STEPPING UP: A GUIDE FOR NEW MANAGERS

ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING, DEVELOPING AND LEADING WINNING TEAMS

A Robert Walters Group Company

ROBERT WALTERS

Introduction

While some professionals chart their course into management over several years, others may find themselves taking on managerial responsibilities to meet rapidly changing business needs.

Whether your move up was by design or destiny, the transition from employee to manager marks an exciting achievement and the beginning of a new phase in your career.

Nonetheless, this period is not without its challenges. Whether you're growing an existing team, or you've been tasked to build an entirely new one, stepping up to hire, develop and lead effective and motivated employees can be a daunting prospect.

But it doesn't need to be. In this guide, we'll give you the hiring 'how to' that you need to succeed – from finding the right talent to eradicating your interview uneasiness and from effective onboarding to embedding a culture and leadership style that inspires, here's how to make that 'step up' as a hiring manager.

Contents

Finding the best talent
Hiring 'how to' for first timers

In today's competitive market, attracting outstanding talent is a double-edged sword. While acting quickly is key to securing a great candidate, rushing into a decision could lead to a costly mistake.

From looking in the right places to knowing exactly what to look for in a candidate, following these steps will help you hire the best talent for your team.

Identify what you're looking for

If you don't know what you're looking for, how will you find it? Before you start crafting a job description, invest some time into understanding exactly what a candidate needs for them to succeed in the role. Consider the experience and skill required for the position as well as the soft skills, behaviours and attitude that will ensure your new hire enhances your team.

Compare the competition

Offering the right salary is obviously important for attracting high-calibre candidates, but in today's landscape, financial rewards alone will not secure the best talent on the market. Ensure your package is competitive by researching what other employers in your sector are offering for similar positions.

> **i** Benchmark salaries with our Global Salary Survey.

Prepare a standout job description

An effective job description is one that communicates the function and responsibility of the role while simultaneously motivating prospective candidates to hit 'apply now'. Crafting the perfect job description also provides the opportunity to refine your candidate wish list into 'must haves' and 'nice to haves', leading to quality candidates and a basis for developing focused interview questions.

> **i** Discover how you can craft the perfect job description on our blog.

Break tradition

When it comes to advertising your role, don't limit your candidate pool by exclusively posting on major job boards. Connect with cultural and community organisations and networks, for example, contact local diversity charities, LinkedIn groups and educational institutions to ensure a diverse candidate pool, and don't forget to tap into your existing employees' networks, by encouraging staff to promote the role on social media and share referrals.

Cast your net a little wider

In talent-short industries, such as technology, it's important to diversify where you look for potential candidates. For some companies, this could include an international search, while others may consider hiring talent with transferable skills from other industries.

With demand soaring for specialist skill sets, more and more employers are focusing their recruitment strategy on hiring for potential rather than proven experience.

> **i** Find out more about widening your talent pool in our guide to hiring for potential.

Create your shortlist

Selecting the best candidates for interview is often the hardest and most time-consuming stage in the recruitment process. Use your job description to draw up a shortlist scorecard, like the example to the right, assessing candidates against your essential and desirable criteria to identify the best candidates.

Candidate Shortlist Scorecard (1 weak – 5 extremely strong)				
	Candidate 1		Candidate 2	
Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Essential	Desirable
Experience	5	2	1	1
Education	4	5	2	3
Knowledge	2	2	1	4
Skills	3	2	4	1
Competencies	4	1	2	3
Attitude	1	3	2	1
Total score	19	16	13	13

Don't do it alone

No matter how experienced you become at hiring; a second opinion will always be valuable. Share your shortlist with another manager or ask for your team's input on essential candidate criteria. Alternatively, consider working with a specialist recruitment consultancy to help you find the best talent for your business.

What our experts say...

"The competition for talent is tough, that's why we work with our clients to take a proactive approach to finding the right candidates through a range of channels, including professional social media networks, networking and recommendations.

My advice to clients is always to consider yourself as a seller, rather than buyer, to fully engage candidates with the role and your business. Through the interview process, the roles will naturally reverse, allowing you to select the best fit for your business.

The hiring process doesn't end with an accepted job offer. An effective onboarding process is essential to ensuring candidates experience a smooth transition into their new role. We advise our clients on best practices and steps they can take to set-up their new hire for long-term success."

Marco Laveda, Managing Director
📍 Robert Walters Iberia

Interviewing essentials
Five basics for creating a stand-out interview experience

Interviews are a two-way process. As much as they are an opportunity for you to assess the skills and personality of a particular candidate, interviews are also their opportunity to assess you (as a potential manager) and your organisation. That's why it's vital, no matter what part of the business you represent, to be an ambassador for your brand and to put your best foot forward. If you've never managed an interview process before, here are five essentials to get candidates excited about the prospect of joining your team.

1 Create a comfortable environment

The physical space where the interview takes place is of prime importance — often, it will be the first tangible experience a candidate has with your brand. You should choose an interview space that strikes a balance between showcasing the reality of everyday life at your company while still creating a positive, memorable experience for your candidate. Before you ask any questions, outline how you expect the interview to progress — knowing the agenda will help calm their nerves and enable them to focus on the interview, rather than wondering what's coming next.

Interviewing remotely? The rules still apply. Choose an environment that's free from noise and distractions so that you and the candidate will be as focused on your conversation as possible. Similarly, make a good impression by providing clear, easy-to-understand instructions for joining the virtual interview, and as always, be on time!

> **i** Get more tips and strategies in our guide to remote hiring.

2 Be a passionate advocate for the role and your brand

It may seem obvious, but showing enthusiasm during an interview is just as important for interviewers as it is for candidates. Don't forget that, while the interview may only be a small part of your day, the interview represents the culmination of many hours of preparation and rehearsal on the part of the candidate.

While you need to be genuine and realistic, take the interview as an opportunity to sell your company and what it has to offer. You can draw from your own experiences, but also take some time to speak to your recruitment consultant to learn more about the candidate's priorities and how a move to your company might be just what they're looking for. Make a point of discussing topics like:

- **Perks and benefits**
  Travel, discounts, bonus schemes
- **Work/life balance**
  Health and wellbeing programmes, flexible working
- **Career progression**
  Learning and development opportunities
- **Company culture**
  Charity initiatives, company events and parties

In short, do your best to make sure the candidate leaves the interview excited about the prospect of being a part of your company.

> **i** Find out how to <u>manage your employer brand throughout the recruitment process</u>.

3 **Assess with competency-based questioning**

At Robert Walters, we always advise candidates to prepare in-depth examples for interviews which will demonstrate their suitability for a particular role. Asking competency-based questions will enable candidates to showcase their skills and experience, which will ultimately help you assess whether they would be a good match for the role and your team.

Examples of competency-based questions:

- 'Tell me about a time when you had to deal with challenging feedback on your work'
- 'Tell me about a time when you were able to resolve a conflict within your team'

- 'Tell me about a time when you were able to help a team member who was struggling with morale issues'
- 'Tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult strategic decision and win over others in the process'
- 'Describe a situation where you were able to directly influence your company's bottom line'

Strong answers will...

- Provide context of the situation
- Highlight specific actions taken by the candidate
- Demonstrate a clear outcome as a result of the candidate's actions
- Include lessons learned from the experience

Weak answers will...

- Lack specifics or give contradictory information
- Come across as apathetic or disinterested
- Focus on minor issues or irrelevant details
- Include negative commentary about the candidate's current employer or colleagues

4 **Give them time to ask questions**

We also advise our candidates to be prepared with their own questions — these can give you further insight into their personalities and what their priorities are. Questions about business strategy or working culture are good indicators of a sincere interest in the long-term plans and day-to-day life of your company. Few or no questions should be seen as a red flag as they suggest the candidate lacks interest in your company.

5 **Explain the next steps and manage expectations**

Show candidates that you appreciate the time and effort they've put into preparing for the interview by giving them a general idea or, even better, a solid plan for what will happen afterwards. Let them know realistically how long it will take for you to get in touch and what the next steps of the process will be — for example, a second interview with other team members. That said, avoid drawing out the interview process to any longer than it needs to be.

Why you can't always just 'trust your gut'

With most things in life, traditional wisdom dictates that you should go with your intuition to help you make decisions. When it comes to hiring, however, that's not always the case.

When you simply go with your 'gut feeling' about a candidate, you unconsciously allow your own personal biases to dictate how you feel about them — from the clothes that they wear to the way they express themselves, and all sorts of characteristics in between. Further, you're more likely to end up choosing a candidate that reflects your own characteristics (race, gender, education, socioeconomic background, etc.). By focusing on skills and experience, you'll open up your options to a more diverse field of applicants, and by building a more diverse team, you'll be introduced to new ways of approaching issues and solving problems.

> **i** Learn more about strategies for overcoming unconscious bias in our whitepaper, Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment.

What our experts say...

"When you're looking to hire into your team, I think the biggest challenge is to try and keep an open mind. Often we are so caught up in filling a gap, desk or market that we put all our focus into finding what we don't have, as opposed to seeing the skill set of the person we're interviewing and looking at how we can use that to our advantage.

Other than that, my best piece of advice to a new hiring manager would be to empower yourself. It sounds cliché, but the biggest mistake that new managers make is not believing in their abilities and not having enough conviction in their decision making. When you first start out in the role it is really tough to operate with confidence, but over time you learn that it's far better for your own development and the development of the team to ask for forgiveness than wait two weeks for permission."

Hamish Smith
Manager – Finance Commerce
📍 Robert Walters Australia | Chatswood

Hitting the ground running
Onboarding to set your new starter up for success

The onboarding process is a crucial one, as it sets the foundation of an employee's experience of your team and company, and therefore has a direct impact on your ability to retain talent. Having already spent weeks or even months on recruiting the right person, make sure to convince your new starter that they made the right choice by designing a great onboarding experience.

Hit the ground running

Have a plan from day one — this gives new starters a sense of purpose right from the start — and make sure you continue to check in and assess progress regularly. You may wish to use a standard onboarding checklist provided by your company, or work with your HR team to develop a bespoke programme for your new starter, like the example to the right.

These are just suggestions, but will hopefully give you ideas for the sorts of things you need to do to prepare for your new starter's arrival and set them up for success. And remember not to overload them with information — prioritise what they need to know and break it down into 'chunks' so that they don't become overwhelmed or confused.

When	Actions
Prior to Start	☐ Confirm receipt of signed contract ☐ Confirm start date and office location ☐ Arrange access ID card ☐ Order computer/hardware/software ☐ Set up new email account ☐ Schedule corporate induction and training sessions ☐ Schedule introductions to key stakeholders and colleagues

End of **Day One**	☐ Team introductions during morning round-up
	☐ Review the welcome pack, including company mission statement, vision and policies
	☐ Go over key procedures:
	    ☐ Requesting annual leave
	    ☐ Submitting expense claims
	    ☐ Logging IT problems
	    ☐ Contacting payroll and HR
	☐ Introduction to intranet and set-up
	☐ Team lunch
	☐ Introductions with key project stakeholders
	☐ Office tour
	☐ Coffee and set objectives for week one

End of **Week One**	☐ Review week one objectives ☐ Assist with any questions ☐ Review training schedule ☐ Discuss any additional requirements ☐ Outline project pipeline and deadlines ☐ Set objectives to complete by the end of quarter one
End of **Month One**	☐ Set weekly or bi-weekly catch-ups ☐ Assist with any questions ☐ Assess progress against objectives set for quarter one
End of **Quarter One**	☐ Performance/probation review ☐ Assess progress against objectives set for quarter one

82%
A positive onboarding experience can improve employee retention by 82%

"You are here"

Imagine you're walking through a large shopping mall and you realise you're lost. You feel like you've been walking in circles until, finally, you find a map, and on it, you find a small red dot labelled 'You are here'. Suddenly, you know exactly where you are and how to get where you're going — all you needed was a little context to figure it out.

Joining a new company can be a bit like getting lost in a shopping mall — you're not sure where to go, what to do or who to speak to. This can make a new starter feel isolated and even a bit disillusioned, which is why it's important to make the time to sit down with them and say 'you are here'. Give them a plain overview of how they fit into your team, how your team fits into the wider company and, just generally, how things work — let them benefit from the wealth of your organisation knowledge and contacts:

- Who's the best person to speak to regarding HR queries?
- Who in the IT department is quickest at responding to problems?
- How do you get copies of your payslips?

This is more than simply printing out an organisational chart — it's about giving your new starter context about your company and the way it works. With the help of your insights, it won't be long before they'll be able to navigate their own way.

When you're onboarding remotely

Onboarding is all about providing structure for your new starter as they begin to learn more about their new role, colleagues and company. That support and structure is even more important when the process is taking place remotely.

In addition to the actions suggested in the checklist on page 8, one of the most important things you can do as a manager when onboarding remotely is to keep the channels of communication open. Check in regularly with your new starter to answer questions, set objectives and plan out their daily activities. It may also be worth assigning a 'digital mentor' — someone to act as a 'buddy', who can be on-hand to answer simple questions via email, text or chat.

> **i** Get more tips and strategies in our guide to remote onboarding.

What our experts say...

"A good onboarding experience will tick the boxes to ensure the new starter knows where to go, who to connect with and how to essentially 'start' on day one. A great onboarding experience provides an opportunity for the new starter to really connect with their new workplace, mentally and emotionally. Think about onboarding in a structured, planned and strategic manner. Ask for feedback and don't assume that one approach to onboarding will work for every new starter.

In short, my advice to new hiring managers is this — think about how you would want to be treated? Put yourself in their shoes, take the time to understand what's important to them."

Indy Lachhar
Group Talent Development Director
Robert Walters Singapore

Culture is crucial
Making a place for creativity and productivity to thrive

So much has been said about workplace culture over the past decade or so that conversations on the topic have almost become a sort of 'white noise'. With the demands of our day-to-day jobs looming ahead of us, it's easy to forget the role that culture plays in motivating employees, building rapport between team members and boosting productivity. And with 73% of professionals having left a job because of poor cultural fit, workplace culture remains an extremely relevant topic and one that every manager needs to take seriously.

Use collaboration as a development tool

Learning and development doesn't have to be confined simply to the classroom. Creating opportunities for informal learning and collaboration between colleagues is a great way to embed a strong team culture while simultaneously broadening and strengthening their respective skill sets. For example, your more experienced team members can share their knowledge about complex or technical skills, while you might ask more digitally savvy members of your team to train their colleagues on new computer systems or platforms.

Adopt a 'one team' mentality

As you'll read about in the next chapter, delegation is an important part of your managerial duties. But it's equally important that your team sees that you're pulling your weight — that you're not only setting strategy, but helping deliver it as well. Adopting a 'one team' mentality shows that, while you may each have different jobs to do, and different levels of responsibility, you're all in it together, working towards the same outcome.

73%
of professionals have left a job because of poor cultural fit

Give your team a voice

Creating a feedback culture is one of the most effective ways to make sure employees feel their voices are heard. As a manager, this starts with you — when your team see that you're not only willing to accept feedback, but that you actively solicit it, they will feel more comfortable soliciting and receiving it too. That said, every employee is different, so be sure to give them the opportunity to give and receive feedback in the way that feels most comfortable for them, for example:

- Attributed vs anonymous
- Individual vs group
- Face-to-face vs written

Additionally, explicitly highlight any decisions you've made that are based on your team's feedback. This not only shows that you've listened to their views but that they've also had an impact on your decision-making — this is incredibly empowering for employees and will help them feel more comfortable about sharing their feedback with you in the future.

Most importantly, try to encourage both positive and constructive feedback. By focusing only on the positives, you risk overlooking or minimising what may be serious performance issues. Alternatively, an overemphasis on constructive criticism can undermine employee confidence and motivation. Striking a balance between the two will ensure that positive feedback is still meaningful and that constructive feedback isn't viewed as negative or critical.

Don't forget to invest in the nice-to-haves

People often hold up companies like Facebook and Google for creating incredible workplace experiences for their employees — think free coffee, bean bag chairs and foosball tables. But you don't have to have millions in the bank to create a stand-out employee experience that keeps people happy and engaged. For the price of a few coffees over the course of the month, or even the odd round of drinks after work, you can show your team members that you appreciate them.

Of course, take your lead from the appetite of your team for these sorts of activities. If you manage a group of self-reliant introverts, forced socialisation might feel more like torture than treat, but for most employees, they'll see it as a fun way to build camaraderie with their colleagues and will appreciate the effort you've made.

"

What our experts say...

"Stepping up into a management role for the first time can be tough and you'll need to establish some boundaries. It's important to get to know your team, learn what their motivations are and how they operate best, all while implementing your own expectations for the standards you want them to uphold. Finding a balance is key. In most cases, clear communication and expectation-setting early on is a good way to counteract any teething issues.

Ultimately, having a strong team culture will always increase the potential success of your workforce. When employees feel valued and are working around people that are truly invested in their success, they return this with high quality outputs. We spend the majority of our lives with our colleagues and in order to retain top talent and nurture the next generation of leaders, your team has to enjoy what they do and feel like they are contributing to the growth of the organisation. They also want to see that their own career goals are being taken into consideration and, hopefully, have some fun while doing it."

Bethan James
Senior Manager – Sales & Marketing
📍 Robert Walters USA | San Francisco

Refining your management skills
Identify your strengths and where you need to develop

When it comes to management styles, there's no hard and fast rule for what's the best approach to take. However, there are certain key skills and attributes that are useful in any managers toolkit for building, leading and growing effective, happy teams.

Identify your strong suit and understand what skills you need to hone to develop your management style.

Listening and observing

Listening is a critical skill for helping managers to understand the feelings and intentions of their teams. While it can be tempting to jump ahead with your point of view or to share an idea, being patient and giving your team members space to say their piece will help you to fully grasp their point. This not only helps to avoid misunderstanding and frustration, but also establishes a mutual respect and creates a sense of a shared goal.

Similarly, keeping an eye on not just what your team delivers but how they achieve tasks is another crucial skill for managers looking to develop teams. For example, is one team member continuously excelling in their performance? If so, how can you ensure they're being challenged?

On the flip side, a team member may be in need of your support. Are deadlines being missed regularly? Are they always staying late and arriving early or seeming stressed? These are red flags of an employee heading towards burn out. Observing these warning signs early can help you to adjust before your employees become demotivated, unhappy or unwell.

Rate your listening and observation skills on a scale of 1 (I could lend my ear a bit more) to 5 (My ears and eyes are always open)

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Want to improve?

Make time for your team to have undistracted discussions with you, book some space away from your desk, ditch your phone, close your emails, and employ active listening – taking mental note of non-verbal cues such as tone, pace, volume, eye contact and body language to help you understand exactly what's being said.

Delegation

As a manager, you're juggling multiple responsibilities including planning new projects, managing your workload, attending meetings and developing your team – you can't do it all and that's why being able to delegate is a key skill for all managers, but it doesn't always come easily.

Delegation done right requires you to identify the skills of your team and assign tasks accordingly. This will help you to increase your productivity while developing your team's confidence and skills.

Rate your delegation skills on a scale of 1 (I take it all on) to 5 (I've got delegation down)

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Want to improve?

Delegating can be tricky. For some managers, relinquishing control is difficult – is there someone in the team with the right skills to do the task in hand? Will they understand what to do? Will they meet the same standards you set for yourself?

Identifying the cause of your delegation anxiety is the first step to letting go. Perhaps you need to get to know your team's strengths or improve trust and communication. You may just need to get comfortable with not being in control. Whatever the reason, ease yourself into delegating by starting with smaller tasks, equip your team member for success by ensuring they have the knowledge of what, when and how, as well as your support should they need it.

Communicating effectively

As a manager, you're the line of communication between senior management and your team, and vice-versa. In short, it's your responsibility to ensure everyone understands the end-goal and how you're going to get there. To do this effectively you need information flowing both ways, so gaining your team's trust is key.

Rate your communication skills on a scale of 1 (Conversations are lacking) to 5 (We're well-versed to converse)

① 1 ② 2 ③ 3 ④ 4 ⑤ 5

Want to improve?

Having an open-door policy or regular team meeting in addition to 1-1 sessions should facilitate an open line of communication and ensure everyone is clued up on what the priority projects are. It's important that your employees know that you're readily available and accessible for them to discuss any issues or concerns as they arise. Simple gestures such as maintaining eye contact, smiling, listening attentively, and discussing actions together will go a long way in earning your staff's trust.

Motivating for performance

Motivated employees are productive employees but influencing each person's activities and outlook is one of the most difficult elements of being a manager because the driving force to deliver exceptional performance differs from person to person.

Nonetheless, there are steps you can take to build a high-performance team culture. A positive and purpose-driven culture is the ultimate motivator. If your team are clear on the impact they're making to the company, and how the company is benefiting the world, then it's a lot easier to overcome challenges and disperse the Monday morning blues.

Additionally, recognising achievements and encouraging collaboration to achieve goals will provide a strong foundation to a happy, healthy and positive work environment.

Rate your motivation skills on a scale of 1 (My team's flagging rather than flying) to 5 (We're thriving, not just surviving)

① 1 ② 2 ③ 3 ④ 4 ⑤ 5

Want to improve?

Maintaining a high motivation level long-term goes far beyond recognising a job well done. When it comes to motivating individuals to deliver an exceptional performance there are a few action points to consider:

1 Set clear expectations

Ensure your staff know what they're expected to do, and how they will be assessed on their performance.

2 Make goals achievable

Equip your team to succeed from the start to avoid disappointment and demotivation.

3 Provide ongoing, constructive feedback

Implementing a process of continuous feedback will help employees to identify what's working well. Waiting to the end of a project could mean you miss the specifics of what made a performance great.

4 Praise publicly, correct privately

Negative feedback can be crushing. Delivering it publicly is not only humiliating but it's also a fast way to sink team morale. Mistakes happen and issues arise – always handle them sensitively and behind a closed door.

Conversely, recognising outstanding work and achievements is highly effective when delivered in front of an audience as it can be motivating for the individual being praised as well as encouraging for the wider team. However, not everyone likes the attention so tailor the way you communicate praise to suit your team member's preference!

5 Demonstrate your belief

Trusting your team to deliver is a powerful motivator. While stating your belief is one thing, demonstrating it by providing your team with autonomy is a critical step in establishing a team that is motivated to push themselves further.

What our experts say...

"One of the most challenging aspects of stepping into a leadership role is getting the balance right between providing support and giving autonomy. To strike that balance, new managers need to focus their attention on developing trusted relationships with their teams.

It's not just a case of listening to your team's thoughts and concerns, but also acting on the feedback you receive. Delivering on promises, being accountable, and communicating openly and honestly will earn your team's trust and respect.

Once those relationships are rooted, you will be able to gain a clear understanding of exactly what your team members need from you in order to grow."

Rachna Ratra
Director – Sales & Marketing
Robert Walters Japan | Tokyo

From manager to leader
Top tools and success strategies for leading a winning team

Moving into a management role doesn't necessarily mean you're equipped to lead. In fact, the shift from tactical delivery to a strategic visionary can be a steep learning curve for new managers. Here we look at the tools and strategies you can employ to manage your transition to leader effectively.

Keeping your impostor syndrome in check

Over 70% of people will experience imposter syndrome at some point in their lives. The lingering sense of self-doubt can be particularly destabilising for new managers, especially if your move into management has come quicker than anticipated. However, that nonsensical nagging can be kept in check when you recognise the symptoms of imposter syndrome and learn how to manage them.

> **i** Struggling with self-confidence? Read <u>how to deal with impostor syndrome</u> on our blog.

Knowing when to step back

Delegating isn't about sharing a busy workload; leaders recognise when to take a step back to provide an opportunity for their team members to step up. This means allowing employees to implement their own approach and correct their mistakes. Of course, if projects start to veer drastically off course, you will need to step in. However, leaders offer support without falling into micro-managing behaviours, which undermine employee confidence.

"I stepped into my first management role over a decade ago, and I remember the difficulty of delegating tasks to my team. I'd always been a 'do-er', so it was challenging to relinquish that control. However, I soon realised that trusting my team, believing in their abilities and providing them the right opportunities gave them the confidence to step up too.

Others believing in you is a great motivator. I've always been cautious and conservative when it comes to making career decisions but working with Robert Walters encouraged me to push myself further. The consultants I worked with took the time to listen to my needs and understand my potential, so when they found a role and organisation that matched with my expectations, I had the confidence to just go for it."

Jann Antonio
Philippines Country HR Lead
Pfizer

Setting others up for success

Leaders are genuinely committed to developing their employees. From providing training to encouraging upskilling and specialisation, good leaders will enable staff to track the course of their professional development and encourage them to recognise and reach their full potential.

Coaching

An essential element of helping others to excel is helping to guide them along the path to success. Coaching goes hand in hand with leadership. It isn't just about imparting advice but providing a sounding board for others to share their problems, bounce ideas and come to their own conclusions for what steps to take next.

Delivering feedback with honesty and empathy

When it comes to developing your team, providing continuous, meaningful feedback to your employees is highly valuable. But, it's not always easy, particularly if you need to address a problem. Here's how to keep your feedback constructive rather than critical:

- **Be specific and focus on the problem**
  Don't assume that an employee has all the context for why something may be an issue. Always explain the 'why' to ensure your feedback is actionable.

- **Don't make it personal**
  Focus on the situation rather than the individual to stop your employee feeling attacked and defensive.

- **Consider your tone and language**
  Ideally, feedback should be delivered face to face and in a concise, clear and calm manner. If you're not able to deliver criticism face to face, pick up the phone rather than send an email, and be mindful of the language you use. Critically, you should avoid using words that are emotionally charged such as 'disappointed' or 'frustrated'.

- **Make it a two-way conversation**
  Whenever you're giving feedback, you should give employees an opportunity to share their views, and together you should develop steps for the solution. This not only shows your employee that you care but turns the discussion into a positive action plan rather than a 'telling off'.

- **Balance positives and negatives**
  Feedback should be given continuously and should never focus entirely on positives or negatives. It can be tempting to soften negative feedback by weaving in praise. For example, "You've worked hard on this project but..." This approach makes your earlier point appear insincere and gives a mixed message. Praise should be given when it's due and is best accompanied by appreciation. For example, "The new process you implemented has really improved our efficiency as a team. Thank you so much for your hard work. Your initiative has really added value."

Inviting constructive critique

In addition to providing feedback, leaders also invite their employees to provide feedback on their performance. It can be tough when the tables are turned, but employee feedback is valuable to developing your leadership style. The best way to elicit constructive feedback is by asking questions, such as:

- How could I better support you if we were to do this project again?
- What were the obstacles you hit when carrying out [X]? How do you think we could work around them?
- What do you think could go wrong if we try [X]?
- What do you think made [X] a success?

Taking an agile approach

In today's fast-paced workplace, leaders need to adapt quickly. Taking a flexible approach to your leadership style and committing to a state of continuous development will help you to get comfortable with change and aid you in adjusting your leadership style to get the best out of your team.

What our experts say...

"As a leader, you can often feel that it is your responsibility to provide the right response or the solution immediately. The reality is that it is not your responsibility to have all the answers, but to provide the means to find them.

If I could give one piece of advice to a new manager, it would be to enjoy the journey. Setbacks and unplanned events will arise along the way, but the privilege of your position is having the power to help others learn how to navigate those challenges, so they emerge from the experience better equipped to handle whatever the future may hold."

Adrien Bizouard
Country Manager
Robert Walters Vietnam

The 8 golden rules of management
How to grow, develop and lead winning teams

1

Hire for potential
Secure quality hires by looking for more than experience. Recruit from diverse talent pools to build high-performance, forward-thinking teams.

2

Lead with passion
If you believe in what you do, others will find it easier to believe in it too.

3

Support from afar
Step back to let others soar.

4

Be empathetic
Whether you're setting a task or providing feedback, remember to keep your employees' needs in focus.

5

Develop continuously
There's always more to learn so ask for feedback and keep iterating your approach.

6

Enable others to succeed
Consult, counsel, and cheer on!

7

Embed a positive culture
Provide the right environment for your team to thrive.

8

Don't expect to be the expert all the time
You can't do it all – ask colleagues, peers and specialists for input.

About Robert Walters

Robert Walters is a global, specialist professional recruitment consultancy.

Over the last 35 years the business has grown and so has our ambition. We now operate across 31 countries and employ over 3,200 people. It's a powerful success story built on the strength of our people. Organisations rely on us to find high-quality professionals for a range of specialist roles. Professionals who are looking for a new role, whether it's on a permanent, interim or contract basis, trust us to find them their ideal job.

Our core recruitment disciplines are:
- Accountancy & Finance
- Business Support
- Financial Services
- Human Resources
- Legal, Compliance & Risk
- Manufacturing
- Sales & Marketing
- Supply Chain
- Technology

Contact us

If you are searching for a new role or looking to hire, please email us at **info@robertwalters.co.jp** or visit our website **www.robertwalters.co.jp**

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