

Managing people

'A boat can't have two captains.'

Akira Mori, Japanese businessman

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CASE STUDY

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STARTING UP

A What qualities and skills should a good manager have? Choose the six most important from the list. Discuss your ideas with a partner.

To be a good manager you need to:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 be an expert. | 7 make suggestions. |
| 2 like people. | 8 judge people's abilities. |
| 3 focus on tasks, not people. | 9 plan ahead. |
| 4 enjoy working with others. | 10 be good with numbers. |
| 5 give orders. | 11 make good presentations. |
| 6 listen to others. | 12 be older than your staff. |

B If you are managing people from different cultures, what other personal qualities and skills do you need?

examples: *personal qualities: flexibility*
skills: good at languages

C Talk about the good or bad qualities of managers/bosses you have had.

VOCABULARY

Verbs and prepositions

A 'Verb + preposition' combinations are often useful for describing skills and personal qualities. Match the verbs 1–7 to the prepositions and phrases a)–g).

A good manager should:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1 respond | a) in their employees' abilities. |
| 2 listen | b) to a deputy as often as possible. |
| 3 deal | c) to employees' concerns promptly. |
| 4 believe | d) with colleagues clearly. |
| 5 delegate | e) with problems quickly. |
| 6 communicate | f) in regular training courses for employees. |
| 7 invest | g) to all suggestions from staff. |

B Which do you think are the three most important qualities in Exercise A?**C** Some verbs combine with more than one preposition.He **reports to** the Marketing Director. (to someone)The Sales Manager **reported on** last month's sales figures. (on something)Say whether these combine with **someone**, **something** or both.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 a) report to <i>someone</i> | 4 a) agree with |
| b) report on | b) agree on |
| 2 a) apologise for | 5 a) argue about |
| b) apologise to | b) argue with |
| 3 a) talk to | |
| b) talk about | |

D Complete these sentences with suitable prepositions from Exercise C.

- I agreed *with* her that we need to change our marketing strategy.
- I talk my boss every Monday at our regular meeting.
- We argued next year's budget for over an hour.
- He apologised losing his temper.
- We talked our financial problems for a long time.
- The Finance Director argued our Managing Director over profit sharing.
- I apologised Paula for giving her the wrong figures.
- Can we agree the date of our next meeting?

E Write three questions using some of the 'verb + preposition' combinations from Exercises A and C. Then work in pairs and ask each other the questions.EXAMPLE: *Who do you communicate with every day?***F** Join up with another pair. Compare your answers to Exercise B above and Starting up Exercise A. What is your ideal manager like? Are they male or female?

LISTENING

Managing people



Laurie Mullins

Audio
10.1 – 10.3



A 10.1 Laurie Mullins is the author of *Management and organisational behaviour*. Listen to the first part of the interview and answer these questions.

- 1 Who was the first manager that impressed Laurie?
- 2 How do you spell his name?
- 3 What was his job?
- 4 What three things did he emphasise?

B 10.2 Listen to the second part and complete these notes.

Anita Roddick

- displayed a genuine¹ towards staff
- strong belief in:
 - environmental and² issues
 - feminist principles
 - practical³ to Third World countries
- not possible to provide⁴ and social support without making profit
- was in business to make⁵

Richard Branson

- founded the⁶ brand in⁷
- over⁸ companies
- famous for combining a true⁹ spirit with a genuine¹⁰ for people

C 10.3 Listen to the final part and complete this summary.

All three managers have or had a genuine belief in effective¹; involvement and² for their staff;³ so that staff can see them,⁴ them; and they were able to have immediate⁵ with them.

All either did or do engender a genuine⁶ from members of their staff. All three had or have a genuine belief in creating a climate of mutual consideration,⁷ and⁸ with their staff.

D In pairs, tell each other which manager you would like to work for. Why?

A What would you do if you were a director of your school and had the power to change anything?

B Douglas McGregor, a US psychologist, argued that managers hold one of two theories about the people they have to deal with. Read this extract about the two theories and say which you prefer, and why.

FT

Theory X is based on a fairly negative view of human nature. It says that people are essentially lazy and uncomfortable with the idea of having too much responsibility for anything. They only turn up to work for the pay. Employees have to be managed in a strict way, otherwise nothing will get done.

Theory Y, on the other hand, suggests people may be capable of something more positive – that they will seek out responsibility and try to get better at their jobs, from which they can get significant personal satisfaction. Theory Y managers have high expectations of their people. They are also much more likely to develop a truly motivated workforce.

C Read the article below. Say which theory is probably supported by the management of Ruby's company, and which by the management of Geraldine's company.

FT

Share the power

by Stefan Stern

What does employee engagement look like in practice? John Smythe, from the Engage for Change consultancy, offers two situations to illustrate it.

Imagine two different employees, called Ruby and Geraldine, who work for different businesses. In the first situation, Ruby is invited to attend a morning meeting titled 'Help our recovery'.

'The invitation states that all parts of the company have performed badly, and that its parent company is unable to provide more cash for investment. It says that fast action must be taken to stabilise the situation,' Mr Smythe explains. 'But it also says there are no secret plans for extreme action. It says: "We want to communicate openly. We also want you and your colleagues to take ownership with management to solve the crisis, recognising that unpleasant options will have to be on the table."'

Ruby is both concerned and flattered. She arrives at the meeting feeling like a player rather than a spectator.

A two-month timetable is laid out in which she and her colleagues are invited to use their knowledge to find achievable cost savings without damaging key business areas.

In this process, Mr Smythe says, there are three good questions employees can be asked. What would they do if they:

- had a free hand in their day job?
 - were a director of the company?
 - had to propose important changes?
- In this way, employees can feel part of the decisions that are necessary. They don't become demotivated.

The alternative scenario, which concerns Geraldine, is less appealing. She is also invited to a meeting described as a 'cascade briefing'. Rumours have been spreading, directors are hard to find, and there has been hardly any communication from the company.

'At the "cascade", her fears are confirmed when, in a PowerPoint presentation, the full extent of the terrible state of the business is revealed for the first time,' Mr Smythe says. 'Detailed manage-



ment plans for restructuring and efficiencies are revealed. The focus is all on reduction, with no hint of new business opportunities. Geraldine feels less like a spectator and more like a victim. To varying degrees, her colleagues leave the meeting in shock.'

'When have you felt most engaged and most valued and in a successful project or period at work?' he asks. 'Absolutely none of us is going to report that it was more like Geraldine's experience.'

D Read the article again and say whether these statements are true (T), false (F) or the article doesn't say (DS).

- 1 Ruby and Geraldine were both invited to a meeting.
- 2 Ruby felt part of the decision-making process.
- 3 Ruby and Geraldine both left their meetings in shock.
- 4 The companies that Ruby and Geraldine work for are both having problems.
- 5 Geraldine enjoyed her meeting more than Ruby.
- 6 Communication was better in Geraldine's company than Ruby's.
- 7 After the meeting, Ruby was invited to a staff party.
- 8 Geraldine's company focused on reduction.
- 9 Geraldine is looking for another job.

E In pairs, tell each other about:

- 1 when you have felt most engaged and most valued at work, or in a sports team, or in your daily life;
- 2 the best way to communicate bad news;
- 3 any other theories of managing people that you know.

READING 2

People
management
in a crisis

A

Before you read

What products is Switzerland famous for?

FT

Victorinox

by Yih-teen Lee and Pablo Cardona

Victorinox is famous for its core product – the Swiss army knife. The company was founded in 1884 in Ibach, a small town in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, by Karl Elsener. He wanted to create jobs that would be long term. This has remained a cornerstone of the company culture.

After the terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001, new airline safety regulations around the world stopped passengers from taking knives on board. The rules had a serious effect on Victorinox, because sales of pocket tools at airports were important sales

channels. Victorinox needed to find a way to survive and to deal with the fact that there were too many employees.

Victorinox decided not to get rid of workers. However, it stopped hiring new workers, cancelled overtime and reduced the workday by 15 minutes. Employees were encouraged to take vacation, sometimes in advance of when it was due. Victorinox kept all the employees on its own payroll, while lending 80 or so to other companies for up to six months.

Having committed workers who

understand and share the company mission is the goal of many businesses. But few achieve this. The secret lies in the way that Victorinox has always treated its employees. It created some employee-oriented management systems, such as long-term employment, training and development opportunities, and a policy which aims to better integrate young and older workers, immigrants, and people with disabilities into its workforce. It also maintains a 5:1 salary ratio between the highest-paid and average-paid workers.

B

Choose the alternative with the closest meaning to the expression in *italics*.

- ... for its *core* (line 1) product – the Swiss army knife.
a) most important b) most profitable c) sharpest
- The company was *founded* (line 3) in 1884 in Ibach, a small town in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, by Karl Elsener.
a) begin b) placed c) started
- He wanted to create jobs that *would be long term* (line 7).
a) were necessary b) were well-paid c) would last
- This has remained a *cornerstone* (line 8) of the company culture.
a) one of the most important parts
b) one of the most interesting parts
c) one of the weakest parts

C

Choose the best summary of the whole article.

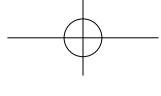
Victorinox ...

- has always had employee-oriented policies, and its actions after 9/11 were part of this long-term 'philosophy'.
- treated its employees particularly well when sales fell after the 9/11 attacks.
- is always willing for its employees to work for other companies, rather than lay them off.

D

Over to you

Think about an organisation you would like to work for in China. If there was a sudden fall in its sales, which of the crisis management actions taken by Victorinox, if any, could be taken by it? Give reasons.



SKILLS

Socialising and entertaining



A Socialising is an important part of good management. When socialising for business in China, how important are the following?

- 1 being on time
- 2 the way people dress
- 3 what people are interested in, e.g. fashion, football, etc.
- 4 how you address people (first names or family names?)
- 5 giving gifts
- 6 shaking hands/kissing/hugging/bowing

B 10.4 Paul is on a business trip to Syria. Mawas is a Syrian business contact. Listen to their conversation, then answer these questions.

- 1 What does Mawas invite Paul to do?
- 2 Does Paul accept?

C Complete this extract from the conversation in Exercise B.

Paul: Mmm,¹ to invite me, but I think I'd prefer to stay in the hotel,². I'm really tired at the moment. It was a long flight, and I feel a little jet-lagged. I need an early night.

Mohammed: OK, Paul, I³. Perhaps we could meet Abdullah at the weekend.

D 10.5 Paul is being entertained by Abdullah and Mawas. Listen to their conversation. Below are the answers to three questions. What were the questions?

- 1 Well, we like the same things as Western people.
- 2 I generally watch TV with my wife.
- 3 I like to go out to restaurants.

E 10.6 Listen to another part of the conversation between Paul and Abdullah. Why has Paul come to Damascus? How can Abdullah help him?

F Role-play this situation.

You meet a business contact in a foreign country. Find out this information.

- a) how they spend their weekends
- b) where they go for their holidays
- c) what they do in the evenings
- d) what kind of hobbies and sports they like

Also, you want to find an agent for your firm's products. Ask him/her if they can help.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

MAKING EXCUSES

I'm afraid I already have plans to ...
I'd like to take it easy if you don't mind.
It's very kind of you, but another time perhaps.

SAYING GOODBYE / THANKING

Thanks very much for your hospitality.
I really enjoyed the meal.
Thanks for showing me round the city.
I'll be in touch soon.
Goodbye. All the best.

MAKING CONVERSATION

What do you like to do in your spare time?
How do you spend your evenings/ weekends?
What's your favourite hobby/pastime?
Where are you going for your holiday this year?
Can you tell me about any interesting places to visit?
What/How about you?
What do you usually do after work?

NETWORKING

I'm looking for ...
Can you recommend anyone?
Do you have any contacts in ...?
I could make some enquiries for you.
I might be able to help.
Can I mention your name?
Would you like me to give them a call first?
Let me give you their business card.

ASHLEY COOPER

Search Agency

Tensions within the team are damaging operations at a property company

Background

The Ashley Cooper Search Agency (ACSA) specialises in finding top-class properties for wealthy clients from all over the world. It charges clients a fee based on the value of the property. Its London office finds properties in the UK, France and Germany for its clients. The agency has a database, which needs building up, and many contacts with upmarket estate agencies in the three countries.

The London branch has six relationship consultants who are multilingual. It is their job to find suitable properties, meet clients, arrange viewings and complete the purchase on their behalf. They only search for properties which are worth more than €1 million.

What advantages do you think clients gain by using ACSA to find a property?

Staff payment system

At present, relationship consultants are paid a salary, depending on their length of service, and an end-of-year bonus. The manager decides the amount of the bonus for each consultant. The company is reviewing this system, because it is not popular with some members of the team. The management is likely to cancel the bonus and adjust the salaries of the consultants.

What is your opinion of this proposal? Do you think it is a good idea?

Briefing the new manager of the London office

10.7 Because of poor health, the present manager, Jim Driscoll, is leaving at the end of the month. He will be replaced by Diana Bishop. Listen to the conversation between them. Jim is briefing Diana about two of the consultants, Adriana and Ahmed.

Make notes about the two consultants.



Summary of recent appraisal interviews with relationship consultants

Read the summary notes on the other four consultants that Jim Driscoll has provided for Diana Bishop. Study the sales chart below and think about the payment system. Working individually, identify the problems Diana may have to deal with when she becomes manager of the team. Make a note of your main points.



Daria

- Good sales performance, especially in Germany – a difficult market.
- Excellent reports/paperwork.
- Always contributes well in meetings.
- Popular with her colleagues.
- Thinks we treat her unfairly because she's female. Says we always allocate the best clients to male consultants.
- Is not happy with the present payment system.



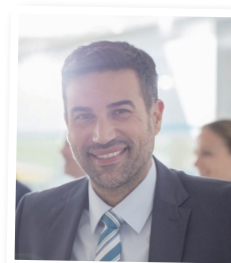
Klaus

- Sales have fallen sharply in the last three years, but still brings in the second biggest proportion of the total sales revenue.
- Not very innovative or creative.
- Does not have many ideas for increasing sales.
- Best contributor to building up the property database.
- Very good at encouraging team spirit and cooperation.
- Is happy with the present payment system.



Jackie

- Excellent sales performance.
- Is very good at closing deals – best negotiator in the team.
- Outstanding presentation skills.
- Not very popular with colleagues – too direct, lacks social skills.
- Very critical and outspoken in meetings.
- Is not happy with the payment system – thinks she should get a much bigger bonus.



Peter

- Sales have fallen in the last three years, but still brings in the biggest proportion of the total sales revenue.
- Does not like change or new technology.
- Has not contributed at all to building up the property database – one of the company's key objectives.
- Has missed several monthly meetings. Reason: 'too busy'.
- Submits poor sales reports – they lack detail.
- Is very happy with the present payment system.

Consultants' sales as a percentage of total sales revenue (three-year period)

consultant (years of service)	last year	previous year	three years ago
Peter (12)	28	34	40
Adriana (1)	8	–	–
Klaus (9)	22	30	38
Daria (6)	14	11	10
Jackie (5)	17	15	12
Ahmed (2)	11	10	–

Task

You are a director of ACSA. You have been asked to give Diana Bishop some informal advice about how to improve the performance of the relationship consultants so that they work more effectively as a team and are more motivated.

1 Working in small groups, discuss these questions.

- What are the main problems that Diana will have to deal with when managing the team?
- What solutions do you propose?
- Should the payment system be changed? If so, how?

2 It is very likely that Diana may soon be asked by head office to make one consultant redundant, in order to cut costs. If this happens, which consultant do you think she should ask to leave? What changes might Diana have to make as a result of her decision?

Watch the
Case study
commentary.



Writing

As a director of ACSA, write the recommendation section of a report on the staff problems and your proposed solutions. The report is for the CEO of ACSA.

➔ Writing file page 147