



ARE YOU A BUSINESS OWNER?

10 MOST POPULAR LINE MANAGER CONCERNS ANSWERED

GET IN TOUCH TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN HELP...



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INTRODUCTION

Line managers are the lynchpin of your business. They are a vital link between you as the owner or senior executive and the staff on the ground who are tasked with delivering your commercial goals and vision.

If you ensure your line managers are well-trained and supported, they will be empowered to engage and motivate their teams to become a productive workforce.

By contrast, line managers who are unsupported and just expected to “get on with the job” risk being poorly equipped to deal with the many difficult issues they face in managing their people.

The team at Reality HR regularly come across day-to-day line management issues, and questions from business owner/managers about how to “manage the managers”.

We have created this guide to highlight some of the most common topics we deal with and hope this will provide a useful resource in getting the very best out of your line management team.

If you would like more information about how we can support you with the challenges you face, please get in touch.

Sally-Ann Hall-Jones
CEO | REALITY HR

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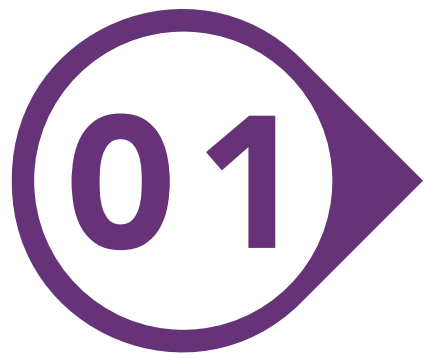
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WHAT IS THE EMPLOYER/LINE MANAGER RELATIONSHIP?

The relationship between you as an employer and your line managers is probably the most important one in your business, because good management comes from the top and cascades down throughout the workforce. As with any relationship, good communication is key.

It's important that you invest in your line managers – it's not necessarily a close friendship, but it is a personal relationship.

Hold regular conversations with your line managers, either in one-to-one sessions or more informal catch-ups, to help you understand what's important to them, what motivates them, and the challenges they face.

In many ways the relationship you have with your line manager sets the tone for the interactions between them and their team – so lead by example. If you demonstrate that you care about them, they in turn will care about their team and the success of the business.



**TOP
TIP**

As with any relationship, communication is key. Understand your managers, what motivates them, and the challenges they face.

02

WHY MIGHT I NEED LINE MANAGERS?

Not every business has line managers. If you run a successful business and are a lone leader, with no senior management team, then give yourself credit!

However, it can be lonely at the top, particularly as a business expands and the number of employees grows. There will usually come a time when you want to start thinking about the structure of your business and how you want it to shape up in the future.

It's best to do this in the early stages of growth, so that your management structure is built on solid foundations for the future – it's far easier to get this right at the beginning than it is to fix it later on.

The most effective management structure of a business will be different for each organisation. Think about the main functions of your business – for example these might be operations, sales and marketing, and financial and admin – and consider whether you need someone to lead them and report to you.

At this stage it's a good time to think about where HR fits into the picture and whether you need external support to get the best out of your people. You may handle it all in-house, use a consultancy to help set strategy and systems, or it may work best to outsource HR entirely.



TOP TIP

Start thinking about your management structure early in your business's growth – it will lay strong foundations for the future.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEADER AND A MANAGER?

"If you want a job done properly, do it yourself!"

Have you ever heard, or even used, that phrase? When it comes to running a business, it couldn't be further from the truth.

As an owner-manager of a business with a team, trying to do everything yourself is only going to restrict your business's growth.

It's important here to know the difference between a leader and a manager.

A good **leader** will have a clear vision for the business, a sound strategy, an ability to listen, and a trusted team of managers who are empowered to deliver.

A good **manager** will have the trust of their team, a clear brief and be equipped with the training and tools they need to effectively deal with people management issues.

Putting an effective management structure in place may require a change of mindset, particularly if the business is "your baby" and you have previously been very hands on. This can be difficult but the more you let go and concentrate on leadership instead of management, the more your line managers and their teams will thrive.



**TOP
TIP**

Remember, your job is to lead, not manage. Appoint the right top team and put trust in them to deliver your vision.

04

SHOULD I RECRUIT FROM WITHIN OR BRING SOMEONE IN?

Having established that you need line managers, you now need to select the best people for the job. The good news is that you may already know them!

The opportunity to progress within a business is a key reason for an employee to stay, and a lack of career opportunity is one of the key triggers to leave.

Recruiting internally has advantages – people who already work for you will know the business and its processes, and you will know their strengths and weaknesses.

Remember, though, that your star employee won't always be the best manager, and if you do promote internally, the right support and training will be essential in helping the new line manager make the transition.

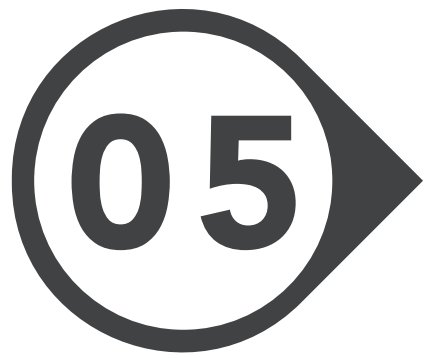
Recruiting from outside the organisation can also bring benefits – you can potentially widen the pool of candidates, increase the skills base and bring fresh enthusiasm and ideas into the mix.

Above all, make sure that everyone has the same opportunity. Advertise the role internally as well as externally, and ensure that every candidate goes through the same fair, robust selection process.



TOP TIP

Internal and external candidates each have their pros and cons – recruiting the right person for the job is more important than where they came from.



HOW SHOULD I DEVELOP A SELECTION PROCESS?

An effective selection process begins before you advertise a role.

Think about the kind of person you want. Set expectations at the outset – what are the qualities you need from this person? How much experience? Is expertise in your business sector essential, or are people management skills more important?

This thought process will also help you formulate interview questions that help identify the candidates with the qualities you need.

Think about where you advertise the role, particularly internally, to ensure equality of opportunity. For example, if yours is a business with several branches, ensure the vacancy gets seen at all your premises. If you have candidates who work in the field, ensure it doesn't just go on an intranet site where head office-based workers are most likely to see it.

Whether you are advertising internally or externally, make sure the job description and any person specification accurately describe the kind of person you want to attract.



**TOP
TIP**

A robust, fair and clear selection process is vital – getting it right now can save a lot of hassle and heartache later.

06

HOW DO I RECOGNISE TRAINING NEEDS?

Whether recruiting from outside your organisation or promoting from within, it's likely that your successful candidate will need some level of training.

Particularly when promoting from within, recognise you have promoted an expert, not a people manager. They are likely to need training in some or all of the following areas:

- Managing Performance – how to ensure your team are delivering excellent performance levels, and how to deal with poor performers
- Recruitment – how to design recruitment practices that find and secure the best people for your team
- Induction and Probation – how to get new joiners settled in and performing at their best as quickly as possible
- Disciplinary and Grievance – how to effectively (and legally) manage issues that may arise
- Absence Management – how to deal with poor attendance, and support the wellbeing of your team
- Employment Legislation basics – to ensure they act in line with all relevant legislation at all times

Ensure your new line managers are aware of the training that is on offer and are reassured that it's a strength, not a weakness, to want to develop skills in areas where they may need support. And remember that training isn't a one-off – continue to support your line managers throughout their time with you and they will reward you with results.



TOP TIP

Make sure your new line managers are clear about the training on offer to them – it's a strength, not a weakness, to want to improve skills.



HOW CAN LINE MANAGERS HELP COMMUNICATE MY COMPANY'S DIRECTION?

As we said at the start of this guide, line managers are the key to delivering the vision, mission and objectives that you have for your business.

Make sure they are clear about these and are as passionate as you are about communicating them to their teams. Communicating a strong and positive business brand will help retain existing staff and recruit new ones.

Ensure that your line managers set their team members goals that feed into the wider company objectives. It is more likely that employees will feel engaged and loyal if they share your goals.

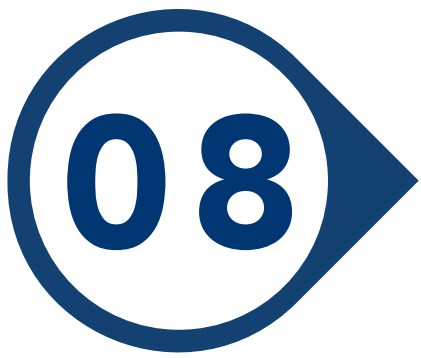
Demonstrating that you and your senior team recognise and value the contributions of the workforce is crucial.

Line managers should be aware of the benefits packages, incentive or reward schemes, and flexible working options on offer – and that their teams are aware of them, too.



**TOP
TIP**

Line managers are a vital conduit between you and the teams on the ground. Make sure you use them to communicate your company's vision.



HOW HANDS ON SHOULD I BE?

If you're naturally a hands-on person who has built a business from the ground up, it can be difficult to step back and trust your senior team.

However, if you've equipped them to do the job, then the advice is simple – let managers manage!

Give your top team space, and time to adjust to being a manager. Recognise that they will often do things differently to the way you would have done it yourself.

They may make mistakes, and then learn from them. Ensure they know that they can refer a problem up the line, or to external support such as HR consultancy, if they need to.

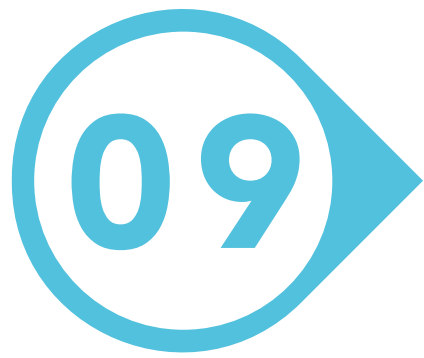
Remember, you are there to lead and not manage – so hands off! Instead, make sure you maintain clear lines of communication each way.

Give your line managers regular constructive feedback and keep up your own processes including one to ones, appraisals and performance targets.



**TOP
TIP**

Let line managers manage their teams – but make sure the lines of communication remain open so you are there when they need you.



MY EMPLOYEES ARE UNHAPPY WITH THEIR LINE MANAGER – WHAT CAN I DO?

Even with the most rigorous selection and training processes in place, sometimes it just doesn't work out and a line manager does not live up to the standards expected of them.

It may be that they find running a team more difficult than they anticipated, they clash with members of their team or they simply don't enjoy the role.

Don't see it as a failure on your part – these things happen in every business. What's important is how you deal with it.

Remember, people tend not to leave companies – they leave their managers. Employees who are unhappy for any reason can have a hugely negative effect on an organisation, so act quickly and don't ignore the problem.

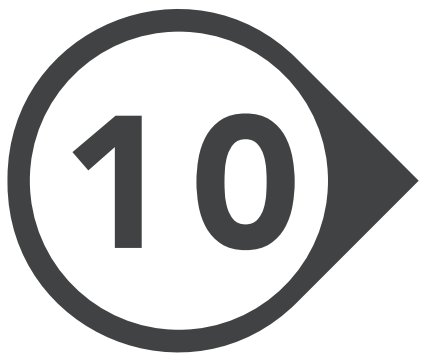
First, establish what the issue is and then speak openly to the line manager to find out. It may be that additional support, or the involvement of an external HR consultancy, can help resolve it.

If it's a case of the line manager underperforming, then seek advice on measures you can take to get them back on track.



**TOP
TIP**

If you become aware of a problem, act quickly – and seek external HR help if you need it.



HOW DOES MY RESPONSIBILITY CHANGE NOW THAT I HAVE LINE MANAGERS?

We hope this guide has helped explain how line managers can be a vital component of a well-structured and successful business.

Having a responsible and effective top team should give you the time to focus on your leadership role – but that doesn't mean it's time to put your feet up!

You are delegating the “doing” but you are still accountable for your business and the people working in it. The strategic goals, mission and values of your business rest with you, and it is your responsibility to support your team in delivering these.

You also have an obligation to be mindful of legal compliance, as you remain ultimately liable in the event of a breach.

If your ultimate plan is to exit the business, remember that a solid management structure, robust processes and a positive culture will help make your company attractive to investors or buyers.



**TOP
TIP**

Remember that even with line managers in place, you are ultimately responsible for your business and its people.



Tuesday 21st January 2020



1pm



FREE

In this 1 hour session we will cover:

- How to recruit and/or promote the right people to be line managers in your business
- The importance of providing role clarity and setting expectations for your line managers
- How to use your line managers to deliver effective communications and build the culture you want
- Hints and tips for “managing managers” and using your performance management processes to get the best from your line managers

We know that effective and empowered line managers are the key to a productive, engaged and motivated workforce – this session is perfectly suited if you’re considering the role of line managers in your business, or if you want to improve the effectiveness of your line managers.

Our aim is to help you ensure that your line managers are effective at dealing with the people side of your business, to positively impact your organisations’ productivity.

HOW TO BOOK

Email us and book your place today: training@realityhr.co.uk

Once you have registered, you will then receive further details on how to join the webinar.

CONTACT US TODAY

The team at Reality HR is experienced at supporting employers in implementing management structures and supporting line managers.

If you're looking to improve the effectiveness of your line managers or find the right person for the job, contact us at info@realityhr.co.uk.



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