk of delays. Time blocking, where specific time slots are allocated to important tasks, ensures that critical work receives dedicated attention without interruptions.

Another important aspect is managing distractions. Frequent interruptions, unnecessary meetings, and constant digital notifications can significantly reduce productivity. Effective managers learn to control their environment by setting boundaries, limiting interruptions, and focusing on one task at a time. The ability to say "no" or defer non-essential tasks is a critical skill in preserving valuable time.

Delegation is closely linked to time management. Managers who try to handle everything themselves often become overwhelmed and inefficient. By delegating appropriate tasks to capable team members, managers free up time to focus on higher-level responsibilities such as planning, decision-making, and team development.

Regular review and reflection are also essential. At the end of the day or week, managers should assess how their time was spent, what worked well, what could be improved, and where time was wasted. This habit of reflection helps in continuously refining time management practices.

In high-pressure industries such as hospitality and entertainment, where operations run at a fast pace, effective time management becomes even more critical.

Managers must balance immediate operational demands with long-term planning, ensuring that both are handled efficiently.

Ultimately, time management is not about managing the clock - it is about managing oneself. It requires discipline, clarity, and conscious decision-making. Managers who master time management are able to achieve more with less stress, lead their teams effectively, and consistently deliver results.

This chapter will give you the complete framework, tools, strategies, and habits to become a manager who does not just manage tasks — but **master's time.**

Understanding Where Your Time Actually Goes

The Time Audit - The Most Honest Exercise a Manager Can Do

Before any time management strategy can work, a manager must first confront an uncomfortable truth ,**most managers do not actually know where their time goes.** They have a general sense. They know they are busy. They know they have meetings. But they rarely have precise, evidence-based data on how their hours are actually distributed across the week.

The **Time Audit** solves this. It is simple, revealing, and often deeply uncomfortable — which is exactly why it works.

STEP 1 - TRACK

For one full work week — track every activity in 30-minute blocks. Record exactly what you did and for how long. Be completely honest. Do not track what you planned to do — track what you actually did.

STEP 2 - CATEGORIZE

At the end of the week, sort every activity into one of four categories:

- HIGH VALUE — Strategic, Q2 work, high-impact activities
- MEDIUM VALUE — Necessary but operational
- LOW VALUE — Could be delegated or streamlined
- NO VALUE — Wasted — adds nothing to goals

STEP 3 - MEASURE

Calculate what percentage of your week falls into each category. Most managers are shocked by the result.

STEP 4 - CONFRONT

Ask the honest question:

"Is this how a professional manager should be spending their most valuable resource?"

STEP 5 - REDESIGN

- Use the audit data to rebuild your week.
- Deliberately protecting high-value time.
- Eliminating or delegating everything else.

In Conclusion: Time Management in the 21st Century

Time management in 21st century has evolved significantly due to rapid technological advancements, globalization, and the increasing pace of work environments. Unlike earlier times, where work was more structured and predictable, today's professionals operate in a dynamic ecosystem driven by digital communication, real-time decision - making, and constant connectivity.

As a result, managing time is no longer just about scheduling tasks, it is about managing attention, energy, and priorities effectively.

One of the biggest challenges in the modern era is the overload of information and continuous interruptions.

Emails, instant messages, virtual meetings, and mobile notifications often consume a large part of a manager's day. Without discipline, these distractions can reduce productivity and shift focus away from high-impact work.

Therefore, managers must develop the ability to filter information, prioritize effectively, and create focused time blocks for critical thinking and decision-making.

Another important aspect of this century time management is the integration of technology.

Digital tools, project management platforms, and communication applications have made it easier to plan, track, and collaborate. However, these tools must be used wisely. Technology should enable efficiency, not become a source of distraction.

Managers must choose the right platforms and use them strategically to streamline workflows and enhance team coordination.

Flexibility and adaptability have also become essential. With remote work, global teams, and changing business demands, rigid schedules are often ineffective. Managers must be agile, capable of adjusting priorities, and prepared to handle unexpected challenges without losing focus on long-term goals.

Delegation and collaboration play a crucial role in modern time management.

A manager cannot succeed by working in isolation. By empowering teams, distributing responsibilities, and fostering accountability, managers can optimize time and improve overall productivity.

Ultimately, time management in the 21st century is about making conscious choices—what to focus on, what to delegate, and what to eliminate.

It requires discipline, clarity, and the ability to balance speed with effectiveness. Managers who master these skills are better equipped to navigate complexity, lead efficiently, and achieve sustainable success in a fast-changing world.

Closing Thought

Every manager is given the same 168 hours in a week—no one gets more, no one gets less.

What separates a manager who is constantly overwhelmed from one who leads with clarity and confidence is not intelligence, seniority, or even effort. The real difference lies in the discipline to decide before distractions take over what each hour is meant for.

Value your time. Protect your focus. Channel your energy into the work that truly requires your attention and leadership.

Because the way you use your time defines the way you lead. And once time and leadership is spent, it cannot be reclaimed.

Tracking progress without micromanaging

"Track progress with trust, not control and guide the path without taking over the wheel".

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work with a wide range of leaders, supervisors, associates, and decision-makers who have significantly influenced my professional journey.

I consider myself fortunate to have started my career under managers who demonstrated excellent supervisory qualities. Their approach to leadership and guidance has left a lasting impression on my understanding of management practices.

As we discuss the concept of *tracking progress without micromanaging*, it is important to first understand the subject in its true context. This is not merely about reducing supervision, it is about applying the right level of oversight based on the situation and the individual involved.

It is important to recognize that not every team member requires the same level of supervision. A fresher, straight out of college, cannot be expected to handle responsibilities independently from the outset. Such individuals need guidance, support, and close supervision.

In the initial stages, a supervisor must handhold, coach, and even micromanage to some extent until the individual gains confidence, develops skills, and understands the work environment. This phase is crucial for building capability and ensuring a strong foundation.

However, the approach must evolve with experience. On the other hand, an experienced manager or a capable team member who has been assigned a task does not require constant oversight.

Micromanaging such individuals can lead to frustration, reduced motivation, and a lack of trust. It may also hinder their ability to take ownership and perform effectively. Excessive control at this level often results in negative consequences, both for the individual and the overall team dynamic.

Therefore, effective management lies in striking the right balance, knowing when to guide closely and when to step back. The ability to adjust your leadership style based on the competence and confidence of your team members is what defines a mature and effective manager.

With this understanding, let us now move forward to explore practical ways to track progress efficiently without falling into the trap of micromanagement.

One of the biggest challenges for managers is ensuring that work is progressing as expected without falling into the trap of micromanagement. While monitoring is essential for achieving results, excessive control can reduce trust, demotivate teams, and limit creativity. The key lies in striking the right balance between oversight and empowerment.

Effective tracking begins with **clear expectations**. When tasks are delegated, the manager must define the desired outcome, timelines, and success criteria. When people know exactly what is expected, the need for constant supervision reduces significantly. Clarity at the beginning prevents confusion later.

The next step is to establish **structured checkpoints** rather than continuous monitoring. Instead of checking every small detail, managers should agree on periodic updates, daily, weekly, or milestone-based reviews depending on the task. These checkpoints provide visibility into progress while giving team members the space to work independently.

Outcome-based tracking is another important principle. Focus should be on results rather than the process. Different individuals may approach tasks in different ways, and that flexibility should be encouraged as long as the outcome meets the expected standards. This approach builds ownership and confidence within the team.

Open communication plays a vital role in this process. Managers should create an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing progress, challenges, and delays without fear. Encouraging proactive updates reduces the need for follow-ups and fosters accountability.

Using **simple tracking tools** such as task lists, dashboards, or status reports can also help maintain visibility without interference. These tools provide a transparent view of progress and allow managers to step in only when necessary.

Equally important is the ability to **trust your team**. Micromanagement often stems from a lack of trust or fear of failure. However, over-controlling behaviour can hinder performance and reduce morale. Trust, combined with periodic review, creates a balanced approach where teams feel empowered yet accountable.

In practical terms, a manager who constantly checks every small action may slow down the team, whereas a manager who sets clear goals, reviews progress at defined intervals, and supports when needed enables faster and more efficient execution.

Ultimately, tracking progress without micromanaging is about shifting focus from control to guidance. It is about creating a system where accountability is built into the process, and individuals are empowered to deliver their best. Managers who master this balance build stronger teams, improve productivity, and foster a culture of trust and ownership.

➢ Understanding Micromanagement

What Micromanagement Really Is

Micromanagement is not simply paying attention to detail. It is not caring about quality. It is not following up on deadlines. These are legitimate and healthy management behaviors. Micromanagement is something more specific and more damaging — it is the **systematic**

over-involvement of a manager in work that has been assigned to someone else, driven by an inability to trust and a need to control outcomes at the level of individual actions rather than results.

➢ The Foundation: Setting Up for Success Before Tracking Begins

The most important insight in this chapter is this:

"The quality of your progress tracking is determined before the work begins — not during it."

Most tracking problems — the anxiety, the constant checking, the urge to intervene — arise not because the manager is a control freak but because the work was not set up clearly enough at the start. When expectations are vague, standards are undefined, and check-in points are not agreed, a manager has no choice but to check constantly — because there is no other way to know what is happening.

Clear setup at the beginning makes light-touch tracking possible throughout.

➢ The Progress Tracking Frameworks

Framework — The Traffic Light System

The simplest and most effective progress tracking tool available to a professional manager is the **Traffic Light System** - a three-color status indicator that gives every task, project, or goal an immediate, honest health check at any given moment.

➢ The Anti-Micromanagement Communication Habits

How Great Managers Stay Informed Through Communication — Not Control

The way a manager communicates during the progress tracking process is just as important as the frameworks they use. The words, tone, and timing of manager communication either build trust and autonomy or quietly erode them.

➢ When to Step In — and How to Do It Without Micromanaging

The Intervention Decision Framework

Even the most hands-off manager must sometimes step in. The question is not whether to intervene — it is **when and how.** Stepping in at the right moment, in the right way, is not micromanagement. It is leadership.

Building a Team That Tracks Itself

The ultimate goal of progress tracking without micromanaging is to build a team where **accountability is not externally imposed but internally driven** — where team members take genuine ownership of their progress, flag issues proactively, and hold each other to high standards without needing the manager to prompt or pressure them.

This is not an idealistic dream. It is a practical outcome of consistent, trust-based management — and it can be deliberately cultivated.

An incident: The Dashboard That Built Trust

Ajay had recently taken over as the Area Manager for a cluster of quick-service restaurants. The numbers looked decent on paper, but something felt off. Staff morale was low, outlet managers seemed anxious, and performance was inconsistent.

Within a week, Ajay noticed a pattern.

Every evening, he would receive multiple calls from his Outlet Managers:

"Sir, I've sent the sales report."

"Sir, have you checked today's wastage numbers?"

"Sir, should I increase staffing tomorrow?"

At first glance, it seemed like dedication. But Ajay realized something deeper—**his team was dependent, not empowered**.

He reflected on his predecessor's style. The previous manager would call every outlet 4–5 times a day, asking for updates on sales, inventory, staffing, and even customer complaints. Nothing moved without his approval.

The result?

Managers stopped thinking. They only reported.

Ajay decided to change this—but carefully.

The Shift

Instead of increasing control, Ajay introduced a simple system.

He created a **daily performance dashboard** that included:

- Sales vs target
- Food cost
- Wastage
- Customer feedback score
- Staff attendance

Each outlet manager had to update their own data by the end of the day.

But here was the twist—

Ajay did **not call them for updates**.

Instead, every morning, he reviewed the dashboard quietly and sent just one message in the group:

"Good work, at Park Street outlet on reducing wastage. Let's all aim for similar control. Rajarhat—let's connect on improving customer feedback."

Initial Resistance

The managers were confused.

"No calls today?"

"Sir didn't ask about yesterday's sales?"

A few even called Ajay proactively.

"Sir, should I explain the drop in numbers?"

Ajay calmly replied,

"I've seen the dashboard. What do you think went wrong?"

That question changed everything.

Ownership Begins

Slowly, the mind-set shifted.

Instead of waiting for instructions:

- Managers began analysing their own numbers
- They started sharing solutions, not just problems
- Peer learning began within the group

One outlet manager posted:

"We reduced wastage by prepping smaller batches during non-peak hours."

Another replied: "Tried this today—worked well!"

The Turning Point

One weekend, a key outlet saw a sudden drop in sales due to local construction work.

Earlier, this would have triggered panic calls.

This time, the outlet manager posted on the dashboard:

- Issue identified
- Action taken: local leaflet distribution + online offers
- Expected recovery timeline

Ajay did not intervene immediately.

He waited. By mid-week, the numbers started improving.

Ajay simply responded: “Great ownership. This is what leadership looks like.”

The Outcome

Within three months:

- Outlet performance stabilized
- Team confidence improved
- Decision-making became faster
- Ajay’s time shifted from chasing updates to **strategic improvements**

Most importantly, the team no longer worked out of fear—they worked with **ownership and clarity**.

The Lesson

Tracking progress is important—but how you track it defines your leadership.

Closing Thought

The manager who tracks everything controls nothing that matters.

The manager who trusts blindly sees the problem only after it is too late.

But the manager who builds clear expectations, creates honest tracking rhythms, responds proportionally to what they see, and trusts their people to bring them the truth.

The manager builds something no system or dashboard ever could.

They build a team that does not need to be watched to perform well.

A team that performs well because they want to.

And that, more than any metric, is the true measure of a manager who has mastered their craft.

Chapter 4 –

Decision Making, Problem Solving & Change

"All birds find shelter during a rain, but EAGLE avoids rain by flying above the clouds. PROBLEMS are common, but ATTITUDE makes the DIFFERENCE" – ***Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam***

Structured decision-making models

"Structured decision-making brings clarity by replacing impulse with logic."

Every manager makes hundreds of decisions every week. Some are small and instinctive, which email to reply first, whether to approve a leave request, how to respond to a team member's question. Others are significant and consequential: which candidate to hire, whether to recommend a major process change, how to respond to a client crisis, which strategic direction to pursue when two equally compelling options exist.

The quality of these decisions accumulated over weeks, months, and years determines almost everything about a manager's effectiveness. Not their charisma. Not their technical expertise. Not their years of experience. The decisions they make and the quality of thinking that goes into those decisions are what ultimately separate managers who build great teams and deliver consistent results from those who struggle despite genuine effort and good intentions.

Yet decision-making is one of the most undertrained skills in management.

While managers are well- versed in processes like budgeting and performance management, they are rarely equipped with the ability to think clearly and systematically when navigating complex and uncertain decisions.

As a result, most managerial decisions are driven by a mix of instinct, organizational habits, cognitive biases, and time pressure, none of which consistently lead to sound outcomes.

Research in behavioural economics and organizational psychology consistently shows that unstructured human decision, even from highly intelligent, experienced professionals is far less reliable than most people believe.

We are overconfident. We are influenced by how information is presented. We are anchored to the first number we hear. We seek information that confirms what we already believe. We are more afraid of loss than we are motivated by equivalent gain.

Structured decision-making models do not eliminate these human tendencies. But they create a **deliberate, repeatable process** that forces the manager to slow down, consider multiple perspectives, examine assumptions, and arrive at decisions that are more reasoned, more defensible, and more consistently good than instinct alone can produce.

This chapter will give you complete mastery of the most powerful structured decision-making models available to a professional manager tools that work whether you are making a routine operational choice or navigating the most complex and consequential decision of your leadership career.

Understanding How Managers Actually Make Decisions

The Decision-Making Reality

Before exploring better approaches, it is important to understand honestly how most managers currently make decisions (this is from my experience over the years) because awareness of our default patterns is the first step toward changing them.

The Six Default Decision-Making Patterns:

PATTERN 1 - **THE GUT DECISION**

"It just feels right."

Relies entirely on instinct and experience.

Fast and sometimes accurate ~ but unreliable for complex, high-stakes, or unfamiliar situations.

PATTERN 2 - **THE PRECEDENT DECISION**

"This is what we have always done."

Defaults to past behaviour regardless of whether past behaviour was optimal or circumstances have changed.

PATTERN 3 - **THE AUTHORITY DECISION**

"This is what my manager would want."

Defers to hierarchy rather than evidence or reasoning. Avoids accountability by outsourcing judgment.

PATTERN 4 - **THE CONSENSUS DECISION**

"Everyone seems to agree so it must be right."

Mistakes popularity for quality.

Highly vulnerable to groupthink.

PATTERN 5 - **THE REACTIVE DECISION**

"We need to decide right now."

Made under time pressure without adequate information or consideration of alternatives.

PATTERN 6 - **THE AVOIDANCE DECISION**

"Let us wait and see a bit longer."

Delays the decision indefinitely to avoid discomfort.

Often results in a worse outcome than any available choice.

None of these patterns is always wrong. Gut instinct, precedent, and consensus all have their place. But relying on them exclusively, especially for important decisions, is a significant leadership risk.

The Decision-Making Structure

The DECIDE is the most comprehensive and widely applicable structured decision-making model for professional managers. It provides a complete six-step process that takes a manager from the moment a decision is recognized all the way through to evaluation of the outcome.

D - DEFINE the problem

E - ESTABLISH the criteria

C - CONSIDER the alternatives

I - IDENTIFY the best alternative

D - DEVELOP and implement the plan

E - EVALUATE the decision

D - DEFINE

The most common reason manager's make poor decisions as they respond to the symptom rather than the cause. They define the problem too narrowly missing the broader context, or they define it too broadly making it impossible to address meaningfully. They at times fail to deep dive into the root cause of the problem.

E - ESTABLISH

Before evaluating any option, the manager must first define what a good decision looks like. The criteria that any successful solution must meet. Without criteria, decisions are evaluated emotionally rather than rationally.

C - CONSIDER

Most managers consider too few alternatives, often stopping at two or three. The DECIDE requires a disciplined effort to generate a **genuine range of options** before evaluating any of them.

I - IDENTIFY

With criteria established and options generated, the manager now evaluates each alternative systematically against the criteria to make the comparison objective and transparent.

D - DEVELOP

Selecting the best alternative is not the end of the decision-making process; it is the beginning of the implementation process. A great decision poorly implemented produces poor results. The implementation plan must be as structured as the decision itself.

E - EVALUATE

The final step is evaluating the decision after it has been implemented. This is where managers learn and improve. Without evaluation, decisions become isolated events rather than building blocks of wisdom.

Closing Thought

Every manager makes decisions every day in many areas, often under pressure and with incomplete information, while facing real consequences for real people.

The manager who decides by instinct alone will be right sometimes and wrong often — and will never fully understand why.

The manager who uses a clear process, understands the problem before solving it, looks at different options before choosing, and thinks about possible failure before celebrating success, will not always be right. No method can guarantee that.

But they will be right more often. They will be wrong in ways they understand. They will learn faster. They will grow further.

And over time their decisions will reflect not just their intelligence but their wisdom.

Managing under pressure and uncertainty

"True leadership is revealed when calm decisions prevail amid pressure and uncertainty."

In the professional world, pressure and uncertainty are inevitable. Whether it is a peak business day, an operational crisis, or an unexpected challenge, managers are often required to perform in situations where clarity is limited and time is short. The true capability of a manager is not tested in routine conditions, but in how effectively they respond under pressure.

The first step in managing pressure is **maintaining composure**.

A calm mind enables clear thinking, while panic leads to poor decisions. When manager remains composed, it creates a sense of stability within the team. People look up to leaders during difficult situations, and their behaviour sets the tone for the entire environment.

Clarity of priorities is equally important. Under pressure, multiple issues may arise simultaneously, but not all require immediate attention. Managers must quickly identify what is urgent and important, and focus their energy accordingly. This ability to prioritize ensures that critical tasks are addressed first, preventing the situation from escalating further.

Structured decision-making plays a crucial role during uncertainty.

Even when complete information is not available, managers must rely on logical thinking, past experience, and available data to make timely decisions. Delaying decisions due to uncertainty can often worsen the situation. It is better to make a well-informed decision and adapt as needed, rather than remain indecisive.

Communication becomes even more critical in such situations. Clear, concise, and timely communication helps align the team and avoids confusion. Managers must ensure that instructions are simple and actionable, while also keeping stakeholders informed. Active listening is equally important, as it helps in understanding ground realities and adjusting plans accordingly.

Delegation is another key factor. A manager cannot handle everything alone, especially under pressure. Assigning responsibilities to capable team members allows for faster execution and better control over the situation. Trusting the team and empowering them to act ensures that multiple tasks are handled simultaneously and efficiently.

Resilience and adaptability define success in uncertain environments. Situations may change rapidly, requiring managers to adjust plans and strategies on the go. Being flexible, learning from ongoing developments, and staying focused on the end goal are essential traits.

In high-pressure industries such as Hospitality, Retail, FMCG, Healthcare, Entertainment and many more, these situations are a part of everyday operations. Managers who prepare themselves mentally, build strong teams, and follow structured approaches are better equipped to handle such challenges effectively.

Ultimately, managing under pressure and uncertainty is about staying calm, thinking clearly, acting decisively, and leading confidently. It is in these moments that true leadership is demonstrated and lasting impressions are created.

Understanding Pressure and Uncertainty

What Pressure and Uncertainty Actually Are

Before building the skills to manage them, a professional manager must understand exactly what pressure and uncertainty are — and crucially, how they are different from each other.

The Manager's Inner Game Under Pressure

Regulation Before Response

The most important skill a manager develops for performing under pressure is not strategic. It is not analytical. It is not even communicative.

It is the ability to regulate their own emotional and psychological state before they respond to the situation around them.

This is not a soft concept. It is a hard leadership requirement.

Research show manager's emotional state is contagious: it spreads to their team through tone of voice, body language, the pace of communication, and the quality of decisions made under stress.

A manager who is visibly panicking creates a team that panics. A manager who is outwardly calm even when internally uncertain — creates a team that holds together.

"The team does not need you to have all the answers under pressure. They need you to hold together while you find them."

CALM for Managing Under Pressure

The CALM is a structured approach designed specifically for managers navigating situations of high pressure and significant uncertainty. It provides a sequence of actions that stabilize the situation, maintain team performance, and preserve the trust and confidence that allow teams to function even when the environment around them is genuinely difficult.

Communication under Pressure and Uncertainty

What to Say and What Not to Say

How a manager communicates under pressure is one of the most visible tests of their leadership. The words they choose, the honesty they demonstrate, the consistency they maintain — all of these are scrutinized by a team that is looking for signals about whether to trust, whether to stay, and whether to give their best when it is hardest.

Building Resilience Before the Pressure Arrives

The Manager Who Prepares Performs Better Under Pressure

The most effective management of pressure and uncertainty does not happen during the crisis. It happens in the weeks and months before the crisis arrives through the deliberate cultivation of personal and team resilience that makes high performance under pressure possible.

After the Pressure -The Recovery and Learning Phase

Why What Happens After the Crisis Matters as Much as What Happens During It.

Many managers treat the end of a difficult period as a signal to immediately move on to the next goal, the next quarter, the next challenge.

This is a significant missed opportunity. The period immediately following a high-pressure episode is one of the richest learning environments available to a manager and their team.

Sharing an Experience:

Let me narrate an incident that dates back to November 2015, during the devastating Chennai floods. This experience clearly demonstrates the essence of managing under pressure and uncertainty.

It was the 30th of November 2015. The city had been receiving continuous heavy rainfall since the previous night, leading to severe waterlogging across multiple areas. Traffic was disrupted, and the city police were actively diverting routes. At that time, I was serving as the General Manager of a classified five-star hotel in Chennai, with 172 rooms spread across 2 acre landscaping.

It was a busy Monday, with the hotel running at around 76% occupancy. Due to flight cancellations, many guests were extending their stays, and the front office team was actively managing requests. As the rain intensified, I decided to cancel the morning HOD meeting, considering the safety and accessibility challenges faced by the team. By noon, the situation had worsened significantly.

The turning point came when the Chief Engineer informed me that the water level was rising rapidly and there was a high risk of the basement getting flooded. This was critical, as all essential services—DG sets, electrical panels, laundry, RO Plant and water systems—were located in the basement. Any flooding would result in a complete shutdown of operations and electrocution.

Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, I immediately called for an emergency meeting at the banquet hall. All Heads of Departments, assistant managers, and executives were briefed about the crisis. Clear roles and responsibilities were assigned, with the highest priority given to the safety and well-being of our in-house guests.

As the day progressed, external supply chains broke down. Vendors were unable to deliver essential items such as vegetables, meat, and groceries. The kitchen had to operate with limited stock. At the same time, we proactively communicated the situation to all guests—those in rooms were informed via calls, while others in public areas were addressed personally. The guests, understanding the gravity of the situation, were extremely cooperative.

By 2:30 PM, water started entering the basement. Acting swiftly, we shut down the main electrical supply and transformers to prevent any hazard, resulting in a complete blackout. However, prior planning played a crucial role. Teams had been instructed to keep mobile devices charged, and the housekeeping department had arranged candles, torches, and basic emergency supplies.

Communication systems were severely impacted. The EPABX system failed, and water supply systems were disrupted due to the shutdown of pumps. Despite these challenges, the team executed the plan effectively. Housekeeping ensured that buckets of water were supplied to all occupied rooms for essential use.

Throughout this crisis, the most remarkable aspect was the composure of the team. Despite facing such a situation for the first time, and with no predefined SOPs, the team remained calm, focused, and committed. There was immense pressure, yet no panic.

The Executive Chef and his team demonstrated exceptional adaptability. Despite non-functional cold storage and limited resources, they managed to prepare meals for both guests and staff with careful planning, they served limited yet adequate meals during dinner, breakfast, and lunch the following day.

This incident stands as a testament to effective leadership under pressure. It highlights the importance of staying calm, communicating clearly, making timely decisions, and empowering teams. In uncertain situations, it is not the availability of perfect plans that ensures success, but the ability to act decisively and lead with confidence.

This experience truly defines what it means to manage under pressure and uncertainty.

Closing Thought

Pressure will come. Uncertainty will come. They always do. For every manager in every organization at every stage of a career.

The question is not whether you will face them. The question is who you will be when you do.

Will you freeze or focus? Will you flee — or face it? Will you perform for the camera and collapse in private? Or will you do the harder thing˜ the thing that defines leadership —

Will you hold steady when steadiness is the hardest thing in the room?

Will you speak honestly when honesty requires courage?

Will you stay present when presence costs you something?

Will you protect your team when the pressure is telling you to protect only yourself?

It is who you choose to be in the moments when the right choice comes at a cost.

That is the manager your team will follow anywhere.

Avoiding cognitive biases

"Clear thinking begins when we question our assumptions and rise above our biases."

Decision-making is one of the most critical responsibilities of a professional manager. Every decision, whether small or significant, has an impact on people, processes, and outcomes. However, many decisions are unconsciously influenced by personal biases ,mental shortcuts or tendencies that can distort judgment and lead to inconsistent or flawed outcomes.

Biases often arise from past experiences, personal beliefs, emotions, or limited information. While they help in quick thinking, they can also lead to errors.

For instance, a manager may favour an idea simply because it aligns with their previous success (confirmation bias), or judge an employee based on recent performance rather than overall contribution. In some cases, overconfidence may lead to decisions without adequate analysis, while familiarity with a person may influence fairness in evaluation.

To avoid such biases, the first and most important step is **awareness**.

Managers must acknowledge that biases exist and that no decision-maker is completely immune to them. This awareness encourages a more thoughtful and balanced approach to decision-making.

The next step is to adopt a **structured decision-making process**. Clearly defining the problem, gathering relevant data, evaluating multiple alternatives, and considering potential risks ensures that decisions are based on logic rather than assumptions. Using objective criteria and measurable parameters, helps reduce subjectivity.

Seeking **diverse perspectives** is another powerful way to minimize bias. Encouraging inputs from team members, peers, or cross-functional stakeholders brings different viewpoints into the discussion. This not only challenges assumptions but also leads to more balanced and well-informed decisions.

Managers should also practice **deliberate thinking**, especially for critical decisions. Taking a pause, reflecting on available information, and questioning initial instincts can prevent impulsive choices. Asking questions such as "What am I missing?" or "Is there an alternative view?" helps in uncovering hidden biases.

Another effective technique is to rely on **data and evidence** rather than intuition alone. While experience is valuable, decisions supported by facts and analysis are more reliable and defensible. At the same time, past decisions should be reviewed regularly to identify patterns of bias and areas for improvement.

Creating a culture of **open feedback** further strengthens unbiased decision-making. When team members feel comfortable questioning decisions or offering different opinions, it reduces the risk of one-sided thinking and promotes transparency.

Ultimately, avoiding biases in decision-making is about maintaining objectivity, fairness, and clarity. It requires discipline, openness, and a willingness to challenge one's own thinking.

Managers who develop this capability are able to make decisions that are more balanced, build trust within their teams, and achieve better long-term outcomes.

In a world of complexity and constant change, the ability to think clearly and act objectively is what distinguishes a good manager from a great one.

"The quality of a decision depends not just on intelligence, but on the ability to remain unbiased."

THE REAL COST OF BIASED DECISIONS IN MANAGEMENT

TO PEOPLE

The talented candidate who was not hired because the interviewer unconsciously preferred someone who reminded them of themselves.

The high-performing team member who was denied promotion because their communication style was different from the manager's — not because their contribution was lesser.

The team member who received inflated performance ratings and missed the honest feedback that would have helped them grow.

TO TEAMS

The project that continued long past the point where stopping would have been the right call because sunk cost thinking kept it alive.

The risk that was never taken because loss aversion made the potential downside feel larger than it was — and the team never captured the opportunity that waited on the other side of that risk.

The meeting room full of intelligent people who all agreed with a bad idea because group think made disagreement feel more dangerous than the bad idea itself.

TO ORGANIZATIONS

Strategies built on bias rather than honest assessment of market reality.

Cultures shaped by similarity bias that look and think the same and therefore miss what diversity of thought would have shown them.

Leadership pipelines filled with people who resemble those already at the top — rather than those best suited to take the organization forward.

These are not edge cases or theoretical risks. They are happening — right now — in organizations everywhere. They are happening because intelligent, well-intentioned managers are making decisions without the structures that would protect those decisions from the predictable errors that human thinking produces.

Closing Thought

Every manager makes decisions. Hundreds of them. Every single week.

Some feel momentous - who to hire, which strategy to pursue, how to handle a team conflict, whether to escalate a concern to leadership. Others feel routine - how to prioritize today's work, which email to respond first, whether to approve a non-budgeted request.

What most managers do not realize and what research in psychology and behavioural economics has proven beyond reasonable doubt — is that the process behind both types of decisions is fundamentally the same. And that process is far less rational, far less objective, and far more influenced by invisible forces than most managers believe.

And over time decision by decision, week by week, year by year — **the quality of their thinking becomes the quality of their leadership. And that quality is felt by every person who has ever worked for them.**

Leading teams through change

"Change is managed through processes, but it is led through people."

Change is inevitable in any organization whether driven by market dynamics, technology, leadership decisions, or unforeseen challenges.

However, while change is constant, resistance to change is equally natural. The role of a manager is not just to implement change, but to lead people through it with clarity, confidence, and empathy.

- The first step in leading team is **creating awareness and clarity**.

  Team members must understand *why* the change is necessary. When people are unaware of the purpose, they tend to resist or disengage. A manager must communicate the reason behind the change, the expected outcomes, and how it impacts both the organization and individuals.

- The next stage is **addressing emotions content**.

  Change often brings uncertainty, fear, and discomfort. Managers must actively listen to concerns, acknowledge challenges, and provide reassurance. Ignoring emotions can lead to disengagement, whereas addressing them builds trust and acceptance.

- Once alignment is established, the focus shifts to **planning and involvement**.

  Engaging team members in the process gives them a sense of ownership. Breaking the change into manageable steps, defining roles, and setting clear expectations ensures smoother execution.

During implementation, **consistent communication and support** are critical.

Managers must provide regular updates, monitor progress, and remove obstacles. Recognizing small wins during this phase helps maintain momentum and motivates the team.

Finally, the change must be **reinforced and sustained**.

Once implemented, it is important to ensure that the new processes or behaviours are embedded into daily operations. Continuous feedback, training, and reinforcement help in making the change permanent.

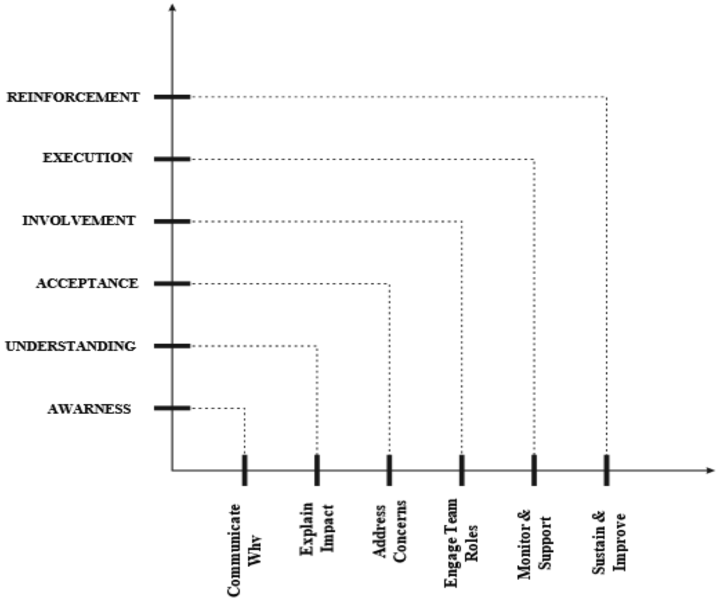
Leading change is not just about processes—it is about people.

Managers who communicate effectively, involve their teams, and demonstrate resilience can turn uncertainty into opportunity and resistance into acceptance.

While processes and plans are important, the true success of change lies in how well people understand, accept, and adapt to it.

It requires a thoughtful balance of a clear and compelling vision, deep empathy towards team members, and consistent, transparent communication. A manager must not only define the direction but also connect with the emotions and concerns of the team, ensuring they feel supported throughout the transition.

When handled effectively, change is no longer seen as disruption—it becomes a shared journey. With the right approach, uncertainty can be transformed into a collective opportunity for growth, learning, and long-term success.



Closing Thought

As we reflect on the subject of leading teams through change, it is essential to understand that leadership begins with example. A manager cannot expect the team to embrace change unless they demonstrate it themselves through actions and behaviour.

Change is the only constant that drives both organizational growth and personal development.

To stay relevant, one must be agile, proactive, and prepared to respond effectively to evolving situations. The ability to adapt at the right time is what differentiates a good manager from a great one.

Leading from the front plays a crucial role in building confidence within the team. When managers step forward, take ownership, and demonstrate commitment, it inspires trust and motivates team members to follow.

A leader who acts as a role model creates a positive environment where change is accepted rather than resisted.

Equally important is the ability to embrace change with conviction. When a manager truly believes in the change, that belief reflects in their communication and actions. This conviction becomes contagious, influencing the team and driving collective effort towards success.

Ultimately, successful change is not enforced—it is inspired. And it begins with a leader who is willing to lead by example.

"Before expecting your team to change, become the example of that change."

Building a resilient, adaptable team

"A resilient team adapts, evolves, and thrives—no matter how the winds of change blow."

In today's fast-changing and unpredictable work environment, the strength of a manager is reflected in the resilience and adaptability of the team they lead. A resilient team does not break under pressure, and an adaptable team does not resist change—they evolve with it. Building such a team is not accidental; it is a result of consistent leadership, the right culture, and deliberate effort.

The foundation of resilience lies in **mind-set**. Managers must cultivate a culture where challenges are viewed as opportunities to learn rather than obstacles to fear. Encouraging a positive outlook, promoting problem-solving, and reinforcing the idea that setbacks are temporary helps teams remain steady even in difficult situations.

Clear communication and trust are equally critical. When teams are well informed and feel trusted, they respond better to uncertainty. Transparency from leadership reduces anxiety and builds confidence. A team that trusts its leader is more likely to stay united and focused during disruptions.

Another key factor is **empowerment and ownership**. Teams become resilient when individuals feel responsible for outcomes. Delegating authority, encouraging decision-making, and allowing team members to take initiative builds confidence and strengthens their ability to handle challenges independently.

Adaptability, on the other hand, requires **continuous learning and flexibility**. Managers must encourage skill development, cross training, and exposure to different roles. When individuals are equipped with diverse skills, they can adjust quickly to new demands and changing circumstances.

It is also important to **normalize change**. When change becomes a regular part of the work culture rather than an exception, resistance reduces significantly. Managers should communicate that change is not a disruption, but a pathway to growth and improvement.

Recognition and support play a vital role in sustaining resilience. Acknowledging efforts, celebrating small wins, and providing support during setbacks motivates the team to keep moving forward. Resilience grows when people feel valued and supported.

In high-pressure environments, such as service industries, these qualities become even more critical. Teams that are mentally strong, well-coordinated, and adaptable can maintain performance even during crises or uncertainty.

Ultimately, building a resilient and adaptable team is about preparing people not just to perform in stable conditions, but to thrive in change and adversity. It is about creating a team that does not wait for direction in difficult times, but rises with confidence to meet challenges head-on.

Such teams are not only efficient—they are future-ready.

"Strong teams don't avoid challenges—they are built to rise through them."

Let me share two different incidents that took place in two different situations which best explains the topic.

Incident 1

During one of the peak wedding seasons at a large city hotel in Hyderabad, the property was running at full capacity. Multiple events were lined up. Banquets, corporate gatherings, and in-house dining all scheduled on the same day.

The team was well-prepared, and operations were running smoothly until an unexpected situation disrupted everything.

In the early afternoon, a sudden technical failure led to a complete breakdown of the central kitchen's (main kitchen) cooking range.

At the same time, one of the Sr. Chef (Chef de partie- CDP) reported sick, and a delay in vendor supply added further pressure. With hundreds of guests expected within a few hours, the situation could have easily turned into a service disaster.

Instead of panicking, the team came together with remarkable composure. The Executive Chef quickly restructured the menu based on available resources. Dishes that required complex preparation were replaced with alternatives that could be executed efficiently without compromising quality. The banquet team coordinated closely with the kitchen to adjust service timelines.

Simultaneously, the manager redistributed responsibilities. A junior chef (Commis-II) was given the opportunity to step up and handle a section independently, while another team member coordinated with vendors to arrange emergency supplies. The service team was briefed to communicate proactively with guests, ensuring transparency and managing expectations.

What stood out was not just the execution, but the mind-set of the team.

No one waited for perfect conditions or complete instructions. Each individual took ownership, adapted to the situation, and contributed to the solution. There was flexibility in roles, clarity in communication, and a shared commitment to delivering the best possible experience.

By the end of the day, all events were executed successfully. Guests appreciated the service, and many were unaware of the challenges faced behind the scenes. What could have been a failure turned into a demonstration of teamwork and resilience.

This incident highlighted a powerful truth: resilient and adaptable teams are not built during crises—they are revealed by them. When teams are empowered, trained, and trusted, they rise above uncertainty and perform beyond expectations.

Such teams do not just survive challenges—they transform them into opportunities for excellence.

Incident 2

A few years ago, while managing a large multiplex cinema, the General Manager faced a situation that truly tested my team's resilience and adaptability.

It was a Saturday evening the busiest time of the week and the theatres were nearly full for multiple shows. Suddenly, a technical glitch caused the ticketing system and display boards fail, creating confusion among staff and patrons alike.

Instead of waiting for IT team to resolve the issue, he immediately took charge. Floor managers coordinated manually to direct guests to their seats, ushers communicated updates clearly and calmly, and the box office (ticket counter) staff implemented a temporary offline ticketing system. Everyone adapted quickly to new roles outside their usual responsibilities, keeping the operation running smoothly.

By the end of the evening, all shows ran successfully, without any show cancellation or refund of tickets and all guests left satisfied, and the team reflected on their ability to handle unexpected challenges.

This experience demonstrated that **a resilient, adaptable team doesn't just survive crises—it transforms pressure into performance**.

Takeaway Basket

- Resilient teams don't wait for perfect conditions; they create success even in imperfect situations."
- Resilience comes from mind-set, training, and empowerment.
- A team's true capability is revealed during crises, not routine days.

- Empowered teams take initiative without waiting for instructions.
- Flexibility in roles and responsibilities is key during unexpected situations.
- Calm, clear communication sustains performance under pressure.
- Adaptability arises when team members feel ownership and trust.

Chapter 5 –

Mastering People Management

"I don't believe in taking the right decisions. I take decisions and then make them right." – ***Ratan Tata***

Hiring and building the right team

"Hire for attitude, build for strength, and the right team will create lasting success."

The success of any manager is largely determined by the quality of the team they build. Hiring the right people is not just about filling positions, it is about creating a strong foundation for performance, culture, and long-term growth. A well-built team can overcome challenges, adapt to change, and consistently deliver results, whereas a poorly structured team can struggle despite strong leadership.

The process begins with **clarity of role and expectations**. Before hiring, a manager must clearly define what the role demands—not just in terms of technical skills, but also attitude, behaviour, and cultural fit. A clear understanding of expectations ensures that the selection process is focused and effective.

While technical competence is important, **attitude and mind- set** often determine long-term success. Skills can be taught, but attitude is deeply ingrained. Hiring individuals who demonstrate a willingness to learn, adaptability, and a positive approach creates a strong and sustainable team culture. A candidate with the right mind-set will grow with the organization and contribute beyond their defined role.

Another critical factor is **cultural alignment**. Every organization and team operates with a certain set of values and working styles. Hiring individuals who align with these values ensures smoother integration and better collaboration. At the same time, it is important to balance alignment with **diversity of thought**, as varied perspectives lead to innovation and better decision-making.

Structured hiring processes play a vital role in selecting the right candidates. Interviews should not be limited to basic questioning but should include scenario-based discussions, problem-solving exercises, and behavioural assessments. This helps in evaluating how a candidate thinks, reacts, and performs in real-life situations.

Building the right team does not end with hiring it extends to **on boarding and integration**. The initial days of a new employee are critical in shaping their experience and performance. Providing clear guidance, setting expectations, and offering support helps them settle in quickly and become productive.

A strong team is also built through **complementary strengths**. A manager should aim to create a balanced team where individuals bring different skills and capabilities. This ensures that the team is not dependent on a single individual and can handle diverse challenges effectively.

Continuous development and engagement are essential to sustain a strong team. Hiring the right people is only the first step; nurturing their growth through training, feedback, and opportunities is what builds long-term success. Engaged employees are more committed, productive, and aligned with organizational goals.

Managers must also be mindful of avoiding biases in hiring. Decisions influenced by familiarity, assumptions, or personal preferences can lead to poor team composition.

Objective evaluation, diverse interview panels, and structured criteria help in selecting candidates based on merit and potential.

In dynamic industries such as hospitality and services, where performance is directly linked to people, building the right team becomes even more critical. A well-chosen team not only delivers operational excellence but also enhances customer experience and organizational reputation.

Ultimately, hiring and building the right team is about making thoughtful choices, investing in people, and creating an environment where individuals can thrive. A manager who excels in this area builds not just a team, but a strong, resilient, and future-ready organization.

A Story of Hiring the Right Fit

One of my organisation in past was looking to hire a housekeeping supervisor.

The role required someone who could handle pressure, manage a team, and interact confidently with guests.

We interviewed several candidates, and one individual stood out with exceptional technical knowledge and experience. On paper, he was the perfect fit. However, during the interaction, it was evident that he lacked patience, showed limited willingness to listen, and had a rigid approach towards team handling.

At the same time, there was another candidate who had relatively less experience but displayed a positive attitude, eagerness to learn, and strong interpersonal skills. He communicated well, listened carefully, and showed a natural inclination towards teamwork.

The decision was not easy. Choosing experience over attitude would have been the safer and more conventional route. However, we decided to hire the second candidate, focusing on long-term potential rather than immediate convenience.

In the initial months, he required guidance and training, but his willingness to learn and adapt made a significant difference. He built strong relationships with his team, handled guests with confidence, and gradually developed the technical skills required for the role.

Within a year, he emerged as one of the most dependable supervisors in the department. His team performance improved, employee engagement increased, and overall operations became smoother.

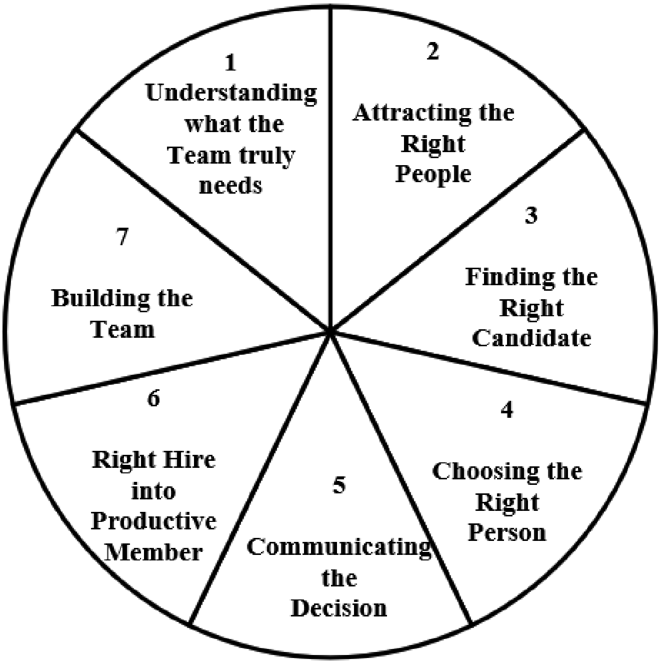
On the other hand, we later learned that the first candidate, who had been technically strong, struggled in another organization due to his inability to manage people effectively.

This experience reinforced a crucial lesson: **skills may get the job done, but attitude builds the team.**

Hiring decisions should not be based solely on experience or technical expertise, but on the individual's mind-set, adaptability, and ability to grow.

Building the right team is not about choosing the best individual on paper—it is about choosing the right fit for the team and the organization.

"Hire for attitude and potential skills can be developed, but mind-set defines success."



Closing Thought

A manager can have the best strategy in the world. The clearest goals. The most sophisticated processes. The most generous budget.

If the team is wrong, everything else amounts to very little. But a manager with the right team, one that trusts each other, challenges each other, stands by each other, and believes in a shared purpose can navigate almost anything be it uncertainty, pressure, change, and setbacks.

A team is more than just a mechanism for getting work done..

The team is the answer to almost every management question worth asking.

Hire with intention. On-board with care. Build with patience. Lead with trust.

And the team you build will become the most meaningful work of your career.

Understanding TEAM dynamics

"Great teams are not just built on talent....they are built on strong dynamics."

Team dynamics are happening -

Team dynamics are the invisible, powerful, and constantly shifting forces that operate beneath the surface of every team , shaping how people relate to each other, how power flows, how decisions get made, how conflict is handled, how trust is built or eroded, how roles are claimed or contested, and ultimately how much of the team's potential is actually realized.

Understanding team dynamics is not a soft skill.

It is **the challenge of leadership**, because a manager who does not understand the forces working within the team is leading without clear vision. They see only surface behaviour, not the real cause behind it. They fix the symptom but not the system. They repeat the same actions again and again and wonder why nothing changes.

This chapter will give you a complete, richly illustrated understanding of team dynamics ,what they are, how they form, how they evolve, how they break down, and how the professional manager reads, shapes, and leads them with skill and intention.

Team dynamics refer to the invisible forces that influence how individuals interact, collaborate, and perform within a team. It includes behaviours, relationships, communication patterns, and the overall environment that shapes team performance. For a manager, understanding team dynamics is essential to building a cohesive, high-performing, and engaged workforce.

At the core of team dynamics lies **individual behaviour**. Every team member brings unique strengths, personalities, motivations, and work styles. Some individuals are proactive and outspoken, while others may be reserved but highly analytical. A manager must recognize and respect these differences, ensuring that each individual's strengths are effectively utilized.

The next layer is **interpersonal relationships**. How team members interact with one another significantly impacts collaboration. Strong relationships foster trust, open communication, and mutual support, while weak or strained relationships can lead to conflicts, misunderstandings, and reduced productivity.

Communication patterns play a vital role in shaping team dynamics. Teams that communicate clearly, openly, and frequently are more aligned and efficient. On the other hand, lack of communication or unclear messaging leads to confusion and errors. Managers must create an environment where ideas, feedback, and concerns can be shared freely.

Another important aspect is **roles and responsibilities**. Clarity in roles ensures that each team member understands their contribution and accountability. Overlapping roles or unclear expectations can create friction and inefficiency. A well-structured team with defined roles performs with greater coordination and confidence.

Leadership influence is a key driver of team dynamics. The manager's behaviour, communication style, and decision-making approach set the tone for the team. A supportive and fair leader encourages collaboration, while an authoritative or inconsistent leader may create fear or disengagement.

Conflict is a natural part of any team, and **conflict management** determines whether it becomes constructive or destructive. Healthy conflict can lead to better ideas and innovation, but unresolved conflict can damage relationships and morale. Managers must address issues promptly and objectively.

Finally, **shared goals and purpose** align the team. When individuals understand the bigger picture and how their work contributes to organizational success, they are more motivated and engaged. A clear sense of purpose unites the team and drives collective performance.

Understanding and managing these dynamics enables a manager to transform a group of individuals into a cohesive and high-performing team. It creates an environment where people collaborate effectively, support each other, and consistently deliver results.

These two incidents will mirror the Topic-

The Banquet Breakdown That Became a Breakthrough

A luxury hotel was hosting one of its biggest corporate events of the year. A high profile banquet with over 900 guests. Every department was involved: Kitchen, F&B Service, Housekeeping, Banquet team. On paper, the team was strong, experienced, and well prepared.

However, as the event began, things slowly started to fall apart.

The kitchen was ready with the food, but the service team was not aligned with the timing. Housekeeping had not cleared a section of the banquet hall on time, causing confusion in hall setup.

The banquet team was trying to manage guest expectations, but there was no clear communication between departments. Each team was working hard but not together.

Frustration started building. The kitchen blamed service delays, service blamed housekeeping, and housekeeping blamed last-minute changes. Despite having capable individuals, the event was heading towards failure.

The F&B Manager stepped in and quickly realized that the issue was not capability—it was coordination.

He immediately gathered key teammates from each department for a quick 5-minute huddle.

Instead of assigning blame, he established one clear communication channel and assigned a single coordinator for real-time updates. Roles were clarified instantly—who would lead service flow, who would manage guest communication, and who would ensure readiness of sections.

The focus shifted from "my task" to "our outcome."

From that point onward, the team began to move in sync. The kitchen adjusted plating speed based on service readiness, housekeeping prioritized critical areas, and the service team communicated proactively with guests.

The remaining event flowed smoothly, and by the end, the guests appreciated the overall experience.

What changed? Not the people, not the skills ,but the dynamics.

This incident clearly demonstrated that team dynamics are the invisible force behind visible results. Even the most talented teams can fail without alignment, while an aligned team can recover from near failure and deliver success.

The direction that changed the dynamics

A Hotel in New Delhi during the evening shift at the all-day dining restaurant was known for its chaos despite having experienced staff, the service often ran into delays, guest complaints were frequent, and the team appeared disorganized.

Interestingly, each individual was competent in their own role, yet the team as a whole struggled to perform. A new manager took over the operations and decided not to make immediate changes to processes or staffing.

Instead, he spent the first few days simply observing the team. He noticed that while the chef blamed the service staff for delays, the service team pointed fingers at the kitchen. Communication was minimal, roles overlapped, and there was little coordination during peak hours. Rather than enforcing strict rules, the manager initiated a simple change.

He brought the kitchen and service teams together before the shift for a quick briefing. Roles were clearly defined, responsibilities were reassigned based on individual strengths, and a single point of communication was established between the kitchen and the floor. He also encouraged open communication and asked team members to support each other instead of assigning blame.

Small but important changes,like calling out orders clearly, updating delays proactively, and acknowledging each other's efforts—were introduced. Within a week, the transformation was visible. The same team that once struggled began to operate smoothly. Orders were delivered on time, coordination improved, and guest satisfaction increased significantly.

The individuals had not changed their dynamics had

This experience highlighted a powerful lesson ~ A team's performance is not just the sum of individual skills, but the quality of interaction between them.

When trust, communication, and clarity align, even an average team can deliver exceptional results. Conversely, without proper dynamics, even the most skilled individuals can fail to perform. Understanding and managing team dynamics is what turns a group of individuals into a cohesive and high-performing team.

Closing Thought

A team is never just a group of people who share a reporting line.

It is a living, breathing system of relationships, histories, fears, ambitions, loyalties, and hopes — all in constant motion, all shaping what is possible, all waiting to be understood.

The Manager who sees only the surface — the tasks, the deadlines, the outputs — will always be surprised by what emerges from beneath it.

But the manager who learns to read what is invisible - who senses the trust that is absent, the conflict that is building, the norm that is forming, the voice that is going unheard ,that manager does not just manage a team.

They shape one.

And the team they shape built on trust, held together by honest norms, energised by healthy conflict, and guided by a manager who truly sees them become successful and agile.

A team that would follow their manager not because they have to but because working together has become the best part of their professional life.

Motivation, engagement, and trust

"When people trust you, feel engaged, and stay motivated, performance becomes a natural outcome."

In any organization, people are the driving force behind performance, productivity, and success. However, people do not perform at their best merely because they are assigned tasks, they perform when they are motivated, engaged, and trust the environment they work in. These three elements are deeply interconnected and form the foundation of effective people management.

What is Motivation

Motivation is the internal drive that influences an individual's willingness to perform. It is what pushes people to go beyond the minimum and strive for excellence. However, motivation is not the same for everyone. What inspires one individual may not necessarily work for another.

Some employees are motivated by recognition and appreciation, while others seek growth opportunities, financial rewards, or job stability.

A manager must understand these individual drivers and tailor their approach accordingly. A "one size fits all" method rarely works in motivating a diverse team.

According to me, Motivation is categorized under two majors:

- Intrinsic (inner) Motivation: Driven by personal satisfaction, passion, and a sense of achievement.
- Extrinsic (external) Motivation: Driven by external rewards such as incentives, promotions, or recognition.

An effective manager creates a balance between both. While rewards and incentives are important, long-term motivation comes from meaningful work, learning opportunities, and a sense of purpose.

Driving Engagement

While motivation initiates action, engagement sustains it. Engagement refers to the emotional commitment an individual has towards their work and the organization. An engaged employee does not just complete tasks—they contribute, innovate, and take ownership.

Engagement is built through:

- Clear communication: Understanding expectations and goals
- Involvement: Being part of decisions and processes
- Recognition: Feeling valued for contributions
- Growth opportunities: Continuous learning and development

Managers play a crucial role in creating an engaging work environment. Simple actions such as acknowledging efforts, involving team members in discussions, and providing timely feedback can significantly enhance engagement levels.

Disengagement, on the other hand, often stems from lack of clarity, poor communication, limited growth opportunities, or feeling undervalued. If not addressed, it can lead to reduced productivity and higher attrition.

Building Trust

Trust is the foundation that holds motivation and engagement together.

Without trust, even the most motivated and skilled individuals may hesitate to give their best. Trust creates psychological safety…an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing ideas, taking risks, and expressing concerns without fear.

Trust is built through:

- Consistency: Acting in a predictable and reliable manner
- Transparency: Being open and honest in communication
- Fairness: Treating all team members equally
- Accountability: Taking responsibility for decisions and actions

A manager who builds trust earns loyalty and respect from the team. When trust is strong, communication becomes easier, conflicts are resolved constructively, and collaboration improves.

The Interconnection

Motivation, engagement, and trust are not isolated elements—they are deeply interconnected.

- Motivation drives individuals to start
- Engagement ensures they stay committed
- Trust sustains their performance over time

A lack of any one element weakens the entire system.

For example, a motivated employee without trust may hesitate to contribute, while an engaged employee without motivation may lose direction.

Concept	Key Focus	Outcome if Strong	Outcome if Weak
Motivation	Why people act	High effort, goal achievement	Low effort, disengagement
Engagement	How people act (emotionally, cognitively)	Sustained performance, commitment	Minimal participation, burnout
Trust	Confidence in others & systems	Collaboration, risk-taking	Fear, conflict, turnover

Practical Approach for Managers

To effectively manage these elements, managers should:

- Understand individual drivers and aspirations
- Communicate clearly and consistently
- Recognize and appreciate efforts regularly
- Provide opportunities for growth and development

Build a culture of openness and fairness

In high-pressure environments, these factors become even more critical. Teams that are motivated, engaged, and built on trust are more resilient, adaptable, and capable of delivering consistent results.

The Friday Night Blockbuster: A Lesson in Motivation, Engagement, and Trust

It was a Friday night at a bustling city multiplex in Kolkata, and a highly anticipated blockbuster was premiering. All screens were sold out, the lobby was crowded, and the concession counters were operating at full capacity. Normally, such nights were chaotic and stressful for the staff, but this particular night would demonstrate the real power of motivation, engagement, and trust.

The Duty Manager and the Cinema General Manager had spent months cultivating a strong team culture. They knew each staff member's strengths and motivators: the ticketing staff thrived on recognition and efficiency, the ushers were motivated by responsibility and ownership of their zones, and the concession staff loved fast-paced challenges. Before the shift, the managers held a brief huddle—setting clear expectations, emphasizing trust in the team's abilities, and acknowledging their previous efforts.

As the night unfolded, a sudden technical glitch occurred in one of the projectors hosting 380 guests. The screen went black in the middle of the show, causing an immediate challenge.

Rather than panicking, the team sprang into coordinated action. The ushers, along with the Duty Manager, calmly addressed the guests, explaining the situation and providing continuous updates on the progress of the repair. A few guests requested refunds, which were handled efficiently by the Duty Manager, while most chose to wait for the screening to resume. Meanwhile, the technical staff worked seamlessly to fix the projector. Within just 15 minutes, the issue was resolved, and the show continued without further disruption.

The success of this response was rooted in **trust**: the manager had empowered the team to act independently without waiting for instructions. Their **engagement** with their roles allowed them to proactively solve problems, and the **motivation** - knowing their efforts would be recognized ,pushed them to go above and beyond.

By the end of the night, all guests were satisfied, the show went on smoothly, and the team celebrated their collective success. What could have been a disaster became a clear demonstration of what a motivated, engaged, and trusted team can achieve.

Lesson: In high-pressure environments like a multiplex, **motivation sparks effort, engagement sustains action, and trust enables autonomous decision-making**. Together, these elements turn challenges into opportunities for success.

Conclusion

Motivation, engagement, and trust are the pillars of effective individual and organizational performance.

By understanding their nuances and interconnections, leaders, educators, and team members can create environments where people thrive, innovate, and contribute meaningfully.

Organizations that invest in these areas experience not only higher productivity but also a healthier, more resilient culture.

Giving feedback that actually works

"Effective feedback doesn't judge ~ it guides, empowers, and inspires improvement."

"An organization without feedback is like a team working in the dark. A ship without a radar and navigation system in middle of an ocean."

Feedback is not just a "nice to have" in an organization, it is a core mechanism that keeps the entire system functioning, improving, and adapting. Without it, even highly talented teams can gradually drift off track.

I believe feedback acts as a set of directions that an organization receives from both internal and external customers. These inputs help align processes, improve functions, and reset goals when necessary. Much like a navigation system, feedback provides timely signals and alerts, guiding the organization back on the right path whenever deviations occur.

Therefore, organizations should view feedback positively and proactively work on it. By doing so, they can continuously refine their strategies and build their business around insights that truly matter to their stakeholders.

Here I am summarizing 10 pointer to take us forward:

1. Aligns People with Goals

In any organization, goals are constantly evolving.
Feedback helps employees understand:

- What's expected
- Whether they are meeting expectations
- How their work connects to larger objectives

Without feedback:

- People assume they're doing fine (even when they're not)
- Effort gets wasted on the wrong priorities

2. Improves Performance Continuously

Performance does not improve automatically with time, it improves with correction.

Feedback:

- Highlights gaps in skills or execution
- Reinforces what's working well
- Helps employees adjust quickly

Example: A salesperson improves faster when told *exactly* what part of their pitch is failing.

3. Builds Employee Engagement

Employees want to know:

- "Am I doing well?"
- "Do I matter here?"

Regular feedback:

- Makes employees feel seen and valued
- Increases motivation and ownership
- Reduces uncertainty

Without feedback:

- People feel ignored
- Engagement drops
- Productivity declines

4. Strengthens Communication

Organizations often struggle not because of lack of talent, but because of poor communication.

Feedback:

- Opens two-way conversations
- Reduces misunderstandings
- Encourages transparency

5. Prevents Small Problems from Becoming Big Ones

Most major issues start small.

Without feedback:

- Minor mistakes go unnoticed
- Bad habits become permanent
- Conflicts grow silently

With feedback:

- Issues are addressed early
- Corrections are easier and less emotional
- ✓ Feedback is **preventive, not just corrective.**

6. Drives Learning and Development

Feedback is one of the fastest ways people learn.

It helps employees:

- Understand their strengths
- Identify development areas
- Grow professionally

Organizations benefit by:

- Building stronger talent internally
- Reducing training costs
- Creating future leaders

7. Builds Trust and Stronger Relationships

When feedback is honest and respectful:

- It creates trust between managers and employees
- Encourages openness
- Reduces fear of judgment

Without feedback:

- People guess what others think
- Misinterpretations increase
- Trust weakens

8. Encourages Accountability

Feedback makes expectations clear.

Employees:

- Know what they are responsible for
- Understand consequences of actions
- Take ownership of their work
- ✓ No feedback = no accountability.

9. Supports Innovation and Improvement

Organizations that encourage feedback:

- Get ideas from employees
- Identify inefficiencies
- Adapt faster to change

When feedback flows upward:

- Leaders make better decisions
- Systems improve continuously

10. Reduces Employee Turnover

One of the biggest reasons people leave jobs:

- Lack of recognition
- Lack of growth

- Lack of communication

All three are solved by effective feedback.

- ✓ People don't just leave companies—they leave ***environments where they feel unheard***.

Simple Summary

Feedback is important because it:

- Guides performance
- Builds engagement
- Prevents problems
- Improves communication
- Drives growth

I am narrating a story, which will connect us with the subject we are discoursing:

From Average to Star: The Story of a Hotel Sales colleague -

Manoj worked as a Sales Executive at a large -sized business hotel.

His job was to bring in corporate clients, manage bookings for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), and build relationships with bookers and corporates accordingly.

For nearly a year, his performance was……average.

- He met only about 70 - 80% of his sales targets
- His client base wasn't growing
- Most of his deals came from existing accounts, not new business

In monthly reviews, The Sales Head would simply say:

"You need to push harder."

But Manoj didn't know *how* to improve.

The Turning Point: Meaningful Feedback

One quarter, a new Sales Manager Deepa , joined the team. Instead of general comments, she sat down with Manoj and gave him structured feedback:

“Manoj, I’ve reviewed your client interactions. You’re good at explaining room rates and packages, but you focus too much on price. You’re selling rooms and packages not solutions. Clients care about how their events will run, not just what they’ll pay.”

She added: “Also, you tend to respond to inquiries instead of proactively reaching out. In sales, waiting means losing.”

Then she gave him **clear, actionable steps**:

- “Before every client meeting, research their business and needs.”
- “Instead of quoting prices first, ask questions about their event goals.”
- “Reach out to at least 5 new potential clients every day.”

For the first time, Manoj understood exactly what was missing.

Putting Feedback into Action

Arvind changed his approach.

Instead of saying:

“We can offer you a conference package at ₹ XXX per day…”

He started saying: “Can you tell me what kind of experience you want your guests to have?”

He began:

- Suggesting customized event setups
- Offering ideas to improve client events
- Following up proactively instead of waiting

Early Results

Within a few weeks:

- Clients started engaging more in conversations
- Meetings became longer and more productive
- He began closing deals that were previously slipping away

One corporate client even said: "You're the first salesperson who actually understood what we needed."

The Transformation

Over the next six months:

- Manoj exceeded his targets by 120%
- He brought in several new corporate accounts
- His name started appearing in positive client feedback

He was no longer just another salesperson, he became a **trusted advisor** for clients.

Recognition

At the annual review:

- He was awarded **"Top Sales Performer of the Year"**
- Promoted to **Senior Sales Executive**
- Asked to mentor new team members

What Made the Difference?

It was not luck.

It was:

- **Specific feedback** (not "work harder," but "change how you sell")
- **Actionable guidance**
- **Consistent application of feedback**

Key Lesson

- Feedback turns effort into direction.
- Direction turns average performance into excellence.

Handling difficult people and tough conversations

Great leaders transform difficult conversations into moments of clarity and mutual understanding, rather than sources of conflict.

Handling difficult people and tough conversations is less about "winning" and more about **managing behaviour, emotions, and outcomes effectively**.

Here is a **simple, practical approach you can actually apply in real situations**:

How to Handle Difficult People and Tough Conversations

1. Control Yourself First and stay focussed on the subject

Before handling others, manage your own reaction.

- Stay calm
- Don't react immediately
- Control tone and body language
- ✓ If you lose control, the conversation is already lost.

2. Understand the Person

Ask yourself:

- Are they stressed?
- Are they misunderstood?
- Are they defensive or insecure?
- ✓ Difficult behaviour often has a reason behind it.

3. Focus on the Issue, Not the Person

Avoid personal attacks.

- "You are irresponsible"

- “The report was submitted late”

✓ This reduces defensiveness and keeps the discussion professional.

4. Use Clear and Direct Communication

Do not be vague or indirect.

Say:

- What happened
- Why it matters
- What needs to change

✓ Clarity avoids confusion.

5. Listen Actively

- Let them speak – be a good listener
- Don’t interrupt or break conversation
- Acknowledge their point and stay connected

Example: “I understand your concern.”

✓ People calm down when they feel heard.

6. Ask Questions Instead of Arguing

Instead of saying: “You’re wrong”

Ask: “Can you explain your approach?”

✓ Questions reduce conflict and open dialogue.

7. Stay Assertive, Not Aggressive be professional

- Be firm but respectful
- Stand your ground without attacking

Example: “I understand your point, but we need to meet this deadline.”

8. Set Boundaries

If behaviour is unacceptable:

"I'm happy to discuss this, but let's keep the conversation respectful."

- ✓ Boundaries protect professionalism.

9. Handle Emotional Reactions Smartly

If they get angry

- Stay calm
- Don't argue
- Let them cool down

If they get defensive : "I'm not blaming you, just trying to improve the situation."

If they avoid: Be direct; Follow up; Set deadlines

10. Don't Avoid the Conversation

Avoidance leads to:

- Bigger problems
- Frustration
- Poor performance

11. End with a Solution, Not Conflict

Always close with:

- Agreement
- Next steps
- Positive tone

Example: "Let's work on this going forward."

Quick Example

Instead of saying: "You're always late and careless"

Say: “I noticed the last two reports were delayed, which affected the team timeline. Let’s plan how we can avoid this next time.”

Key Skills You Need

- Emotional control
- Clear communication
- Listening ability
- Assertiveness

Final Insight

- ✓ You can’t control difficult people ~but you can control how you respond, and that changes the entire conversation.

This story will explain us the Topic:

The Escalation Dispute: Tenant vs. Mall Management

Vikram was the Cluster Retail Head for a well- known apparel brand with stores across multiple malls. One quarter, while reviewing costs, he noticed a **sharp increase in Rent and CAM (common area maintenance) charges** at one particular mall.

The increase was much higher than expected:

- Rent had escalated beyond the agreed percentage
- CAM charges had risen significantly without clear justification

This directly affected store profitability.

The Conflict Begins

When Vikram’s team raised the issue with the Mall Management, the response was blunt:

“All escalations are as per agreement. These are standard revisions.”

No detailed explanation was provided.

Follow-up emails became tense:

- Vikram's team demanded clarification
- Mall Management responded defensively and delayed replies

The situation quickly turned into a **difficult relationship**, with both sides losing trust.

Recognizing the Need for a Tough Conversation

Vikram realized:

- ✓ This was not just a billing issue - it was a **contractual and relationship issue**
- ✓ Escalation without clarity could set a bad precedent

Instead of continuing email exchanges, he requested a **face-to-face meeting**.

Preparation Before the Meeting

Before stepping in, Vikram:

- Reviewed the lease agreement in detail
- Identified clauses related to rent escalation and CAM increases
- Gathered past invoices to compare trends
- Prepared specific discrepancies with data

He was ready with facts- not emotions.

The Tough Conversation

The meeting started with visible tension.

The Mall Finance Head said:

"These charges are standard across tenants. There's nothing unusual."

Instead of reacting, Vikram responded calmly:

"I'm not questioning the intent. I just want to ensure we are aligned with what was agreed in the contract."

- ✓ This avoided direct confrontation and kept the tone professional.

Addressing the Issue Clearly

Vikram presented his points:

- "As per Clause X, rent escalation is capped at a fixed percentage annually."
- "However, the current invoice reflects a higher increase."
- "CAM charges have increased by nearly 30%, but the agreement mentions justification linked to actual expenses."

He added: "I would appreciate it if we could walk through how these numbers were derived."

Handling Difficult Behaviour

The Mall Manager became slightly aggressive:

"If every tenant starts questioning, operations will become impossible."

Vikram stayed composed:

"I understand operational challenges. At the same time, clarity helps both sides maintain a long-term partnership."

- ✓ He acknowledged their concern without backing down.

Shifting Toward Resolution

Instead of arguing further, Vikram suggested:

- A detailed CAM cost breakdown
- Review of escalation calculations line by line
- A joint reconciliation of past invoices

He said: "Let's review this together so we can close it transparently."

The Breakthrough

After reviewing documents together, it was found that:

- Rent escalation had been applied using a **different base value** than agreed
- CAM charges included **one-time capital expenses**, which should not have been part of monthly billing.

These were not intentional errors, but **system and interpretation issues**.

The Outcome

- Incorrect charges were **revised and credited**
- A **clear escalation calculation sheet** was shared going forward
- CAM charges were **segregated into operational vs. capital expenses**
- More importantly: The relationship improved
- ✓ Communication became more transparent

Long-Term Solution

Both parties agreed to:

- Quarterly financial reconciliation meetings
- Pre-approval for major CAM increases
- Clear documentation for future escalations

What Made This Successful-

Vikram handled the situation well because he:

- Stayed calm under pressure
- Focused on facts and agreement clauses
- Avoided emotional or personal arguments
- Managed difficult behaviour with assertiveness and respect
- Converted conflict into collaborative problem-solving

Key Lesson

- ✓ Tough conversations are most effective when backed by **data, clarity, and professionalism**.
- ✓ Difficult people become easier to handle when the discussion is about **facts, not emotions**.

Chapter 6 –

The Future Ready Professional Manager

"The young generation is willing to experiment more. Firstly, they are less motivated by money and compensation, unlike the previous two generations. Secondly, integrity and governance are very important issues for them."

- Kumar Mangalam Birla

Managing remote and hybrid teams

"Great teams stay connected by trust and purpose, not just by location."

Here is a comprehensive overview of what future ready professional managers need to master when leading remote and hybrid teams.

Managing remote and hybrid teams is no longer a temporary adaptation — it is the defining challenge for professional managers today. The skills required span technology fluency, emotional intelligence, process design, and culture building, often simultaneously.

Future-ready managers must consolidate:

1. Trust & Autonomy - shifting from presence to performance

The biggest mind-set shift for remote managers is moving away from monitoring hours and toward measuring outcomes. This means setting clear expectations, defining deliverables, and trusting employees to manage their own time. Micro-management is lethal in remote environments — it destroys morale and signals distrust. Future-ready managers design for accountability, not surveillance.

2. Digital Communication - async (asynchronous) and sync mastery

Remote work has two modes: asynchronous (PMS, emails, recorded videos, shared docs) and synchronous (video calls, real-time collaboration). Strong managers know which channel fits which message, a nuanced conversation deserves a call; a status update belongs in a thread. Over communicating via video meetings causes "Zoom fatigue"; under-communicating creates isolation. The skill is calibration.

3. Inclusive Culture - bridging the proximity gap

In hybrid settings, office-based employees naturally receive more visibility, sponsorship, and informal mentoring. Future-ready managers actively counteract this by rotating who leads meetings, ensuring remote voices are heard equally, and making informal moments (water cooler chats, celebrations) accessible to all. Equity of experience is a deliberate design choice, not an accident.

4. Performance Management - structured and empathetic

When managers cannot see their teams in person, they need to check in regularly. Good managers use clear systems to track work and also stay genuinely interested in the challenges their people face. In remote teams, writing things, down is very important—decisions, goals, and feedback should be documented, not just talked about.

5. Wellbeing & Burnout Prevention to the team with the human element

Working from home can mix up the line between work and personal life. Managers should set a good example by respecting off-hours, encouraging people to take breaks, and noticing early signs when someone feels tired or disconnected. It is also important to create a safe environment where team members feel comfortable sharing concerns or saying they are feeling overwhelmed.

6. Technology Fluency — tools and AI literacy

Future-ready managers are comfortable navigating a digital ecosystem project management platforms , communication tools , video conferencing, and increasingly, AI-assisted workflows. They also help their teams to adopt new tools without creating tool overload.

The modern workplace is evolving rapidly, with remote and hybrid work becoming the norm. In this environment, the role of a manager has shifted significantly.

A **future-ready professional manager** is not just someone who supervises tasks but someone who can:

- Lead distributed teams
- Use technology effectively
- Maintain engagement without physical presence
- ✓ Managing remote and hybrid teams is one of the **key competencies of future-ready managers**.

1. Changing Role of Managers in Remote & Hybrid Work

Traditional managers focused on:

- Monitoring attendance
- Supervising daily tasks

Future-ready managers focus on:

- Outcomes and performance
- Employee well-being
- Collaboration and innovation
- ✓ The shift is from control → trust, and presence → performance.

2. Key Challenges in Remote & Hybrid Team Management

Communication Gaps

- Lack of face-to-face interaction
- Misunderstandings due to virtual communication

Trust and Accountability Issues

- Difficulty in monitoring work
- Risk of micromanagement

Employee Engagement

- Isolation and lack of connection
- Reduced motivation

Coordination and Collaboration

- Time zone differences
- Delays in decision-making

Proximity Bias in Hybrid Teams

- Preference for employees working in-office
- Unfair evaluation of remote workers

3. Role of a Future-Ready Manager in Remote & Hybrid Teams

Builder of Trust

- Trust employees to deliver results
- Avoid unnecessary control

Effective Communicator

- Clear, transparent communication
- Uses multiple digital channels effectively

Technology Enabler

- Uses digital tools for collaboration
- Ensures team members are comfortable with technology

Coach and Mentor

- Supports employee growth
- Provides regular feedback

Inclusive Leader

- Ensures equal opportunities
- Promotes diversity and inclusion

4. Key Strategies for Managing Remote & Hybrid Teams

Set Clear Goals and Expectations

- Define roles and responsibilities

- Use performance metrics (KPIs/OKRs)

Focus on Outcomes, Not Activity

- Evaluate results, not hours worked

Strengthen Communication

Future-ready managers:

- Conduct regular check-ins
- Use video calls for important discussions
- Document decisions

Build Team Engagement

- Virtual team-building activities
- Recognition and appreciation
- Informal interactions

Ensure Work-Life Balance

- Avoid overloading employees
- Respect boundaries

Standardize Processes in Hybrid Teams

- Ensure all communication is accessible to everyone
- Avoid "office-only" decisions

5. Skills Required for Future-Ready Managers Digital Skills

- Knowledge of collaboration tools
- Ability to manage virtual workflows

Emotional Intelligence

- Understanding employee needs
- Managing stress and conflict

Communication Skills

- Clear, concise, and empathetic communication

Adaptability

- Ability to manage change and uncertainty

Strategic Thinking

- Align team efforts with organizational goals

6. Overcoming Challenges

Challenge	Future-Ready Solution
Communication gaps	Regular meetings & clear documentation
Low engagement	Recognition & team bonding
Trust issues	Outcome-based evaluation
Proximity bias	Equal opportunities for all
Coordination issues	Use of digital tools & planning

7. Benefits of Effective Management

When managed well, remote and hybrid teams lead to:

- Higher productivity
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Better work-life balance
- Access to global talent

8. Key Takeaways

- Managing remote teams requires trust, communication, and clarity
- Future-ready managers focus on results, not presence
- Technology and emotional intelligence are equally important

- Inclusivity is critical in hybrid environments

9. Conclusion

Managing remote and hybrid teams is no longer optional- it is a core capability of the future-ready professional manager.

Such managers:

- Adapt to change
- Embrace technology
- Build strong relationships
- Drive performance regardless of location

Final Insight:

A future-ready manager focuses not on where people work, but on how effectively they collaborate regardless of location.

Presenting an experience on Future ready Manager:

The Transformation: A Future-Ready Manager in Action

Pooja had recently been promoted to Operations Manager at a fast-growing retail company. Just a few months into her role, the company decided to shift to a **hybrid work model** and implement a new digital inventory system.

Her team was struggling:

- Senior employees resisted the new technology
- Remote employees felt disconnected
- Productivity started dropping
- Miscommunication became frequent

Many team members openly said:

"The old system was better. Why change something that worked?"

The Challenge

Pooja realized that this was not just a technical issue, it was a **people and change management challenge**.

Instead of forcing decisions, she decided to take a **future-ready approach**.

Step 1: Listening and Understanding

She conducted one-on-one conversations with team members:

- Senior staff were afraid of learning new systems
- Remote employees felt excluded from decisions
- Some lacked clarity on expectations

She did not dismiss their concerns, she acknowledged them.

"I understand this change is uncomfortable, but let's work through it together."

Step 2: Embracing Technology

Instead of expecting everyone to "figure it out," Neha:

- Organized training sessions on the new system
- Created simple guides and tutorials
- Encouraged team members to ask questions freely

She also learned the system herself in depth, leading by example.

Step 3: Improving Communication

To bridge the gap between remote and in-office staff, she:

- Introduced weekly video meetings
- Ensured all decisions were documented and shared
- Created open communication channels
- No one felt left out anymore.

Step 4: Building Trust and Engagement

Pooja shifted focus from- Monitoring hours → tracking outcomes

She:

- Set clear goals
- Gave employees flexibility in how they worked
- Recognized achievements publicly

Gradually, team morale improved.

Step 5: Encouraging Innovation

She started asking: "What can we do better?" Team members began suggesting:

- Process improvements
- Better ways to use the new system

What started as resistance turned into **active participation.**

The Outcome

Within six months:

- Productivity increased significantly
- Errors in inventory reduced due to digital tracking
- Team engagement improved
- Employees became comfortable with hybrid work

Pooja's team became one of the top-performing units in the company.

Recognition

Senior leadership recognized Pooja for:

- Successfully managing change
- Building a high-performing hybrid team
- Driving digital adoption

She was later promoted to **Regional Operations Head**.

What Made Pooja a Future-Ready Manager?

She demonstrated:

- **Adaptability** → Embraced change
- **Digital awareness** → Used technology effectively
- **Emotional intelligence** → Understood team concerns
- **Strong communication** → Kept everyone aligned
- **Leadership** → Inspired and guided the team

Key Lesson

- A future-ready manager doesn't resist change—they lead it.
- Success comes from balancing **technology, people, and adaptability**.

Ethics, integrity, and workplace culture

"Ethics and integrity form the bedrock of a culture where trust flourishes and people are inspired to do their best work."

Ethics, integrity, and workplace culture are deeply interlocked. You cannot meaningfully have one without the others. Together they form the moral backbone of any organisation and the invisible architecture through which people decide how to behave, especially when no one is watching.

Organisational values

Values are only meaningful when they are specific, observable, and enforced.

Generic statements like "we value integrity" mean nothing unless people can point to a concrete decision the organisation made because of that value — especially when it was costly to do so.

The credibility gap between stated values and actual behaviour is one of the most damaging forces in organisational culture.

People don't read the values poster on the wall; they watch what happens when someone breaks the rules and what happens to the person who reports it.

Integrity - character under pressure

Integrity is not a policy. It is the internal consistency between what you say, what you decide, and what you do particularly when no one is watching and particularly when doing, the right thing is inconvenient.

For professional managers, integrity means honouring commitments to team members, being honest in appraisals even when it is uncomfortable, refusing to claim credit for others' work, and owning mistakes rather than deflecting them. The test of a manager's integrity usually comes in private, not in public.

Ethics - navigating complexity

Ethics comes into play when values collide or when there is no obvious right answer. Common ethical dilemmas in workplaces include conflicts of interest, fairness in promotions, and handling of confidential information, pressure to meet targets through questionable means, and how to treat an underperformer who is personally well liked.

Future-ready managers need a working ethical framework — not a memorised rulebook, but a trained capacity to reason through competing obligations, seek appropriate counsel, and be transparent about their decision-making process.

Workplace culture - the invisible operating system

Culture has been famously described as "what people do when no one is telling them what to do." It is shaped far more by behaviour than by aspiration. The three most powerful culture-shaping forces available to a manager are - what they pay attention to and measure, how they respond to problems and crises, and who they hire, promote, and let go.

A toxic workplace culture does not usually announce itself. It reveals itself through patterns, high turnover in specific teams, reluctance to raise problems, credit-hoarding, exclusion of certain voices in meetings, and the quiet exodus of the most talented people.

The Manager's role

Individual managers are the single most powerful lever of cultural change more powerful than any policy, training programme, or leadership statement.

This is because culture is transmitted through proximity and repetition. Each manager sets a micro- climate for their team, and those micro-climates aggregate into the overall organisational culture.

A future-ready professional manager cultivates ethical culture through three everyday practices:

- First, they make values visible in decisions
- Second, they create safe channels for dissent.
- Third, they model ethical reasoning out loud.

The fundamental insight across all of this is that ethics and culture are not HR concerns or compliance exercises they are core management competencies.

Organisations that treat them as such consistently outperform those that treat them as obligations to be minimised. The evidence is not moral; it is empirical: psychological safety, trust, and ethical consistency predict innovation, retention, and long-term performance far more reliably than short-term pressure tactics do.

'Organizations don't fail only because of poor strategy; they often fail because of weak ethics and lack of integrity.'

An incident - The Contract That Almost Broke the Company's Values

Amit was the Procurement Manager at a rapidly growing infrastructure company. The company was bidding for a **major government contract**—one that could significantly boost its growth and reputation.

After weeks of evaluation, Amit shortlisted a vendor who offered:

- Competitive pricing
- Good quality materials

Everything seemed perfect.

The Hidden Offer

Just before finalizing the deal, the vendor requested a private meeting.

During the discussion, he said:

"If you approve our contract, we can arrange a personal incentive for you - off the record."

It was a clear **bribe**. Amit was taken aback.

The Dilemma

He knew:

- This deal would help the company win a major project
- No one might ever find out
- Rejecting it could delay the process

At the same time:

- Accepting it would violate company policy
- It would compromise his personal integrity

For a moment, the pressure was real.

The Decision

Amit firmly responded:

"Our company doesn't operate this way. If your proposal is strong, it will stand on its own."

He immediately reported the incident to senior management and documented the interaction.

The Turning Point

Instead of ignoring the issue, leadership took a strong stand:

- The vendor was disqualified immediately
- A strict message was sent to all suppliers
- The procurement process was reviewed for transparency

Some team members initially worried:

"What if we lose the contract because of this?"

The Outcome

The company proceeded with a different vendor.

It took more effort but:

- The project was executed successfully
- The company built a reputation for **fair and ethical practices**
- More credible clients and partners started trusting them

Impact on Workplace Culture

Amit's action had a lasting impact:

- Employees felt proud to work in an ethical organization
- Trust in leadership increased
- Ethical behaviour became a **shared standard**, not just a policy

The CEO later said: "We can lose a deal, but we cannot lose our integrity."

Recognition

Amit was:

- Publicly recognized by leadership
- Promoted to Head of Procurement
- Asked to lead ethics training programs

What This Story Represents

Ethics

- Following the right principles even under pressure

Integrity

- Doing the right thing despite personal risk

Workplace Culture

- Leadership reinforcing values through actions, not just words

Key Lesson

- Short-term gains achieved unethically can damage long-term success.
- One ethical decision can shape the culture of an entire organization.

Final Insight

Integrity is truly tested when there is something to gain from doing the wrong thing and that is precisely when true professionals choose to stand firm.

Performance reviews and coaching

"Performance reviews measure progress, but coaching unlocks potential."

Performance reviews and coaching are **extremely important for future-ready managers** because the role of a manager today is no longer just to evaluate performance, it is to **develop people, build capability, and prepare teams for the future**.

Importance of Performance Reviews and Coaching for Future-Ready Managers

1. Shift from Evaluation to Development

Traditional managers focused on Rating employees and Judging past performance.

Future-ready managers focus on: Developing skills and preparing employees for future roles

- ➢ Performance reviews identify gaps, and coaching helps close them.
- ➢ The purpose of coaching is to prepare people to take ownership so one can confidently delegate.

2. Supports Continuous Learning

In today's fast-changing environment Skills become outdated quickly and Employees need constant upskilling.

Performance reviews highlight learning needs coaching helps employees improve continuously

- ➢ This creates a **learning culture**, which is essential for future readiness.

3. Improves Employee Performance

Performance reviews provide clarity on expectations and show where employees stand.

Coaching guides employees on how to improve

- Together, they turn average performers into high performers.

4. Builds Strong Relationships

Future ready managers must build trust; reviews create structured communication while coaching builds ongoing connection.

Employees feel Heard, Supported and Valued

5. Enhances Employee Engagement

Employees today expect regular feedback , Career growth ,performance reviews recognize achievements while coaching shows investment in employee growth

- This increases motivation and retention.

6. Enables Better Decision-Making

Performance reviews provides Data on employee performance while Coaching provides Insights into employee potential

7. Essential for Managing Remote & Hybrid Teams

Future-ready managers often lead remote teams.

Performance reviews help track performance without physical presence while Coaching Keeps employees connected and supported.

8. Encourages Accountability

Performance reviews Set clear goals and Coaching ensures follow-through

- Employees take ownership of their work.

9. Develops Future Leaders

Future ready managers focus on building talent.

- ➢ Reviews identify high-potential employees
- ➢ Coaching prepares them for leadership roles
  - ✓ This creates a strong **leadership pipeline**.

10. Drives Organizational Growth

When employees improve:

- ➢ Productivity increases
- ➢ Innovation improves
- ➢ Business performance grows
  - ✓ Performance reviews + coaching = **organizational success**

Key Takeaways

- ➢ Future-ready managers focus on **growth, not just evaluation**
- ➢ Performance reviews provide **direction**
- ➢ Coaching provides **action and improvement**
- ➢ Both are essential for **employee and organizational success**

A Story: From Appraisal to Awakening

Ananya was the Restaurant Manager of a busy QSR outlet.

Efficient, disciplined, and result-oriented - she believed in numbers. Sales, speed of service, upselling percentages—everything had to be on point.

It was that time of the year again - **performance review season**.

Among her team was Rakesh, a Shift Supervisor. Hardworking, punctual, and loyal, but his numbers were average. His upselling was low, team engagement weak, and customer feedback inconsistent.

Ananya had already made up her mind. “Rakesh is dependable, but not leadership material,” she noted in her appraisal sheet.

The Review Meeting

Rakesh walked in, slightly nervous.

Ananya began in a formal tone:

"Rakesh, you are sincere and disciplined. But your performance has been average. Your upselling numbers are below target, and customer feedback isn't consistent. You need to improve."

Rakesh nodded quietly.

The meeting was about to end—just another routine appraisal.

But something made Ananya pause.

She remembered a workshop she had attended sometime back - **"Managers as Coaches, Not Judges."**

She closed the file.,and changed her approach.

The Shift in Conversation

Instead of concluding, she leaned forward and asked:

"Rakesh, tell me—what do you think is holding you back?"

Rakesh hesitated. No one had asked him this before.

After a few seconds, he spoke softly:

"Ma'am, I am comfortable handling operations. But when it comes to talking to customers or pushing upselling... I feel I might say something wrong."

That was the real issue—not capability, but **confidence**.

Ananya realized she had been evaluating performance, but not understanding the person behind it.

Coaching Begins

Instead of giving instructions, Ananya created a simple coaching plan:

- She paired Rakesh with a top-performing supervisor for live observation
- She conducted short role-play sessions before shifts
- She gave him one small, clear goal:
- **"Just suggest one add-on to every third customer."**

No pressure. Just progress. Every evening, instead of asking: "Did you meet your target?"

She asked: "What did you try today?"

Small Wins

In the first week, Rakesh struggled. In the second week, he improved slightly. By the third week, something changed.

One evening, he shared excitedly: "Ma'am, today a customer appreciated my suggestion and added a combo!" it was a small win—but a big breakthrough.

The Transformation

Over the next two months:

- Rakesh's upselling numbers improved steadily
- His confidence grew
- His interaction with the team became more proactive

But more importantly, he started thinking like a leader.

One day, he suggested: "Ma'am, can we train the new joiners on simple upselling lines? It might help them too."

Ananya smiled. This was the same person she had once labelled as "average."

The Next Review

Six months later, during the mid-year review, Ananya's feedback was very different:

"Rakesh, your growth has been remarkable. Not just in numbers, but in confidence and initiative. You are now ready for the next level."

Rakesh walked out of the room—not just with a good rating—but with **belief in himself**.

The Lesson

A performance review should not be a **judgment of the past—** It should be a **conversation about the future**.

When managers only evaluate: People feel measured

When managers coach: People feel developed

Performance improves not when people are told what they lack—

But when they are **guided to discover what they are capable of**.

A true manager does not say: "Here is your rating."

A true manager says: "Here is your path—and I will walk it with you."

Final Insight

A future-ready manager does not just tell employees how they performed- they help them become better than they were yesterday

Building your personal brand as a manager

"Your personal brand as a manager is built not by what you say, but by how consistently you lead."

How you show up defines how your team, peers, and organization perceive and trust you.

"Your personal brand is not what you say about yourself - it is what others say about you when you leave the room."

Most managers spend years developing technical skills, yet invest little time thinking about how they develop as leaders.

Personal branding is not self-promotion or performative visibility. It is the deliberate practice of aligning how you work, communicate, and show up with the values and strengths you want to be known for.

As a manager, your brand extends beyond you — it shapes how your team is perceived, how your projects are prioritized, and how much influence you carry across the organization. In short, it matters enormously.

Why Personal Brand Matters More at the Management Level

When you were an individual contributor, your work largely spoke for itself. Deadlines met, code shipped, designs delivered. As a manager, however, your output is invisible in the traditional sense. Your value lives inside the successes of your team, the quality of decisions made, and the culture you cultivate.

This invisibility creates a branding vacuum and nature hate a vacuum. If you do not shape the narrative around your leadership, others will shape it for you. Colleagues and executives will fill in the gaps with assumptions, often based on limited data points: a single tough meeting, one difficult performance conversation, or the optics of a missed deadline.

A strong personal brand does not mean being liked by everyone. It means being understood consistently so that people know what to expect from you, what you stand for, and when to bring you in the room.

Managing Reputation During Difficult Moments

Your brand is never more visible or more vulnerable than during hard times. How you handle a project failure, a team conflict, or a missed target says more about your leadership character than any success ever could.

The managers who emerge from difficult moments with their reputation intact are those who communicate proactively, take appropriate ownership, protect their teams publicly while coaching privately, and avoid blame-shifting. These behaviours compound over time into a reputation that people trust to show up when it matters most

Visibility without self-promotion

Many managers, particularly those who come from technical or introverted backgrounds, resist the idea of promoting themselves. They find it uncomfortable, even distasteful. The good news is that building visibility does not require you to be loud. It simply requires making your work and thinking legible to the right people.

Some of the most effective visibility strategies are quiet ones - writing a concise summary email after a major decision to articulate your reasoning, asking thoughtful questions in leadership meetings, mentoring a junior colleague publicly, or advocating loudly for your team's wins while staying quiet about your own role in them.

The manager who consistently surfaces their team's achievements not their own builds a reputation for being the kind of leader people want to work for. That is a powerful brand.

Practical tip

After any significant setback, send a brief written retrospective to your stakeholders. Not a defensive memo a clear-eyed summary of what happened, what you learned, and what changes you are making. This single habit builds enormous credibility over time.

Clarity of Values

Your brand is anchored in your values. These act as your decision-making compass.

Examples of managerial values: Integrity, Accountability, Empathy, Excellence and Innovation.

When your actions consistently reflect your values, your brand becomes **trustworthy and predictable**.

Building your personal brand is not a onetime effort, it is a continuous journey.

Every email you send, every decision you make, every interaction you have contributes to your brand.

The most powerful managerial brands are:

- **Authentic** (true to self)
- **Consistent** (reliable behaviour)
- **Value-driven** (guided by principles)
- **Impactful** (focused on people and results)

You are already building a personal brand whether intentionally or unintentionally. The question is, are you shaping it, or is it shaping you?

An event to understand Self Branding:

When Arindam was promoted to a managerial role at a mid-sized consulting firm in Kolkata, he believed success would come from one thing alone - **delivering results**.

And at first, he did exactly that.

Projects were completed on time. Clients were satisfied. Senior leadership noticed his efficiency. But within six months, something felt off.

His team was quiet in meetings. Ideas were rarely shared. Two strong performers requested transfers. One even resigned.

During his first performance review as a manager, his director said something that stayed with him:

"Arindam, you are known for getting work done but not for building people. That is your brand right now."

That word- **brand** -hit him hard.

The Moment of Realization

That evening, Arindam sat alone and reflected.

He asked himself:

- *What do people actually think of me as a manager?*
- *Is this how I want to be remembered?*

The answer was uncomfortable.

He realized that while he was efficient, he was also:

- Impatient during discussions
- Quick to override team ideas
- Focused more on output than development

He had built a brand—but not the one he wanted.

Defining a New Brand

Arindam decided to change deliberately.

He wrote down a simple statement:

"I want to be known as a manager who develops people, listens actively, and builds trust while delivering results."

This became his **personal leadership brand goal**.

Small Changes, Big Signals

He did not make dramatic announcements. Instead, he focused on small, consistent changes.

1. He Started Listening More

In meetings, instead of jumping in first, he asked:

"What do you think?"

At first, there was silence.

But he waited. Gradually, voices began to emerge.

2. He Shifted from Telling to Coaching

When a team member struggled, he resisted the urge to fix everything.

Instead, he asked:

- "How would you approach this?"
- "What options do you see?"

It took longer—but something changed. People began thinking independently.

3. He Became Transparent

Earlier, Arindam kept decisions to himself.

Now, he explained:

- Why decisions were made
- What constraints existed
- What trade-offs were involved

Trust began to grow.

4. He Recognized Efforts Publicly

In team meetings, he started acknowledging contributions—big and small.

Something as simple as:

"That idea from Neha helped us solve a critical issue."

...had a visible impact.

People felt seen.

The Turning Point

Three months later, a high-pressure project arrived.

Tight deadlines. Complex requirements. Demanding client.

Earlier, Arindam would have taken control and driven everything himself.

This time, he did something different.

He trusted his team.

He delegated ownership. Encouraged ideas. Supported rather than controlled.

The result?

Not only was the project successful—but the team delivered **innovative solutions** that exceeded client expectations.

What Changed?

After the project, his director called him in again.

This time, the feedback was different:

"Arindam, people now see you as someone they want to work with—not just someone they work for. That's a powerful shift."

Even more telling was what his team said in anonymous feedback:

- "He listens now.'
- "I feel comfortable sharing ideas."
- "He helps me grow."

Arindam smiled when he read those.

This was the brand he wanted.

The Realization: Arindam understood something important:

Your personal brand is not built by what you say about yourself but by what people consistently experience from you.

He had not attended a workshop. He had not read a book on branding.

He had simply:

- Reflected honestly
- Defined his values
- Changed his daily behaviour

Epilogue: A Brand That Lasts

Two years later, Arindam was promoted again.

But what mattered more than the title was his reputation.

Across the organization, he was known as:

- A developer of people
- A trustworthy leader
- A calm presence under pressure

His results still mattered—but now, so did his impact on people.

Moral of the Story

- You already have a personal brand—whether you realize it or not
- Your brand is shaped by **consistent behaviour, not occasional effort**
- Small daily actions create lasting perceptions
- The strongest managerial brands balance **performance with people**

In leadership, success is not just, about what you achieve; it is about who you become in the process.

100-day continuous growth plan

"Small, consistent steps over 100 days can create transformation that lasts a lifetime."

This 100 - day plan is a **structured transformation journey** moving you from awareness to mastery. It helps you build a personal brand that is **authentic, visible, trusted, and impactful**.

Plan Overview

Phase 1	Days 1–20	Self-Awareness & Brand Definition
Phase 2	Days 21–40	Behaviour Alignment
Phase 3	Days 41–60	Credibility & Visibility
Phase 4	Days 61–80	Influence & Leadership Depth
Phase 5	Days 81–100	Consistency, Legacy & Refinement

Phase 1: Self-Awareness & Brand Definition (Days 1–20)

Goal: Know yourself before shaping your brand

Key Actions

- Reflect daily (10–15 mins): What did I do well today? Where did I fall short?
- Identify: Top 5 strengths ,Top 3 improvement areas
- Gather feedback from Peers, Team members and Supervisor

Create Your Brand Statement

"I am a manager who ______________________, known for ______________________."

Define:

Core values , leadership traits and 1 signature strength (e.g., problem-solving, people development)

Phase 2: Behaviour Alignment (Days 21–40)

Goal: Align daily actions with your intended brand

Focus Areas

1. Communication

- Speak clearly and purposefully
- Listen without interrupting
- Ask open-ended questions

2. Decision-Making

- Be timely and fair
- Use data + judgment
- Communicate reasoning

3. Team Engagement

- Conduct weekly 1:1 meetings
- Provide constructive feedback
- Encourage participation

Phase 3: Credibility & Visibility (Days 41–60)

Goal: Make your brand visible through consistent value

Key Actions

Take ownership of a visible project, share ideas in meetings and offer solutions proactively

Build Expertise

- Identify one domain to strengthen
- Read, learn, and apply insights

- Share knowledge with your team

Phase 4: Influence & Leadership Depth (Days 61–80)

Goal: Move from manager to leader

Focus Areas

1. Relationship Building

- Build trust across teams
- Collaborate beyond your function
- Strengthen stakeholder connections

2. Coaching & Development

- Mentor at least 2 team members
- Help others grow, not just perform
- Ask guiding questions instead of giving answers

3. Handling Challenges

- Stay calm in pressure situations
- Resolve conflicts fairly
- Demonstrate resilience

Phase 5: Consistency, Legacy & Refinement (Days 81–100)

Goal: Make your brand sustainable and respected

Reassess Your Brand

- Ask 5 people:
- "What 3 words describe me now?"
- Compare with your initial feedback

Build Long-Term Impact

- Create a team culture aligned with your values
- Be known for something meaningful (your signature strength)
- Ensure your behaviour is consistent across all situations

Monthly Milestones

Day 30 • Clear brand identity formed • Initial behaviour changes visible	**Day 60** • Increased confidence and visibility • Improved team engagement
Day 80 • Stronger influence and relationships • Recognized leadership traits	**Day 100** • Consistent personal brand • Trusted and respected managerial identity

Success Indicators

By Day 100, you should observe:

- Better team trust and openness
- More participation in discussions
- Recognition from leadership
- Stronger influence without authority
- Increased self-confidence

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Trying to change everything at once
- Ignoring feedback
- Being inconsistent under pressure
- Focusing only on results, not people
- Losing authenticity

Final Thought

Your personal brand is shaped every day by what you do, how you behave, and how you treat others.

A strong manager is remembered for ***results****. A great manager is remembered for* ***impact, trust, and leadership legacy.***

Chapter 7-

MANAGER

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do." – ***Steve Jobs***

M A N A G E R

MANAGER - Motivates, Aligns, Nurtures, Adapts, Guides, Empowers, and Results follow."

"Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action." – Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

The term *Manager* is often associated with a formal designation granted by an organization, company, or institution typically linked to employment and the earning of a salary.

However, to me, a manager is far more than a title. It is not defined by hierarchy or position, but by the ability to engage, influence, and effectively interact even with a single individual.

If I were to reinterpret the word M*anager*, I would break it into two parts : ***Manage*** **and** ***R*** where *R* stands for resilience.

Hence, a **Manager *Manages* with *Resilience*.**

Thus, a true manager is someone who manages with resilience, adapting to challenges, guiding people, and creating impact regardless of the setting or scale.

The word **MANAGER** represents a set of **responsibilities, behaviours, and leadership qualities**.

Each letter can be used as a powerful framework to understand what it truly means to be an effective and future-ready manager.

M – Motivator

A ***M*anager** must inspire and energize the team.

What it means:

- Encouraging team members during challenges
- Recognizing effort and achievements
- Creating a positive and driven work environment

Why it matters: Motivated teams are more productive, innovative, and committed.

In practice:

- Appreciate small wins
- Provide purpose behind tasks
- Keep morale high during pressure

A – Achiever

A M***a***nager is responsible for delivering results.

What it means:

- Setting clear goals
- Ensuring targets are met
- Driving performance consistently

Why it matters: Organizations depend on managers to convert plans into outcomes.

In practice:

- Focus on execution
- Track progress regularly
- Overcome obstacles proactively

N – Navigator

A Ma*n*ager guides the team through uncertainty and change.

What it means:

- Providing direction
- Making decisions in ambiguity
- Helping the team stay aligned

Why it matters: Without direction, teams lose focus and efficiency.

In practice:

- Clarify priorities
- Communicate vision
- Adjust course when needed

A – Accountability Champion

A Man*a*ger takes ownership of both success and failure.

What it means:

- Being responsible for team outcomes
- Owning decisions and actions
- Maintaining transparency

Why it matters: Accountability builds trust and credibility.

In practice:

- Admit mistakes openly
- Take responsibility without blaming others
- Ensure commitments are honoured

G – Guide

A mana***g***er develops people, not just processes.

What it means:

- Coaching and mentoring team members
- Supporting career growth
- Providing constructive feedback

Why it matters: Strong teams are built through continuous development.

In practice:

- Conduct regular 1:1 discussions
- Help employees improve skills
- Encourage learning

E – Empath

A Manag***e***r understands and values people.

What it means:

- Listening actively
- Understanding team members' perspectives
- Showing emotional intelligence

Why it matters: Empathy strengthens relationships and trust.

In practice:

- Be approachable
- Support employees during challenges
- Respect individual differences

R – Result driver

A manage***r*** must focus on outcomes while staying strong under pressure.

What it means:

- Delivering consistent performance
- Staying calm in difficult situations
- Adapting to challenges

Why it matters: Resilience ensures stability and confidence in leadership.

In practice:

I. Focus on solutions, not problems
II. Stay composed during crises
III. Maintain persistence

Bringing It All Together

A MANAGER is:

Motivator who inspires, **Achiever** who delivers, **Navigator** who guides direction, **Accountable** who owns outcomes, **Guide** who develops people, **Empathetic leader** who connects and **Result oriented & Resilient** who sustains success **Key Insight.**

A manager is not just someone who manages work.....but someone who manages people, performance, and purpose simultaneously.

Good Vs Bad Manager:

Parameters	**Good Manager**	**Bad Manager**
Leadership	Inspires	Dictates
Communication	Clear and listens	Unclear and dismissive
Empathy	Understands	Indifferent
Decision Making	Involves with team	Acts alone
Adaptability	Flexible	Resist change
Development	Supports growth	Ignores growth
Conflict resolution	Mediates	Escalates and avoid
Delegation	Trust and guide	Micromanage and abandon

Conclusion

The word **MANAGER** itself is a leadership model.

When practiced fully, it transforms an individual from a task supervisor into a **matured trusted, impactful leader**.

MATURITY is not when we start speaking BIG things; it is when we start understanding SMALL things. ~ Swami Vivekananda

The All~ Weather Manager

A story about one extraordinary leader -

A Story of a Hotel Operation Manager – Farooq Ali, it was a stage where every hour demanded a different version of him.

By 7:20 a.m., the first challenge arrived.

“Sir, we’ve overbooked rooms. Three families are already on the way.”

Before panic could spread, Farooq stepped in not as a manager, but as a *decision-maker*.

“Upgrade two bookings, arrange a partner hotel for one, and ensure complimentary transfers. I’ll speak to the guests personally.”

Within minutes, a potential disaster turned into a moment of delight. Guests walked in frustrated but left the desk smiling.

At 9:00 a.m., Farooq was no longer handling guests. He was in the restaurant, sleeves rolled up. The breakfast rush had peaked. Orders were delayed. Staff were overwhelmed.

Without hesitation, he picked up a tray.

“Table 8 needs coffee.”

“Refill the buffet.”

“I’ll manage the waiting guests.”

A restaurant captain whispered, “Sir, you don’t have to do this.”

Farooq smiled, “Today I do.”

In that moment, he wasn’t a manager—he was *part of the team*. And that made the team stronger.

By noon, the hotel had stabilized. But Farook’s role shifted again.

He sat with department heads, reviewing numbers, forecasting occupancy, and planning promotions. “What we faced this morning,” he said, “should not repeat tomorrow.”

Now he was a *strategist*—thinking beyond the present, shaping the future.

At 2:30 p.m., while walking through housekeeping floors, he noticed something subtle.

A room attendant, Meena, seemed unusually quiet. “Everything okay?” he asked gently.

She hesitated before saying, “I’m struggling to keep up today.”

Farooq didn’t correct her. He didn’t rush her. Instead, he reassigned zones, reduced her load, and paired her with an experienced colleague.

“Take your time,” he said. “We succeed together.” In that moment, he became a *listener*—and a leader who cared.

Evening brought a new storm.

A corporate group of 80 arrived early, hours before their scheduled check-in.(due to rescheduled flight time and the group leader did not inform the hotel).

Rooms were not ready. The lobby filled with restless guests.

The team looked at Farooq.....He did not hesitate.

“Front office—start express check-in.”

“Housekeeping—prioritize these 20 rooms.”

“F&B—arrange refreshments in the lounge.”

Then, he moved—guiding, assisting, coordinating, reassuring.

He was everywhere at once. Not because he was doing everything—but because he was *connecting everything*.

By 8:00 p.m., the situation was under control. Guests were settled. The team exhaled.

One front office executive finally asked,"Sir, how do you manage so many things at the same time?"

Farooq paused, then said, "I don't try to manage everything. I just understand what needs me the most at that moment."

As the night settled, Farooq stood quietly in the lobby.

From handling crises to serving guests, from planning strategy to supporting his team—he had worn many responsibilities in a single day.

Not as separate roles, but as one continuous flow of leadership. Because an all-weather manager is not someone who sticks to one job. He is someone who adapts, responds, and leads no matter the situation.

He is a problem-solver in chaos,

a teammate in pressure,

a thinker in calm,

and a leader at all times.

And that is why, in a hotel where every day is unpredictable, the team never feared the storm.

Because they knew **Farooq** would always become *exactly what the moment needed.*

Today, we need leaders like Farook who can handle all kinds of situations, manage multiple tasks, stay positive, and step forward without hesitation, even in difficult or uncomfortable moments.

Conclusion

As we reach the final stage of this journey, pause for a moment, not to look back at what you have read, but to reflect on what you have become aware of.

The idea of an "All-Weather Manager" is not a role you step into overnight. It is not a designation, nor a checklist that can be completed. It is a way of thinking, a way of responding, and ultimately, a way of being.

It is not built in comfort, but in contrast, shaped by moments of uncertainty, pressure, success, failure, and everything in between.

An All-Weather Manager is not someone who controls the weather. That is neither possible nor necessary. Instead, they are someone who is prepared for it.

When the skies are clear, they remain grounded. When storms arrive, they remain steady. When the path is uncertain, they move forward with clarity of purpose. Their strength lies not in predicting every change, but in responding to change with resilience and intent.

Throughout this book, one truth has quietly emerged- leadership is less about managing situations and more about managing oneself within those situations.

There will be days when everything works in your favour, plans align, people perform, and outcomes exceed expectations. These are the easy days. But what defines you as a leader are the other days, the ones where nothing goes as planned.

There are moments when decisions must be taken without full clarity, when emotions surge, pressure intensifies, and the room for error feels almost non-existent.

In those moments, the All-Weather Manager does not panic. They pause, they observe. They think and then ACT.

They understand that their behaviour becomes the reference point for everyone around them. Calm creates calm. Clarity creates direction. Confidence creates belief. And just as easily, confusion creates chaos. That awareness shapes every word they speak, every decision they make, and every action they take.

An All-Weather Manager does not seek perfection. They seek progress.

They accept that mistakes are inevitable, but stagnation is not. They learn continuously, not only from structured knowledge, but from everyday experiences. They reflect, adapt, and evolve. They are willing to question themselves, to acknowledge gaps, and to grow beyond them. This humility is not a weakness; it is their greatest strength.

At the heart of it, all lies a deep sense of responsibility.

Not responsibility as an obligation imposed by a role, but as a personal commitment. A commitment to do what is right, even when it is difficult. A commitment to support others,

even when under pressure. A commitment to stay aligned with values, even when circumstances tempt compromise.

This sense of responsibility transforms how they see challenges. Problems are no longer interruptions; they are opportunities to demonstrate leadership.

Difficult people are not obstacles; they are chances to practice patience and understanding. Uncertainty is not fear—it is space for thoughtful decision-making.

Equally important is their relationship with people.

An All-Weather Manager knows that no meaningful outcome is ever achieved alone. They invest in people not just for performance, but for growth. They recognize potential, encourage effort, and create an environment where individuals feel seen, heard, and valued.

They understand that when people feel trusted, they rise. When they feel supported, they contribute and when they feel inspired, they excel.

But perhaps the most powerful quality of an All-Weather Manager is consistency.

Not rigid consistency, but principled consistency. The ability to remain aligned with values regardless of external conditions. Whether in success or failure, praise or criticism, ease or difficulty, their core remains unchanged. This consistency builds credibility, and credibility builds influence.

Over time, something remarkable happens.

The All-Weather Manager stops being the centre of every solution.

Instead, they become the force that enables solutions to emerge from everywhere.

Teams grow stronger, individuals become more confident, systems become more resilient and leadership becomes a shared experience rather than a solitary burden.

This is the true legacy of an All-Weather Manager.

Not just results, but resilience.

Not just achievements, but alignment.

Not just authority, but impact.

As I close this book, remember ~

You will not always have control over circumstances. There will be unexpected turns, unforeseen challenges, and moments that test your limits. But you will always have control over how you respond, and in that response lies your leadership.

So when the next challenge arrives, ask yourself , “Why is this happening?” but “Who do I choose to be in this moment?”

Because that choice, repeated consistently over time, is what shapes you into an All-Weather Manager.

Not defined by the conditions you face, but by the character, you demonstrate within them and perhaps, that is the most enduring lesson of all.

The world does not need perfect managers. It needs steady, thoughtful and resilient ones.

It needs ***All-Weather Manager.***

Now, this journey is yours to continue......................

Acknowledgements:

I offer my deepest gratitude to the almighty Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Sri Sarada Maa, and Swami Vivekananda for their divine grace and blessings showered on me.

This book may never have come into existence had I not engaged with young graduating students from management institutions across the country. Their endless curiosity and expansive dreams inspired me to bring this work to life.

I would like to humbly acknowledge that my professional journey would not have taken shape without the inspiring leadership and hands-on mentorship of the late Sanjeev Kapoor, Vijaya Vardhan Reddy, and Supriyo Prasanna Ghosh, who have since departed for their heavenly abode.

Throughout my journey, the contributions of Mr. Suresh Kumar and Mr. Rohit Malhotra have been truly remarkable. Their exemplary leadership and guidance have immensely enriched my learning and growth.

In the later years of my career, I gained significant momentum under the charismatic leadership of Mr. A.Murali Krishna Reddy and Mr. D. Ravinder Rao.

Finally yet importantly, I express my heartfelt gratitude to my present organization and its senior management, who have consistently challenged me to bring out the best in myself.

I deeply appreciate the supervision, guidance, and unwavering support the organization extended especially during the challenging phases of the COVID-19 pandemic and other demanding times over the years.

The leadership has been exceptional in motivating, guiding, training, and supporting whenever needed.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Gautam Dutta and Mr. Alok Tandon for their trust and unwavering belief in me.

Ultimately, I extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Vivek Pathak, Founder Director of NIPS School of Hotel Management, where my journey into real-world hospitality management began over four decades ago. Dr. Pathak has been truly instrumental, dedicating his time and effort to nurturing each student and shaping them into future-ready professionals.

I also extend my sincere thanks to *Team BlueRose*, the publisher of this book, for their close coordination and seamless execution.

Lastly, the thoughts, stories, and experiences shared in this book come from my own reading, research, life experiences, and observations over the years. These are my personal views and understanding. I share them with honesty and humility, while respecting that others may think differently. I truly value and welcome different opinions and perspectives. I would love to hear from you. Please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn or write to me at writeamitava@gmail.com.

amitava guha thakurta

About the Author

Amitava Guha Thakurta is a seasoned professional with over four decades of diverse experience spanning the **Hotels, Food & Beverages, and Entertainment industries**.

He earned Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Calcutta and went on to pursue postgraduate studies in Personnel Management from the National Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM).

Augmenting his domain expertise, he obtained Diploma in Hotel Management, Food Science, and Catering Technology from NIPS School of Hotel Management, Kolkata, and attended esteemed management development programs conducted by XLRI Jamshedpur, IIM Calcutta, and IIM Ahmedabad.

Over the course of his career, he has been associated with several reputed hotels across India and is currently with the country's largest multiplex exhibitor, PVR INOX Ltd.

Amitava has been recognized for his contributions with several prestigious accolades, including the **'National Tourism Excellence Award'** from the World Economic Progress Society, New Delhi. He is also a recipient of the **'Exemplary Leader Award,'** conferred by EIILM Kolkata in association with the World HRD Congress and CMO Asia, as well as the **Atal Bihari Vajpayee Seva Ratna Samman Award** from the Jivran Foundation.

A passionate speaker, he frequently contributes to professional forums and management institutes, sharing his knowledge and experience.

He is also the **Founding Member and President** of the *NIPS Alumni Association – i League*, and serves as a **Board Member** of the *Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI).*