Victorian
Public Sector
Commission

Welcome to Management

A Guide for New Managers in the Victorian Public Sector

VICTORIA
State
Government

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All About this Guide

Who Should Use this Guide

- newly appointed managers
- staff who are about to be promoted to a management role.

When to Use this Guide

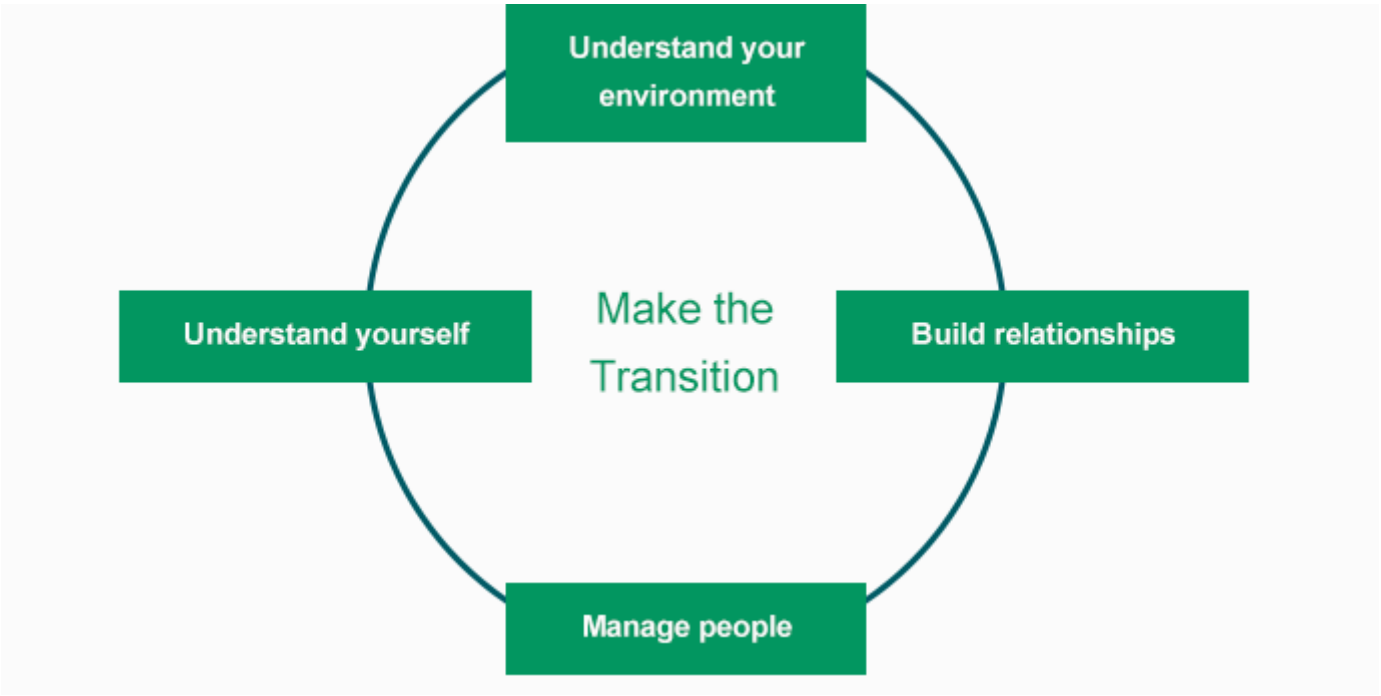
- as part of the induction to your first management position
- as a refresher after your first three to six months in your new management role
- as a reference to look up ideas to help deal with management challenges you may face.

Why Use this Guide

- help you be successful in your job as a manager in the Victorian public sector
- increase your understanding of what the 'manager' bit of your job entails
- learn more about your strengths and weaknesses as a manager
- identify your skill gaps and set your priorities for building knowledge or learning new skills
- identify further resources to help you in your day-to-day work.

What's in this Guide?

The diagram on this page shows how the information in this guide is organised:



The core task for all newly appointed managers is making a smooth transition to their new role and coping with the changes to their work and maybe even personal lives. Surrounding this core are four domains of management.

Within each domain, there is a set of skills that needs mastery. The chapters in this guide include discussion of public sector expectations and standards, real life examples, self-assessment activities, and pointers to other resources that can help you.

What's Not Covered

This guide does not cover financial management, project management or general public administration requirements. These will vary across organisations. Please speak to your manager for guidance.

Assumptions

This guide assumes that you are, or are about to be, newly appointed to your first management role in the Victorian Public Service or public sector. It does not matter if you have management experience in other sectors. There will be some matters that are specific to public sector management and some topics will cover generic management skills.

1. Make the Transition

Congratulations on your new role. And don't forget to celebrate your achievement.

As a manager in a Victorian public sector organisation, you should not underestimate the potential you have to influence staff and organisational outcomes. Your approach to managing has the potential to inspire a team to the highest standards of performance.

About the Transition

Many managers find the transition from staff member to manager to be the most challenging of their career. Moving from being a team member or a technical expert, to working through others, requires a major shift in perspective. Different skills and behaviours are needed for a manager's job.

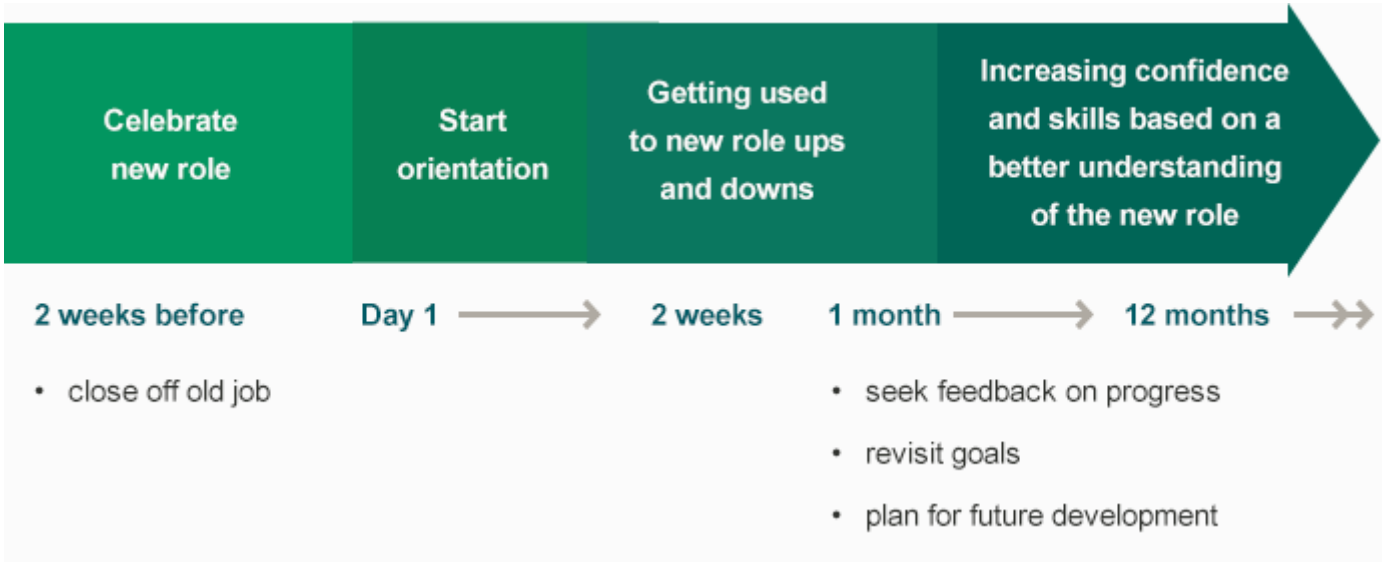
There are also many aspects of managing in the public sector that are different to other environments. Much of the authority and accountability of public sector managers is determined by legislation specific to our sector (e.g. in relation to financial management, privacy and freedom of information).

Transition to a management role may also require a greater understanding of the functions of and relationships with other organisations within the public sector (e.g. between your organisation and the portfolio Department, or oversight bodies such as the Office of the Ombudsman).

Public sector managers will also need to be familiar with the values and employment principles outlined in the Public Administration Act 2004 (the Act), which set the core standards for behaviour and workplace relationships.

Every new role involves a learning curve: understanding what you need to do, priorities, key relationships and so forth. You may find your confidence levels fluctuating in the early days. This is all part of adapting to change. For support, you should schedule more frequent meetings with your manager in the first weeks. The following diagram shows the typical tasks of transition.

Figure 1. Sample timeline for typical transition tasks and responses



New managers can sometimes be surprised by how much of their day is now taken up with meeting others. This is because, as a manager, your primary focus has undergone a fundamental shift.

You are no longer simply accountable for what you alone produce and do; you are now accountable for the outputs and behaviour of your whole team.You will find yourself faced with various degrees of responsibility for others: their workload, development, performance and wellbeing.

Managers therefore have to combine the ability to:

- work to a high standard
- influence their team to work to a high standard
- influence other managers and external stakeholders.

You become a key communicator of organisational news and strategies for your team, who will probably prefer to receive important information from you as their direct manager, face to face. You also play a vital role in relaying information back up the management line.

Closing Off the Old Job and Preparing for the New Role

Closing off your old job helps you to focus better when you start your new role. This is particularly important if your new management role is in the same area or organisation as your previous role.

An essential part of preparing for the new role is to confirm your team's purpose and objectives. Without this, you cannot lead your new team effectively.

Suggested Activity

The following table provides a checklist of the key actions you should take to close off your old job and prepare for your new role.

	Closing off the old job and preparing for the new role
1	Document the processes and expertise required for outstanding tasks associated with your old job, and hand over to your successor.
2	Discuss with your former manager how you can use your strengths in the transition to your new role.
3	Enrol in your organisation's induction program – ask if there is a program specifically for new managers.
4	Discuss with your new manager: • key result areas and what they expect you to achieve in the first one to six months; • what skills and knowledge you need to develop; • key stakeholders you will need to deal with; • how your performance will be assessed; and • how they would like to work with you (and you with them).
5	Meet team members and discuss their experiences, work preferences and strengths, and how you might work best together.

Closing off the old job and preparing for the new role	
6	Meet key stakeholders; understand their relationship to your team, their needs and expectations.
7	Find out about the extent and limitations of your ability to authorise and/or approve certain activities.
8	Make a written plan with your manager about how your performance will be assessed and the types of development and training opportunities you could benefit from.
9	Schedule dates for reviewing your transition with your manager.

Adapted from: *Making the Transition to a New Managerial Role*, Corporate Executive Board, 2008

Transition Challenges

Whether you are an experienced manager from the private or not-for-profit sector, or a newly promoted public sector employee, there may be some specific challenges you will face during your transition into your new role.

Below are a few scenarios commonly faced by new managers. It may be worthwhile discussing these with your manager and deciding whether you need to include specific tasks in your transition plan to address them.

Suggested Activity

Identify the transition challenges that apply to you. Use the table below as a starter. Are some challenges greater than others? If so, why?

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Situation	Transition challenges
Common to everyone	• Earn the respect of your staff. • Clarify and confirm priorities and measures of success with your manager. • Focus on agreed priorities – avoid taking on too much at once. • Model the behaviours you expect of your team. • Understand how to work with your new manager. • Build a network – Who does what? Who can help?
Promoted from within the team	• Establish a managerial relationship with staff who were previously your peers.
Promoted from another part of the organisation	• Become someone who is recognised as having good knowledge of the subject matter at hand and the way things are done
Appointed from outside the organisation, possibly different sector	• Understand the culture – how people work together, definitions of 'success', expected behaviours. • Understand the legislative and policy frameworks within which you have to act

2. Understand Yourself

To understand and guide others you need to understand yourself, including your preferences, knowledge, skills and dominant behaviours.

Everybody is different and we adapt our style, to some extent, when dealing with different people in different contexts. If you have never reflected much on the impact of your behaviour and your style on others, now is the time: because the first thing a manager needs to manage is self.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- do a stock-take – find out if you have the full range of management capabilities
- how do you treat others? – understanding and demonstrating organisational values
- how are people responding to you? – how to deal with others' perceptions of your management ability
- reduce your blind spots – seeking and dealing with feedback
- build your external support crew – when to seek out mentors or coaches
- look after yourself – your health and wellbeing is the foundation for success.

Do a Stock-take

As a manager you can have an enormous impact on the success of your team. Your competence in key areas and the way in which you conduct yourself in relation to others affects the productivity and wellbeing of your team.

Reflecting on self and style helps highlight natural skill matches, skill gaps and possible mismatches or dislikes. You may uncover biases and patterns of behaviour that you need to manage around or grow beyond – most new managers do.

Behaviours that have been useful for you in the past may need to be adapted as you move from team member to team manager.

An honest self-assessment is a useful starting place for understanding yourself and your management capabilities. The 13 development areas that the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) has identified as being important to all Victorian public sector managers provide a good basis for this assessment.

Management role foundations: What are your skills and comfort levels around the following core knowledge, skills and behaviours that managers use every day?

1. Understanding and developing yourself

2. Applying different styles of management to different situations

3. Persevering to achieve outcomes in the face of set-backs and challenges

4. Utilising advanced interpersonal skills to engage people in intelligent and compelling ways

5. Thinking and acting strategically.

Management role activities: How skilled are you at the following tasks and actions that managers need to undertake to deliver outcomes?

6. Overseeing operations, projects and resources in the Victorian public sector

7. Managing and developing people in the Victorian public sector

8. Managing difficult situations involving the people you manage

9. Managing attraction and recruitment activity in the Victorian public sector

10. Collaborating across and beyond the Victorian public sector

11. Working with diversity in the Victorian public sector

12. Managing during organisational change

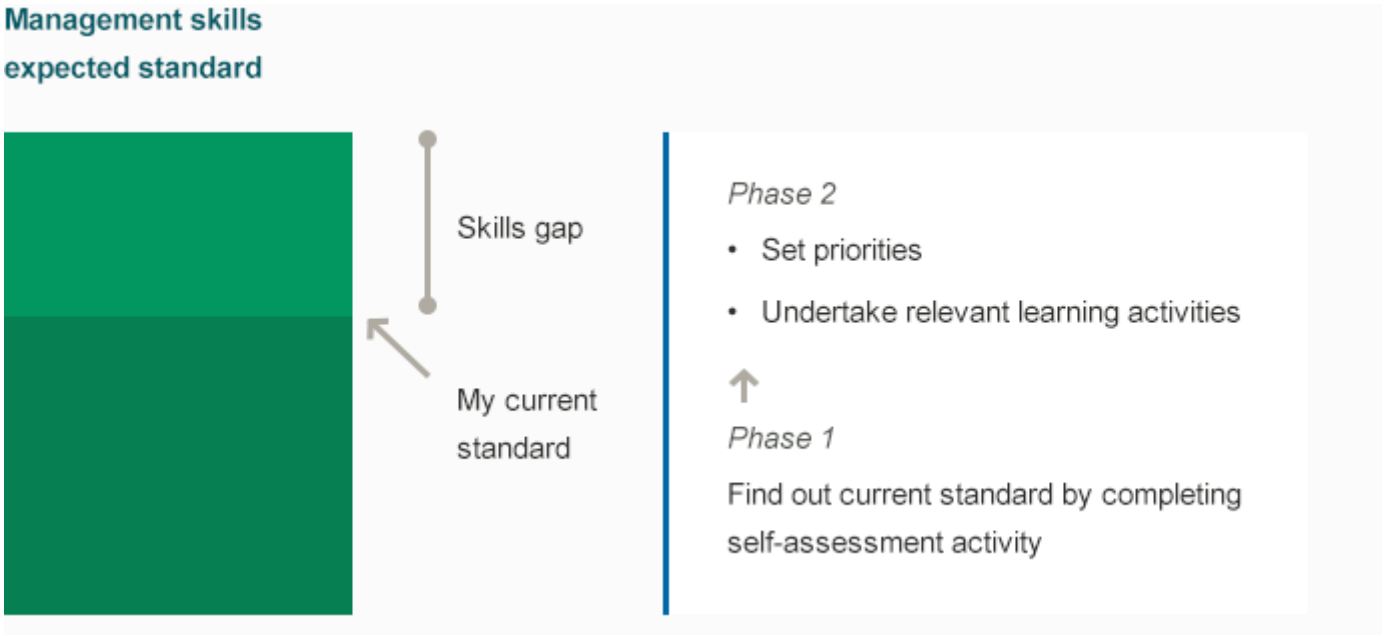
13. Contributing to public policy.

Suggested Activity

Use the VPSC publication, Great manager, great results: Self assessment and development planning template for Victorian public sector managers, to assess how you are performing in each of the above 13 areas. The publication also provides advice on identifying your skill gaps and priorities for development, as well as selecting effective development activities.

Over time, you should plan to develop all 13 areas in order to succeed in your management role. Initially though, you should focus on the areas most relevant to your current work (your manager should be able to help you with this).

Figure 2. How good are your management skills? (Identify your skill gaps)



How Do You Treat Others?

When discussing what your manager expects you to achieve, it is also important to discuss how you will achieve it. As a manager you are expected to play a key role in upholding the values outlined in the Public Administration Act. These are responsiveness, respect, integrity, impartiality, accountability, leadership and supporting human rights.

The Code of Conduct for public sector employees describes how we demonstrate the values in our behaviours and, in effect, sets minimum standards of conduct. You will also need to become familiar with any subset of these values that your organisation has developed, and how they apply to your work.

Alongside the values and Code of Conduct are the employment principles and standards. Together they make managers accountable for:

- demonstrating merit and supporting equal employment opportunity in tasks such as assigning staff duties, assessing performance, recruiting and promoting
- treating people fairly and reasonably with regard to employment decisions and activities
- allowing people a reasonable avenue of redress in cases where they feel they have a grievance, and making sure the principles of natural justice are applied.

Suggested Activity

Go to the VPSC website (www.vpsc.vic.gov.au) and download a copy of Leading the Way. This is a development guide specifically for managers, about the values and employment principles.

How Are People Responding to You?

Working productively with people depends upon building professional workplace relationships within which you can accept each other's similarities and differences.

> "Trust not yourself, but your defects to know. Make use of every friend and every foe." – Alexander Pope

If you have been promoted from within the organisation and are known, people will already have formed opinions of you. Your team may be wondering what this change of role will mean and whether it will change you.

If you are new to an organisation or work area, you are an unknown quantity. Your immediate task should be to spend time with your manager and your team members, and give them an opportunity to get to know you.

It will also give you a chance to get a sense of them as a team and as individuals, provide you with information about work the team currently does and the kind of manager you need to be for your new situation.

The way you perceive yourself may not be the way others perceive you. It is possible that whilst you may describe yourself as organised, others may describe you as rigid. It is possible that what you see as hands-on, problem solving skills, your team sees as micromanaging. It is also possible that, whilst you feel awkward handling a particular situation, those who observe you think you perform brilliantly.

These 'blind spots' reflect a gap between information that you do not know about yourself, but which others may know. The best way to sharpen your understanding of the perceptions of others is to seek specific, evidence-based feedback. The next section provides some tips in this area.

Reduce Your Blind Spots

The ideal situation is to reduce the amount of information in your 'blind spot', so that you become more aware of how others perceive you or how your behaviour impacts on others. To do this, you need to seek and receive feedback from others.

Seeking Feedback

Regular, informal feedback is crucial for self-development and for building effective working relationships.

Why not make a habit of having informal one-on-one conversations with your manager, staff, peers and others who are important to you and are in a position to see you in action?

The insights you gain from seeking their feedback can position you better to respond to staff, clients, stakeholders and managers.

Your manager's perceptions of you are vital. Your manager's view of your ability to achieve good outcomes may well influence the opportunities they are comfortable offering you.

Don't be intimidated at the thought of discussing your weaker areas. Your manager is the person who can help provide you with opportunities to develop your skills.

Remember, if you make a habit of asking for feedback – and receiving it respectfully – it will make the feedback process feel normal and comfortable for you and for the people giving the feedback.

It also makes it easier and more comfortable for you to give feedback to team members, peers and managers about their performance.

Receiving Feedback

Feedback provides an opportunity for you to learn something. The biggest challenge is to listen without becoming defensive, without making excuses and without overly justifying your actions.

> "If you would reap praise you must sow the seeds." – Benjamin Franklin

Whether or not you agree with the feedback, is not really the issue. The important thing is that you are getting a sense of how others perceive you, opening up communication channels and laying a foundation of trust.It is always a good idea to reflect on feedback and what it means for you in a practical sense. You may want to re-open dialogue with the person who has given the feedback to clarify your understanding, give reassurances or explore ideas for change. You may even want to get the perspective of others before making changes.

See Appendix A. It provides a step-by-step model for seeking and receiving feedback.

Emotional Intelligence

Research cited by Harvard Business Review[1] shows that the key drivers of outstanding performance are not in a person's technical or cognitive abilities, but rather in a person's ability to be self-managing and build respectful and productive relationships with others.

This skill set is commonly referred to as emotional intelligence.

These skills are relevant to all employees and essential for managers because of the manager's key role in leading and being a role model for others.

See Appendix B. It describes the five components of emotional intelligence. You may recognise some of the elements in yourself or the people you work with.

Build Your Support Crew

Networks, Professional Associations and Communities of Practice

You can bolster your support considerably by participating in groups such as networks, professional associations and communities of practice.

They are great ways to share experiences in a non-threatening environment and make contacts outside your immediate work area. Professional associations and communities of practice usually provide avenues for continuing professional development and other forms of structured training.

Contacts can help to open doors, suggest new ideas and different ways of approaching problems, which can have a positive impact on your confidence and capabilities.

The Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) is the professional association for those involved in public administration. It is a voluntary, non-profit, member organisation enabling people with an interest in public administration and public sector reform to exchange ideas on trends, practices and innovations in public administration.

IPAA has its own Victorian group whose mission is to enhance the reputation of the public sector and support the development of the profession in Victoria. IPAA offers programs and events, confers awards and provides high-level networking opportunities across government.

If you live outside metropolitan Melbourne, try using some of the electronic options that many associations and communities of practice offer such as pod casts, live media and other electronic forums.

Suggested Activity

Ask your manager and peers about professional associations or networks that they have accessed.

Do You Need a Coach or a Mentor?

Coaches and mentors can be of great assistance in helping you identify 'who you are' and, with that, achieve your development and career goals.

Coaching and mentoring relationships rely on trust and honest communication. The relationship is most effective when the coach or mentor is someone you like and respect. If you are thinking of getting a coach or mentor, you should first speak to your manager or HR representative.

In selecting a coach or mentor you may want to identify someone who:

- has good skills in the development area you are focused on
- is skilled at giving constructive, balanced feedback
- is prepared to invest time to help you.

Look After Yourself

New managers who are keen to prove themselves may take on excessive workloads or work long hours. This can have negative consequences if it is sustained over a long period without regard for physical and mental health.

Your organisation will have policies for health and safety, and may also offer health, wellbeing and social programs such as walking clubs, social clubs and access to local gyms.

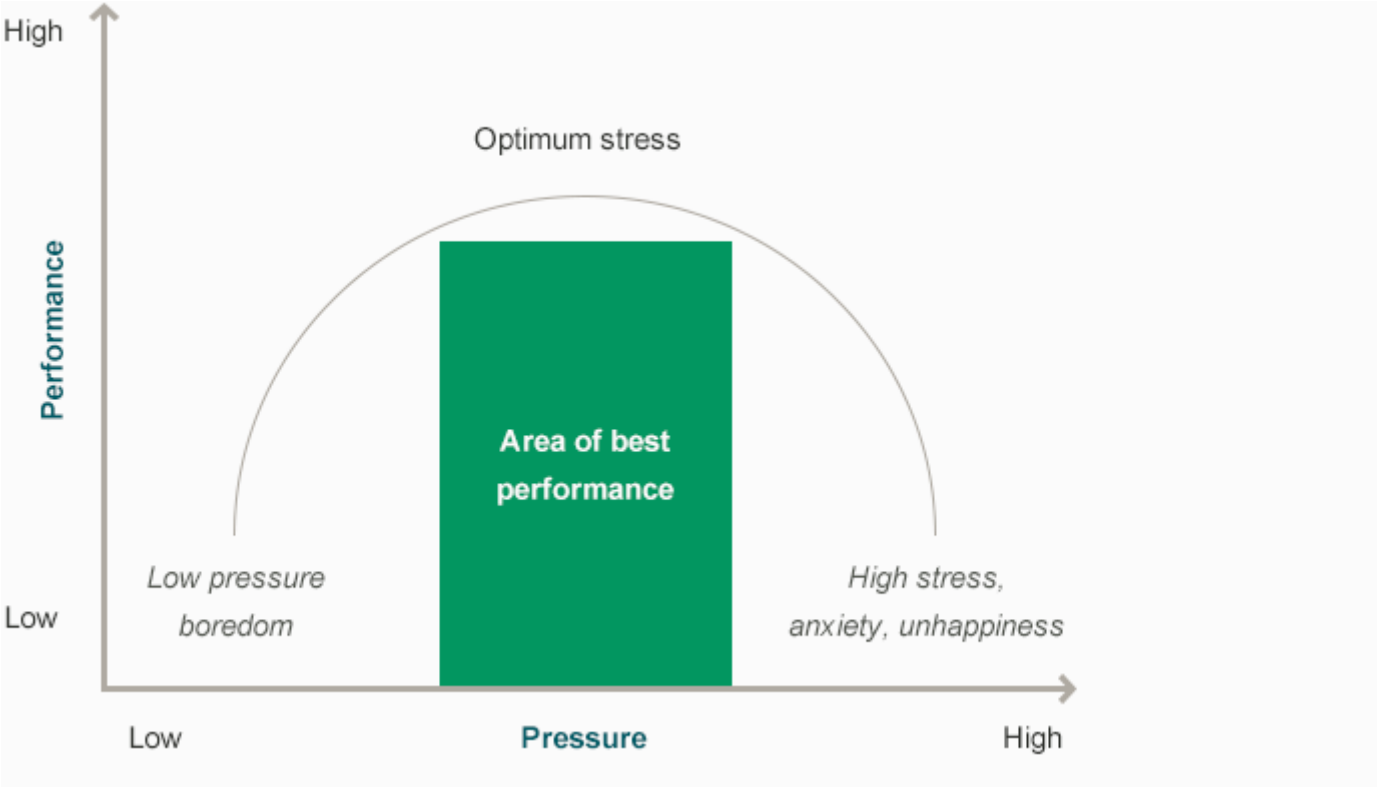
You may also have access to structured health advice through your private health insurer. This service is also offered by the Hospitals Contribution Fund (HCF), which is the company that offers discounted health insurance products and services to Victorian public sector employees. Making the most of these initiatives can help you manage yourself and your team.

Dealing with Stress

The way you manage yourself and your team through times of challenge can have an enormous impact on the success and wellbeing of you and your team. As the following

diagram illustrates, pressures and demands can have both a positive and a negative impact on people's performance. Too little pressure can lead to a lack of focus and boredom. Too much pressure can cause anxiety and lower performance.

Figure 3. The inverted-u relationship between pressure and performance



It's all about getting the balance right. If you as manager are stressed and overwhelmed by the demands placed upon you, it is likely to cause issues for your team.

Building skills and strategies to help you respond better in challenging situations can reduce the degree of stress you may feel as challenges occur. Learning to pace yourself, prioritise and rely on the expertise within the team can help manage your's and your team's health.

Suggested Activity

Quick quiz – Does this sound like you?

- Disruption to sleep, such as taking longer to get to sleep or waking up more often during the night
- Feeling tense

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- Increased irritability
- Increased worry
- Difficulties concentrating

These are the most common early signs of stress.[2] Sometimes, stress symptoms can be temporary and resolve over a few days; sometimes, they can persist or progress into more serious, stress-related health problems. In general, if you notice any particular changes in your sleeping pattern, eating or drinking (especially alcohol) patterns, day-to-day moods, concentration and physical functioning (at work, at home and socially), you should do something about it. Please seek advice from a qualified health care professional.

See Appendix C. It provides practical tips for managing stress in the workplace.

Building Your Resilience

Victorian public sector organisations are required to operate in a changing and complex environment. As a manager you need to develop comfort in dealing with ambiguity, competing interests and changing directions.

You will also need to guide your team in dealing with set-backs, disappointments and frustrations. Recovering a team's energy quickly in the face of a set-back is vital to maintaining motivation, productivity and effectiveness.

Resilience is the ability to recover from challenging or stressful experiences. It involves remaining calm under pressure, persevering to achieve goals, and being able to adapt to change rather than resisting or trying to manipulate things beyond your control.

Something for Your Toolkit...

Steps for building resilience:

1. Remind yourself of the things you do well.
2. Develop realistic and achievable goals, monitor your progress and identify what is holding you back.
3. Maintain your optimism despite what is happening around you.
4. Build and maintain your connections with your support network.
5. Take decisive actions to deal with unfavourable situations where possible, rather than

avoiding them.

Recommended Further Reading and Resources

Do a stocktake

- Great Managers, Great Results: Self assessment and development planning template for Victorian public sector managers. Lists the skills and knowledge required of successful managers. Provides advice on self-assessment and how to choose relevant, effective development activities. Available from the VPSC (in print and online)
- Public Sector Management Program: Leadership program aimed at emerging and highly motivated public sector middle managers from the Commonwealth, state and local government in Australia
- VPSC on-demand presentations: Series of presentations and workshops available to Victorian public sector organisations, mostly free-of-charge, on the following topics: governance, workplace culture and performance, workforce planning, attraction and recruitment, staff development and retention, and strengthening human resources.

How Do You Treat Others?

Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees. The Code reinforces the public sector values contained in the Public Administration Act 2004.

How Are People Responding to You?

- Leading the Way: A development guide for managers. This Guide takes readers through a series of self-assessment and development activities for each of the public sector values and employment principles.

Reduce Your Blind Spots

- Johari Window explained as a communication tool
- Johari Window in Luft, Joseph (1969). *Of Human Interaction*, Palo Alto, California, National Press
- Handy, Charles (2000). *21 Ideas for Managers,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Build Your Support Crew

- IPAA Victoria is the independent professional association of the public sector. It offers programs and events, and provides high-level networking opportunities across government.

Look After Yourself

- Look up your organisation's health and safety policies (available from your HR representative)
- Familiarise yourself with the enterprise agreement or industrial award applicable to your workplace. In particular become aware of clauses relating to leave provisions and flexible working arrangements
- Better Health Channel. Award-winning health information website, quality assured by Department of Health. Includes articles on work health issues
- HCF discounted private health insurance for Victorian public sector employees. See link on VPSC home page
- *Stresswise: Preventing Work-related stress, A guide for employers in the public sector*, WorkSafe Victoria
- Description of 'rational positive thinking' as one method of reducing stress.

Footnotes

1. Harvard Business Review www.hbr.org/2001/12/primal-leadership/ar/1
2. Better Health Channel

3. Manage People

The people management function of your role can be the most interesting and rewarding aspect of your work. As a manager, you get the chance to lead a team to achieve their core purpose and excellence in their work. You also have the chance to positively influence the career success of individual team members.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- Managing all types of performance
- Setting team direction and style
- Learning and development
- Health and wellbeing
- Managing difficult situations
- Managing attraction and recruitment activity
- Understanding employment conditions.

Managing All Types of Performance

When it comes to influencing performance, you as manager can make a big difference. You can optimise staff performance through direct influences such as helping your staff set goals, showing appreciation, acknowledging achievements, building rapport and providing effective coaching feedback and development. These core techniques should be used in managing any employee, regardless of their level of performance.

Data collected by the VPSC demonstrates the power of informal, everyday feedback. The following two diagrams drawn from the People Matter Surveys, show that staff who received informal feedback, either with or without formal feedback, were more likely to find their work engaging and less inclined to leave their organisation.

The same research shows that employees find formal feedback alone is the same as receiving no feedback at all. This is probably because formal feedback (i.e. performance assessments) tends to be infrequent and removed from specific actions and behaviours at a given point in time.

Figure 4. Percentage of staff who find their work interesting vs type of feedback

provided

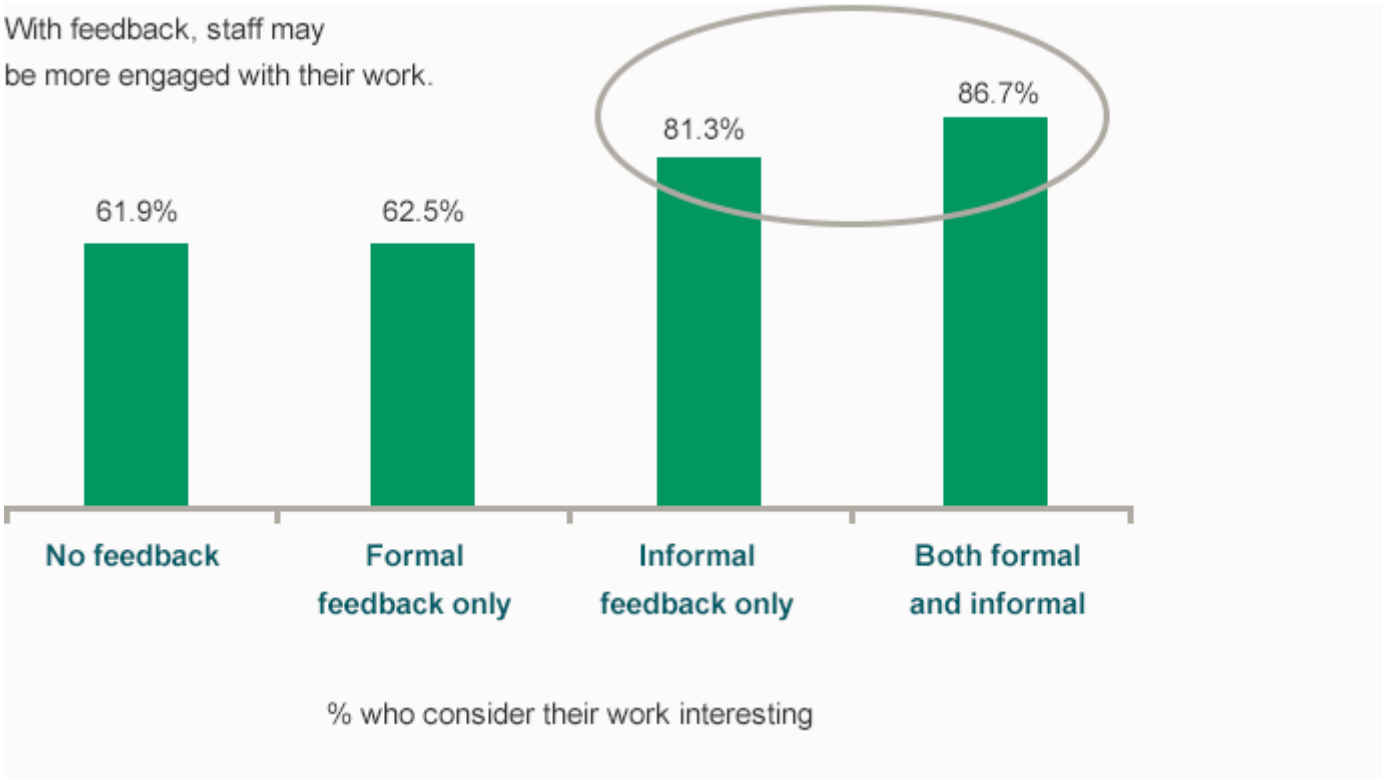

Figure 5: Percentage of staff who think about leaving vs type of feedback provided

Regular informal feedback also helps identify and address emerging issues. This can help to address situations before patterns of behaviour (e.g. underperformance) become

established.

Despite the best of intentions, team members are sometimes left to their own devices in the manager's rush to meet deadlines, fix the day's emergencies or deal with the unexpected. Investing time in constructive people management practices is one of the key contributions a manager can make to an organisation and its culture.

You can help your team get the job done by motivating them to do their best, and empowering them so they're able to succeed. If you have been the team subject matter expert, your toughest challenge may be to let go of the task and enable your team to do the task, without micromanaging or dictating solutions.

The VPSC's Talking Performance resource can help you improve your ability to provide constructive feedback as part of your day-to-day management of staff. It helps optimise your staff's performance through:

principles and strategies for managing and participating in feedback conversations; practical tools and aids such as 'how to' tips, checklists and conversation starters; and engaging videos showing 'in action' examples of managers applying key skills when working with high performing and poorly performing staff.

Suggested Activity

Consider how often you use the following strategies for motivating and empowering your team:

- help people see the links between organisational goals and their work tasks
- clarify or jointly develop outcomes and measures of success
- collaboratively set goals with people in consideration of their interests, skills and career goals
- learn what motivates each person
- give people the authority and autonomy to carry out work assignments
- help people develop their own solutions to work challenges
- engage in regular feedback
- encourage individuals to build useful networks across the organisation.

As well as these informal methods for managing the performance of your team, your

organisation is likely to have a formal performance assessment process, which you should speak to your manager or HR representative about.

Setting Team Direction and Style

Working with Individual Differences and Styles

Diversity in the workplace can stimulate creativity and foster innovative thinking.[1] The Victorian government supports diversity through legislation and the human rights charter[2]. Culturally diverse teams include people with different backgrounds and life experiences.

Working with different personality types also has the potential to bring depth and breadth of thought, emotion, work style and ideas. The natural challenges of working with different personalities can help a group develop maturity around fundamental human skills like tolerance, patience, perseverance and communication.

A good manager can help a team manage individual differences and natural conflicts through a number of methods:

- clarifying performance expectations
- discussing workplace values and principles
- intervening early in disputes or any contentious situation
- maintaining fair and equitable work practices
- encouraging constructive communication at every level in the team
- encouraging the team to develop a set of agreed behaviours

- developing team members' skills in negotiation and alternative dispute resolution.

It also is important to take into account people's communication preferences. For example, you may notice that some people in your team generate ideas quickly in an open forum, whereas others need time to figure out their thoughts. You may notice that some people explain things in step-by-step detail, whereas others give you more of a broad overview.

To learn more about how members of your team like to work, observe them in various situations and keep note of their reactions to certain events. Better yet, ask them directly.

Group Dynamics and Team Effectiveness

Teams are more than just a collection of individuals. Because individuals in a team interact and influence each other, the team itself develops an identity and behaviours which are beyond those of any single individual.

Group dynamics describe the way people behave in a group or team. It can explain why some groups or teams are able to achieve far greater results as a team than the skill levels of each individual would suggest they should. It can also explain why some groups achieve far less.

For managers, this means you need to focus on the capability and wellbeing of your group as a team and not just on each individual's needs. Be observant and give yourself time to spot behavioural patterns.

A basic understanding of some theories of team dynamics can help you in your role, from organising team responsibilities to managing performance.

Some theories focus on preferences for team roles (Belbin), some advocate understanding and working with individuals' differences and preferences (Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Strength Deployment Inventory), whilst others look at how behaviour is influenced by group membership (Social Identity Theory, Tuckman Theory – 'Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing').

Suggested Activity

Make time to read the recommendations at the end of this chapter regarding pointers on enhancing team dynamics. Check with your manager/HR representative and discuss with your team opportunities to explore these tools.

As you develop individuals to become high performing team players, you will need to

monitor the progress of the team as a whole. Whenever there is a change of team membership, you may need to redefine roles, clarify goals and rebuild working relationships.

> "I hear, I forget. I see, I remember. I do, I understand." – Confucius

Learning and Development

Consider some activities for the whole team to address particular performance goals, or if there are particular issues that keep arising. Start by defining the cause of your team's issues. Then plan activities that will address the issues (e.g. communication exercises, building trust).

There are key steps your staff need to undertake to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for success in their current and future roles.

Your task is to help your staff at each step by talking to them, asking them questions and helping them to find solutions to their issues. The purpose of these conversations is to ensure that staff become accountable for their own development and remain focused on achieving tangible and valuable outcomes for the development they undertake.

This also helps staff see that development does not only mean attending 'courses'. There can be more effective development to meet people's learning objectives, such as development through on-the-job experience or through mentoring or buddy arrangements.

Suggested Activity

Plan when and how you can undertake the activities in the following table with your individual team members, to help them develop their skills and knowledge:

Staff member's task	Manager's role
Identify development needs and goals (needs analysis)	Act as sounding board. Prompt ideas with open questions: • How do you envisage development at this time will be accommodated within your current work? What are you seeking to achieve? • What skills/knowledge do you need to develop?
Identify options for development	Discuss with your staff what types of learning and development activities would suit (more likely to involve a range of activities). Prompt ideas with open questions: • How quickly do you need to develop the knowledge, skills or behaviours? • Is an emphasis on theory or practice (or both) important? • How expert do you need to become? • When can you set aside time to undertake development activities, including time for thought and reflection? Consider selection of activities based on the 70:20:10 Principle. 70% development based on experience (e.g. learning by doing, experimenting, and talking about the experience); 20% through peer or one-on-one interactions; 10% through formal courses.
Plan development activities	Ask staff (just prior to the activity) to write down what they want to do differently as a result of the development activity and what this will look like in terms of things people will notice.

Staff member's task	Manager's role
Undertake development activities	Ensure staff have enough time and space to benefit from the learning activity, and stay focused on the goals.
Apply newly-acquired knowledge, skills and behaviours at work	Provide opportunity for staff to practise or reinforce new skills and knowledge. For example: • arrange a time with you during and/or immediately after the development activity to tell you about the experience and what they are going to do differently as a consequence • present an overview of the development activity and lessons learnt at a staff meeting.
Repeat above steps	

The steps are adapted from *Helping People Develop: A guide for Victorian public sector managers*, Talking Performance resource, and from the Great Managers, Great Results resources. If there are issues that possibly affect the whole team, it makes good sense to address them on a team basis.

For example, if communication is something that your team needs to work on, the chances of longer term positive changes are more likely to occur if everyone works together with someone skilled in communications training.

Keep in mind that individuals learn and develop at different rates. Be patient with those who need more time and be prepared to create new challenges for those who learn quickly.

Health and Wellbeing

As a manager you have a duty of care to your team. This means you are responsible for creating and managing environments that are positive, engaging, productive, healthy and considerate of work/life balance.

You can help create a positive environment for your staff by promoting health and safety in

the workplace. Some practical ways of doing this are by introducing staff to their occupational health and safety (OH&S) representative and asking your OH&S representative to talk regularly at team meetings.

Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible working arrangements can be a practical strategy for meeting the organisation's needs, as well as supporting work/life balance. These arrangements can include opportunities for part-time work, job-sharing, working from home, compressed hours, flexible start and finishing times, and unpaid leave. As a manager, you play an essential role in interpreting and implementing the flexible work policies and practices in your organisation and ensuring that your team's performance is maintained. This involves:

- setting the direction in promoting flexible work
- creating a supportive culture
- implementing and sustaining arrangements
- reviewing and measuring the benefits to the workplace.[3]

Managing Difficult Situations

Organisations are complex and challenging places in which to work. Competing goals, deadline pressures, complex projects and different personalities can create tensions for managers and teams.

As a manager you may find yourself needing to deal with:

- poor behaviours
- underperformance
- difficulties meeting role or task requirements
- misconduct
- conflicts that threaten to damage relationships and reduce productivity
- discrimination and harassment
- criminal activity.

Managing any of these situations is never a comfortable position to be in, but dealing with

the issue is always a manager's responsibility. You may consider using one or more of the following strategies to assist you in managing difficult workplace situations:

- open discussion and direct feedback
- awareness training on the values, principles and standards of the public sector and of your own organisation (e.g. through using the tools in the VPSC's Ethics Resource Kit)
- individual and team-focused coaching
- alternative dispute resolution strategies like negotiation, coaching, facilitation and mediation
- formal performance improvement processes
- disciplinary processes
- talking with your HR area
- employee assistance programs.

Make sure you understand the support available to you and don't be afraid right to do what to use it. It is always best to deal with issues as early as possible, before they become bigger problems. Remember you are aiming to influence problematic behaviour to cease or improve and to not re-occur.

> "The time is always right to do what is right." – Martin Luther King

Suggested activity: If you feel you are dealing with ongoing poor performance, serious misconduct or criminal behaviour, seek advice from your manager and follow your organisation's set procedures.

Ask your manager or HR representative about the types of support available to you, if needed. Ask other managers about their experiences of managing difficult situations and what they learned from this.

Managing Conflicts

As a manager, you have a responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. Serious conflict is less likely to occur where people respect each other.

That said, disputes and differences of opinions are a normal part of life. One of the reasons

conflict happens is when someone perceives their values, needs or identity are challenged or undermined.

It is important that you create a culture where open and constructive communication is encouraged. This helps to prevent conflict from escalating and involving more people. It is certainly reasonable to expect team members to take responsibility for helping to resolve their own problems. However, as the manager you might need to support people by:

- taking a coaching approach
- instigating some kind of awareness-raising around tolerance
- assisting someone in preparing to have a difficult conversation with another colleague
- facilitating referral for specialist support through HR or your organisation's employee assistance program.

Suggested Activity

If you are interested in developing your knowledge of dispute resolution methods, you should talk to your HR representative. One external source of information is the public sector Conflict Management Network. It meets quarterly and features guest speakers.

The Network is also a means of accessing information about skills development programs such as conflict coaching, workplace facilitation and relationship management. Send an email to info@vpsc.vic.gov.au. This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it for more information.

See Appendix D. It illustrates some of the different types of conflicts that can occur and what might underpin them.

Bullying

Workplace bullying is a threat to productivity, staff retention and to the health and welfare of individuals. Bullying is defined as the persistent, unreasonable treatment of an individual at work by one or more people.

Though we often think of bullying as causing physical harm, workplace bullying includes actions that are subtle or covert, such as setting someone up to fail, creating undue pressure or impossible deadlines, psychological harassment, or leaving someone out of workplace activities.

Individuals, groups of fellow workers, immediate managers, senior managers, clients, members of the public or subordinates can all be sources of bullying behaviour.

Whilst unacceptable in its own right, bullying is often a symptom of deeper issues such as unresolved conflict and other sources of stress. As a manager, you should be monitoring these aspects of the broader work environment and seeking to support a climate where bullying is less likely to occur.

Bullying can influence how people think and feel about their work. For example staff who have experienced bullying are more likely to leave their organisation and the public sector, and also enjoy their work less (see Figure 6). Bullying can also affect staff who witness the action by causing them to feel anxious and stressed. This also is supported by VPSC research showing a correlation between the perceived incidence of bullying and the amount of sick leave taken by employees.

Figure 6. Effects of bullying and harassment on employees in Victorian public sector (from VPSC, People Matter Survey, 2010)

Your organisation has policies and procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviours and bullying. Your manager or your HR professional can assist you with locating, understanding and applying this guidance in a practical manner. It is the legal responsibility of all managers to take reasonable steps to ensure that the work environment is free from harassment.

You and your team must come to a shared understanding about the difference between a perception of bullying, and a manager's duty to direct staff to do a job to an agreed level.

Managing Attraction and Recruitment Activity

Best practice recruitment and selection starts with a clear understanding of the current and future work objectives of your organisation, extended work area and your team. This is followed by developing a clear picture of the knowledge, skills and attributes required to achieve the identified objectives.

You can prevent irretrievable mistakes early on in the recruitment and selection process by:

- thinking through the work that needs to be done and deciding whether it's likely to be an ongoing role or a fixed term project role
- assessing whether you can re-allocate work internally or need to advertise the role externally

- describing the tasks accurately and clearly to help you attract the best possible field of candidates for the role
- developing selection criteria that are relevant and realistic and that will allow a candidate to align their skills, knowledge and attributes to those criteria in their application, making it easier for you to choose the strongest applicant from the field.

Second interviews are an effective method for exploring gaps in your assessment of a candidate's capability, and particularly any potential concerns you may have about their ability to work as part of your team. Involving an additional interviewer in this context (e.g. a senior executive, a fellow manager), who may have a different perspective from the first round interviewers, can also help elicit new information about the candidate.

Our standards for recruitment are underpinned by the employment principles and values in the Public Administration Act. By following due process, you will contribute to the positive reputation of your organisation as well as maximise your chances of a successful appointment.

Suggested Activity

Review the position descriptions for your area of responsibility. Do they accurately reflect the responsibilities of the staff you manage and the critical capabilities needed to deliver what is expected? Are they consistent with current staff performance plans? Ask the staff who are currently doing the jobs for their views, particularly about the accuracy of job and task descriptions.

Induction

As a manager you will need to put in place good procedures for settling in new staff that will help introduce them to the people, resources, processes and knowledge required to perform their job successfully.

Good induction practices help the rest of the team adjust to the new team member. By giving existing team members roles to play, the team has an opportunity to begin to connect with the new team member. The faster the new team bonds, the more quickly they are likely to become productive as a team.

It is particularly important to actively manage the probation period for new staff. This includes regularly meeting with them to clarify responsibilities, assess how they're performing and coping with the role, and to determine if any support is required.

As well as your own organisation's policies and procedures, the VPSC's Best Practice Recruitment and Selection Toolkit offers help on structured induction processes, how to implement a buddy system, manage job expectations and probation periods.

If you are new to your organisation, you will have recent, first hand experience of induction processes.

Suggested Activity

Review your own most recent induction experience. What went well? What could have been handled better? How can you apply this learning when you induct your own staff?

Understanding Employment Conditions

As manager, you are responsible for implementing workplace policies and understanding employment agreements. You should be aware of the agreements covering your workplace and what your team's employment conditions are.

Establish a connection with your local HR adviser, if you haven't done so already. They will provide information and vital early support if you need help with staff management issues.

Suggested Activity

Familiarise yourself with your organisation's workplace policies and procedures to find information on matters such as leave arrangements, salaries and classifications, hours of work, performance management and dispute resolution.

Recommended Further Reading and Resources

Managing All Types of Performance

- *Talking Performance:* Provides 'how to' guidance on improving staff performance through effective communication. Offers interactive training, video case studies, and practical tools such as checklists and templates.
- *Feedback Matters:* Effective communication is essential. This report uses evidence from the People Matter Survey to analyse the effect that the type of feedback has on employee attitudes to their organisations and relationships at work in the Victorian public sector.

Setting Team Direction and Style

- Standards: Application of the Public Sector Employment Principles. Offers information on the minimum that Victorian public sector body heads must do to apply merit in employment, fair and reasonable treatment, equal employment opportunity, and reasonable avenue of address.
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees. Describes the behaviours that demonstrate the public sector values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights.
- Conflict of Interest Policy Framework. Provides information on legislation, principles and responsibilities of all organisations and employees covered by the Public Administration Act in regards to managing conflict of interest.
- Various laws, available online cover diversity matters. These include:
  - Equal Opportunity Act 1995
  - Disability Act 2006
  - Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
  - Sex Discrimination Act 1984
  - Racial Discrimination Act 1975
  - Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
  - Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Team Dynamics

- Overview of Belbin's team roles and Tuckman's stages of group development – 'forming, storming, norming, performing', https://www.mindtools.com/
- Myers Briggs Type Indicator
- Strength Deployment Inventory, http://totalSDI.com/
- Social Identity Theory, en.wikipedia.org
- Perspectives on groups and teams in Brooks, I. (2009), *Organisational Behaviour: Individuals, Groups and Organisation*, Prentice Hall
- Team building exercises, https://www.mindtools.com/

Learning and Development

- VPSC has produced various workforce development publications including Talking Performance resources such as 'helping people develop', Great Managers, Great Results resources, as well as information on leadership and management development programs
- Description of 'conscious competence ladder' available online, https://www.mindtools.com/

Health and Wellbeing

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Making Flexible Work a Success: A Guide to Promoting Work/Life Balance in the Victorian Public Service. Provides leaders, managers and employees with tools and information to assist them in developing flexible working environments that encourage a work/life balance.

Managing Difficult Situations

- Talking Performance: Provides 'how to' guidance on improving staff performance through effective communication. Offers interactive training, video case studies, and practical tools such as checklists and templates.
- Developing Conflict Resilient Workplaces: An implementation guide for managers and teams. Offers a perspective on conflicts in the workplace, the impacts of conflict, conflict resolution approaches and a methodology for making changes to existing complaints handling systems.
- Managing Poor Behaviour in the Workplace: Offers definitions of poor behaviour, disciplinary and non-disciplinary approaches, relevant principles, and procedural issues.
- Ethics Resource Kit: A comprehensive learning and development resource that Victorian public sector employers can use to help make the values and employment principles meaningful for their staff.
- How Positive Is Your Work Environment? Offers a means of determining priorities for change by taking a quick check of an organisation's culture from three perspectives, across 10 elements.
- *Preventing and Responding to Bullying at Work:* A WorkSafe Victoria publication that assists people comply with occupational health and safety laws in relation to bullying at work. It provides general advice for employers and employees (including volunteers) in

any job or industry. See also related tools such as the Employer Checklist and the Bullying Risk Indicator

Managing Attraction and Recruitment Activity

- Best Practice Recruitment and Selection Toolkit: Offers an end-to-end best practice recruitment and selection process, information sheets and templates.
- Attracting and Retaining Staff: A Guide for the Public Sector in Rural and Regional Victoria. Offers identification of typical issues, strategies, tools and questions to consider.
- Succession Risk Management Toolkit: for the Victorian Public Sector. Offers a succession risk management framework and supporting fact sheets, checklists and templates.
- Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework: An introduction for public sector agencies (and card set). Offers a collated set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes across four levels of job complexity. A practical tool for managers.
- All of Us, Victoria's multicultural policy, 'All of Us Policy Summary', available from Victorian Multicultural Commission

Understanding Employment Conditions

- Look up copies of your workplace agreement and employment policies – your HR coordinator will be able to help if you have questions.
- Current Victorian Public Service Agreement, www.business.vic.gov.au

Footnotes

1. Adler, N (1997) International Dimensions of Organizational Behaviour, South-Western College Publishing,
   Cincinnati, cited in Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission and Victorian Multicultural Commission (2008) Harnessing diversity: addressing racial and religious discrimination in employment, pp. 14-16,
   <www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/Harnessing%20Diversity%20report.pdf>
2. The Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter can be accessed via www.legislation.vic.gov.au
3. 'The role of managers' in State Services Authority (2005) Making Flexible Work a Success, p.6.

4. Understand Your Environment

Environmental scanning means developing an insight into the internal and external influences that have an impact on your organisation and the success of your work.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- why you need to scan your environment
- external environment (level 1) – keeping tabs on what's happening in the external environment
- organisational environment (level 2) – making sure your work group supports your organisation's goals
- your immediate environment (level 3) – tracking your work group's achievements and culture.

Why You Need to Scan Your Environment

Understanding the different levels of your work environment will help you to:

- recognise and explain the inter-relationship between your work, your team's work and the organisation's role and purpose
- identify and pass on relevant information to your team
- develop vigilance and the agility to respond to changes
- develop a strategic perspective that helps you respond to complex issues.

Figure 7. Your work is affected by your environment – consider the different levels of influence

Level 1
External environment
Assess the external environment and its impact on your organisation and workgroup.

Level 2
Organisational environment
Understand how your workgroup and its function fit into the bigger organisational picture.

Level 3
Immediate environment
Understand the purpose, goals and culture of your workgroup.

External Environment (Level 1)

To develop an understanding of your environment you need to be able to zoom out to see the 'big picture'. Broadening your focus can assist you to:

- look beyond the here-and-now and anticipate what is on the horizon
- communicate with your manager, peers and team ahead of the need to react to emerging issues
- plot a course of action that can achieve results in light of complexity, opportunities, obstacles and change.

Environmental scanning helps you identify the external events, trends, or issues that will affect your organisation's goals. Factors to consider include government policy, economic conditions, community concerns, legislation, and demographics.

They may represent current trends or future threats. You may also need to consider issues and trends that would impact on professional or occupational practices relevant to the

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services your team and organisation deliver.

A tip for building awareness of the broader environment is to follow media and other information sources (e.g. news reports, periodicals, professional/industry journals), by attending seminars and participating in networks. Make sure you are on the distribution list for any relevant circulars, bulletins or other pieces of regular information that are circulated in your organisation.

One simple tool a manager can use to assess the potential impacts of any environment on their team is a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is a way to consider the strengths and weaknesses of your team or workgroup within the context of the opportunities and threats of the current or future environment.

See Appendix E. It provides more information about a SWOT analysis.

Organisational Environment (Level 2)

Understanding the organisational environment helps you make sure your team supports your organisation's goals. It also provides the opportunity to understand and influence issues and activities that may affect your team.

To understand your organisational environment try to develop an awareness of:

Formal Processes

- changes in your organisation's senior management team, organisational structure, systems, budgets or location
- organisation design and reporting lines
- administrative processes and key functions
- priorities and key strategies.

Behaviours and Relationships

- how people treat each other
- how your organisation treats its clients
- how your organisation interacts with other organisations (e.g. public sector, same industry sector, regulatory or operational agencies, suppliers).

Your evidence may come from a range of sources such as:

- corporate and business plans
- annual reports
- employee and client surveys
- people metrics (e.g. separation rates, absentee rates, recruitment source breakdown)
- benchmarking reports
- employee exit interviews and discussions
- minutes of executive meetings
- your own observations.

Suggested Activity

List the sources of information available to you on your organisational environment.

When collecting this information you should be looking for insight from events that might affect your team's work (e.g. changing administrative processes that affect how your team operates, budget changes that affect your team's resources).

Being aware of these things will help you to prepare your team, and may even enable you to shape a situation to suit your team's needs better (e.g. providing feedback on a new client management system to ensure it takes into account the way your team delivers services).

Your Immediate Environment (Level 3)

For most new managers, understanding the immediate environment will be the priority in the first instance. By building a deep understanding of your current situation, you will be better positioned to develop strategies that will be relevant and meet the priorities agreed with your manager.

As with level 2, understanding your organisational environment, there are multiple sources of evidence. Additionally, keep in mind that social functions and informal conversations over coffee are also valid ways to build awareness of your immediate environment and the politics of your office.

> "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

Suggested Activity

Increase your understanding of your workgroup by answering the following questions:

- Why does our workgroup exist? What is our purpose?
- Where are we going? What is our vision? What does our future look like?
- Whom do we serve? What is expected of us?
- What are our goals and priorities?
- How do we track performance?
- What are our strengths and weaknesses?
- What are the major risks to our ability to successfully deliver our work?
- What is our improvement plan?
- What other work units do we work with most closely and why?

You can also use a synopsis of this information when representing your group to others.

Understanding Culture

Every organisation and workgroup has a culture: one that the people within it may not be able to describe directly, but will certainly be able to show you, if you pay attention. The culture of your team can be one which contributes to its success and resilience; or it can be one that hampers performance, reduces productivity and gives your team a poor reputation, internally and externally.

A team's culture is exemplified by behavioural patterns that often follow unwritten rules. To see the culture of your workgroup, observe team members' habits and patterns of behaviour. What do you hear them say when they discuss work, clients, other departments, or management? How do you see them behave in response to requests?

Does your team sound and behave like this?	Or do they sound and behave more like this?
'I put in the extra effort because it makes a difference.' 'My manager is great. I can speak to her about anything, anytime.' 'We can do it. We'll just need to lobby to get it to happen.'	'By 4.30 I can hardly wait to get out of here.' 'The only time we see management around here is when we're in trouble for something.' 'We tried that five years ago. It didn't work then and it won't work now.'

Managers can also monitor culture by examining data from:

- employee opinion surveys
- 360 degree feedback
- exit interviews
- people metrics (e.g. retention rate, absence rate)
- other workforce data sources like the People Matter Survey administered by the VPSC.

You can also generate additional data and insights using techniques such as the quick-check tool in the VPSC publication How Positive is Your Work Environment?

Suggested Activity

Talk to your manager or HR representative about the availability of these possible sources of data in your organisation.

> "Culture does not change because we desire to change it. Culture changes when the organisation is transformed; the culture reflects the realities of people working together every day." – Frances Hesselbein

It is important for you to build a culture in which people can work to their full potential and feel safe to express their honest and constructive views; a culture of high expectations and standards; and fair treatment for all. It won't simply happen through good intention.What can you do to influence culture?

Managers influence culture through their actions – and inaction. For example, a manager who ignores constructive advice from staff may notice that staff develop a habit of ignoring issues raised by clients.

While important, simply identifying a set of 'values' is not enough. To have real meaning, values need to be understood and defined in terms of behaviours.

Managers can change and shape team culture by modelling desired behaviours and encouraging team members to do the same. Managers can continue to calibrate team culture through individual and team feedback, team building activities and by the skilful use of performance management and development plans, and job design and recruitment.

Suggested Activity

Talk to your team to identify what things they would expect to see (i.e. behaviours) when your organisation's values are being applied. For example, what do people need to do to 'demonstrate accountability' in their day-to-day work?

Recommended Further Reading and Resources

Why You Need to Scan Your Environment

- Introduction to strategic management and environmental scanning, http://www.managementstudyguide.com/environmental-scanning.htm
- Introduction to strategic planning tools including SWOT analysis and goals grid, work911.com/planningmaster/faq/indextools.htm
- Introduction to the appreciative inquiry process and brainstorming techniques, www.mindtools.com

External Environment (Level 1)

- About the Victorian Public Sector. This page provides an overview of the organisations and entities which comprise the Victorian public sector. It is one of a series of fact sheets available from the VPSC website which give an overview of the public sector
- Welcome to Government: Your Introduction to Working in the Victorian Public Sector. Offers an overview of how government works in Victoria; key institutions; role of the public service and public sector; and mechanisms for finance, accountability and employment

- Victorian Parliament website. Provides links to a wide range of publications including Victorian legislation, Hansard, and committee reports. Also provides live broadcasts when Parliament is sitting
- Australian New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) conducts a range of short courses and seminars that help build a more strategic perspective . The VPSC co-ordinates ANZSOG seminars which are open to all public sector employees.

Organisational Environment (Level 2)

- Workforce Planning Toolkit: A Guide for Workforce Planning in Small to Medium Sized Victorian Public Sector Organisations. Offers information and tools for assessing an organisation's current state, forecasting needs and developing and implementing strategies
- The State of the Public Sector in Victoria. Offers an analysis of the current Victorian public sector workforce and the associated challenges and priorities.

Your Immediate Environment (Level 3)

- How Positive Is Your Work Environment? Offers a means of determining priorities for change by taking a quick check of an organisation's culture from three perspectives, across 10 elements

5. Build Relationships

Building good workplace relationships is fundamental to getting the job done and to building a healthy workplace culture. As a manager, this often requires you to develop different kinds of relationships with people external to your immediate team.

All relationships take time to build, so it can be useful to consider relationship building as a task in its own right.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- relationships external to your team
- influencing others.

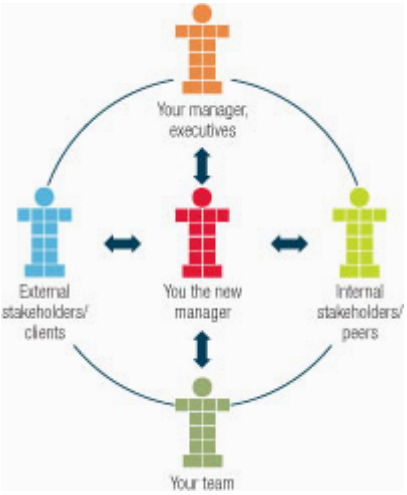
Relationships External to Your Team

There are likely to be a range of people, other work areas or organisations whose work directly impacts on yours, or whose work your team has a direct impact upon.

This includes people you have no direct authority over, though how well they perform or respond to your requests may have a huge impact on your team's success.

Solid relationships here can reduce risks and lead to increased efficiency and better outcomes for the teams involved and for the organisation.

Figure 8. Building strategic relationships as a new manager



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You may have developed relationships with these people before you became a manager. However, the nature of these relationships is now likely to be different, particularly in terms of:

- Playing a greater role in representing your team/division/organisation internally and externally, for example
  - getting buy-in to your team's work agenda from external stakeholders
  - creating internal alliances with your peers
  - using the authority of your role to resolve issues.

- Influencing others to ensure your team has the necessary resources(e.g. equipment, finance, people) to achieve its work goals
- Acting as a conduit for information to and from your team
- Managing the performance of your team (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Your relationship with your manager is likely to set the scene for much of you and your team's success. Your manager acts as an important intermediary with the rest of the organisation. From day one it's important to understand what your manager expects of you and how they can best support you in your new role.

> "Opportunities multiply as they are seized." – Sun Tzu

Suggested Activity

List all the people external to your team who have an impact on your team's performance, or who your team has a direct impact on. Try to rank them in terms of relative importance, then rate the current strength of each relationship (e.g. 'don't know', 'poor'). Use this rating as a guide for setting priorities for building your strategic relationships.

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As you communicate with different groups or individuals ask yourself:

- 'What is my role?'
- 'What skills do I bring to this discussion?'
- 'What is my value to this group?'
- 'At what level does this communication need to be pitched: operational or strategic?'

You should also think about the role of the other group members and what they bring to the discussion.

Suggested Activity

How effective are you at building relationships	**Circle one response for each statement**			
	Strongly agree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

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How effective are you at building relationships	**Circle one response for each statement**			
1. I understand my manager's responsibilities, key result areas, working style preferences and boundaries.	1	2	3	4
2. I understand the pressures my team faces, the things that inspire them, and their working style preferences.	1	2	3	4
3. I understand the culture, language, processes, interactions, and identity of my organisation.	1	2	3	4

How effective are you at building relationships	Circle one response for each statement			
4. I share my vision with my team and peers. I regularly state my expectations around the business, goals,	1	2	3	4
5. I am able to clearly differentiate my previous role from my new role (even if I am acting manager or have been promoted from within the group).	1	2	3	4
6. I feedback information between my team, peers and stakeholders.	1	2	3	4

How effective are you at building relationships	**Circle one response for each statement**			
7. I actively build my professional support network, including advisers from HR, training, finance and other internal support services.	1	2	3	4
Subtotals				
Total				

How did you score?	
22-28	Well done. You are confident at building relationships, which is an important management capability. Ensure you maintain the relationships and keep up the communication.
15-21	You are on the way. Perhaps you need more practice to gain confidence in building relationships with other groups or individuals. It is worthwhile talking to your manager or mentor for more support for you to build this important management capability.

How effective are you at building relationships	Circle one response for each statement
14 or less	You should consider making building relationships an urgent development priority. To be effective as a manager, you need both confidence and competence in building and maintaining relationships with others. Talk to your manager about development and support opportunities.

Note: The quiz content has been adapted from Making the Transition to a New Managerial Role, Corporate Executive Board, 2008

Influencing Others

> "One of the things I learnt when I was negotiating was that until I changed myself I could not change others." – Nelson Mandela

One of the most important determinants of your effectiveness as a manager is your ability to influence others. You will typically need to influence others in the following broad contexts:

- convincing others to engage on a topic of importance to you
- encouraging people to appreciate your perspective
- influencing people to undertake particular actions.

We all have influencing skills. The question is whether those skills result in a high level of commitment from those we influence. Does the way we influence strengthen or weaken our relationships with those involved?

Some key points to keep in mind are:

- decide whether your overall approach needs to be one of consultation, collaboration or

competition

- resist the temptation to rush towards a result – putting aside your agenda and listening to the interests of the other person is more likely to lead to a positive outcome, as well as strengthening the relationship.

For example, irrespective of various suggestions, a team member is always complaining about excessive workloads and cannot meet deadlines. By a manager probing more deeply and using skilful and relevant questioning techniques, a number of issues may be uncovered. The person complaining may in fact not have adequate skills to do the job.

However, they are very much motivated by the need to be seen as capable. The fear of being 'uncovered' is strong and will drive the person to cover up unless the negotiation starts from a 'no fault' premise and respectfully seeks to identify what is at the core of the problem.

Another possibility might be that, on deeper questioning, the team member is covering for a colleague. Their sense of collegiality is high and you as the manager need to work with that situation to help find a solution that addresses everyone's interests.

Speaking and Listening

Effective communication is critical to influencing others.

When you want to influence someone or a group of people, you will probably only get one chance. So your communication needs to be compelling, the first time!

Here are some tips[1]:

1. Think short – no more than 3 minutes first up is a good amount of time to start. You can give more information when asked, or after there's been time for reflection
2. If your topic is complex, try to relate your idea to something that people are already familiar with (could be a policy, product or service) to help orient your audience to your ideas
3. Prepare and practice
4. 'Why' comes before 'What.' People will understand better what you're doing if they first know why you're doing it
5. Try to include a story or simple example. Use data sparingly, but effectively if it's available

6. Drawn from Derek Brookes, "*Restorative Conversations": Facilitator's Guide* (Relational Approaches, 2010): pp23-24.

Then – Listen for comments and questions.

We all have a sense of when someone is really listening to us. Likewise, we can easily spot when someone is 'tuning out' or waiting for us to finish so that they can talk. When this happens, we feel devalued and treated with disrespect; our motivation to continue talking dries up; and we even lose interest in what we are saying ourselves.

Real listening is not passive. Genuine listening involves actively demonstrating to the listener that you are listening. Some responses that show you are listening are physical (e.g. eye contact); others are verbal (e.g. summarising).

However, at an even deeper level, as a listener, you need to bring the right set of values and attitudes. There are a number of things you can say that will show the listener you are really listening. This is either because what you say reflects back to them what they have just been saying; or you say something that encourages them to continue with or clarify a line of thought.

One important point: it is not always helpful to say something in response. Allowing moments of silence gives a speaker the space to reflect, to feel and come up with the right words to say. Verbal signs of active listening include:

Encourage – them to continue – 'Could you explain what happened next?'

Acknowledge – what they have said – 'I understand,' 'I see'.

Check – that you understand – 'You seem to be angry?' 'Am I right in thinking that you …?'

Clarify – what they have said – 'Can you explain what happened when …?'

Reflect – back to them what they have said – 'It sounds like you are …'

Recommended Further Reading and Resources

Relationships External to Your Workgroup

Introductory resources on topics including 'running effective meetings', 'influence maps', 'stakeholder analysis', and 'win-win negotiation' are available online, www.mindtools.com

Influencing Others and Negotiating

Fisher, R. & Ury, W. (1991), *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*; Penguin, second edition.

Footnotes

1. Drawn from Derek Brookes, "Restorative Conversations": Facilitator's Guide (Relational Approaches, 2010):
   pp23-24.

6. Conclusion

This guide is just that – a guide. No one source can ever address the infinite number of situations you will find yourself in as a manager. Just when you think you have seen it all, there will inevitably be something 'new' to manage. Remain open to new people, changing situations and different ways of doing things.

Some highlights from the guide are:

1. **Transition** – work as much as you can with your team and your manager to identify your priorities.
2. **Understand yourself** – try and look at yourself from other's perspectives … what do they see?
3. **Manage people** – create a culture where open communication is the norm. Working with people is not a fact to be learnt, but a skill to be practised.
4. **Understand your environment** – keep your eyes open on the big AND little things.
5. **Build relationships** – all relationships take time to build, so hang in there!

Suggested Activity

List the things that you think will be most challenging for you. What do you plan to do to develop more skills and understanding in each of these areas? Develop an action plan listing the top three actions you will take (you may want to consider some of the suggested activities listed throughout this guide).

Talk to your manager about your development goals and make sure they are included in your performance plan for this year.

Appendices

Appendix A: Seeking & Receiving Feedback

The following model offers a simple, balanced approach to seeking personal feedback from managers, peers, team members or clients.

Asking for feedback: a model approach	
Step	Suggested wording
Set the scene	'I'd like to get feedback on how I'm going with 'X'. Would you be able to share your thoughts with me on that?'
Ask for feedback on both strengths and weaker areas	'Lately, I have been trying to involve the team more in decisions that need to be made. I'm wondering how effective my approach has been?' 'What have you found to be positive or useful in myapproach?' 'Is there anything about my approach that could be changedor improved?'
Explore solutions (new approaches or behaviours)	'If I were to be more collaborative, how would you like to seeme go about that?'
Set new goals	'So if I were to ... would that be useful?'
Finish on a positive note	'I appreciate your honest response.' 'I'd like to come back and get your feedback again once I've put these changes in place.'

Receiving Feedback

If you do hear something that surprises or confuses you, you might like to manage it using simple communication skills like those shown in the model below.

'So what you're saying is that I ... Is that right?'

Receiving feedback: a model approach	
Technique	Suggested wording
Make statements or ask questions that invite clarification	'When you say I make snap decisions, I'm not sure I that understand what you mean.' 'Can you give me an example of where I ...?'
Paraphrase their responses in your own words, to be sure you understand it	'So what you're saying is that I ... Is that right?'
Acknowledge valid points	'You make a good point about ....' 'I hadn't realised I was doing that.'
Take time to reflect on the feedback or ask for specific suggestions for change.	'I'd like some time to think about this. Can we speak again ask for tomorrow?' 'What would you suggest I do?'

Appendix B: Emotional Intelligence

The term 'emotional intelligence' describes the ability to be aware of, control and manage one's own emotions, and understand those of other people. The following table summarises the emotional intelligence competency framework.

		Definition	Competencies
Personal skills How we manage ourselves	**Self-awareness**	The ability to recognise and understand your moods, emotions and drives and their effect on others.	Self-confidence Realistic self-assessment
	Self-regulation	The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods. The tendency to suspend judgement and think before acting.	Trustworthiness, integrity Comfort with ambiguity Openness to change
	Motivation	A passion to work for reasons beyond money or status. A tendency to pursue goals with energy and persistence.	Strong drive to achieve Optimism even in the face of failureOrganisational commitment

		Definition	Competencies
Social skills How we manage relationships	**Empathy**	The ability to understand the emotional make-up of other people. Skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions	Expertise in developing and retaining talented people Cross-cultural sensitivityService to clients and customers
	Social skills	Skill in managing relationships and building networks. An ability to find common ground and build rapport.	Effectively taking a lead role during change Ability to influenceExpertise in building and taking a lead role in teams

Adapted from Harvard Business Review, 'What Makes a Leader?', Nov-Dec 1998, and Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ.*

Appendix C: Managing Stress

You might find the reason for your stress falls into one of the categories listed in the table below. If so, the suggestions on the right-hand side of the table may help.

Source of stress	
Why do I feel stressed?	**What can I do about it?**

Source of stress	
I am not confident that I have sufficient skill or knowledge to undertake this particular task.	Discuss with your manager/peers. Research training courses/materials that could develop your skills. Consider using a coach or mentor.Create a development plan that anticipates future skills.
I do not have sufficient resources.	Discuss with your manager. Prioritise existing resources. Discuss resource sharing with another section/team.
I am not clear what the goal is/what my manager expects me to achieve.	Speak to your manager and clarify goals, roles, outputs or tasks.
I can't seem to motivate my team.	Discuss with your manager/peers. Research training courses/materials that could develop your skills. Speak directly with your team or key individuals.
I don't have enough time in the day to fit everything in.	Clarify priorities with your manager. Incorporate priority and time management principles into your practice. Consider delegating tasks to staff.
I am frustrated and angry with organisational decisions/roadblocks.	Discuss with your manager. Focus attention on areas you can influence. Treat the process as an opportunity to build skills.

Source of stress	
I am in the wrong job/organisation.	Discuss with a careers counsellor or EAP (Employee Assistance Program) provider to identify: the source of the ill-fit;how you can address the problem by changing aspects of your environment or your personal approach; and what coping strategies you can use.

Appendix D: Types and Causes of Conflict

Not all conflict is bad. Conflict is always difficult, but it can lead to growth and change, which is good.

Some level of organisational conflict is desirable, as it generally reflects people trying to come up with the best solution from a range of different perspectives. This in turn promotes challenge, heightens individual regard to the issues, and increases effort. This type of conflict is necessary. Without it, organisations can stagnate.

When conflict does occur, the results may be positive or negative, depending upon how those involved choose to approach it. Most of the conflicts you are likely to encounter in the workplace will fall into one of the three areas listed below.

Types of conflict	
Interpersonal conflicts	Often caused by misperceptions, stereotyping, poor communication, miscommunication or intolerance.
Facts or methods conflicts	Caused by lack of or incorrect information, different interpretations of the same information, or different ways of performing the same function.

Types of conflict	
Goals or interests conflicts	Often caused by incompatible needs, or perception that in order to meet one party's needs the other's need must be sacrificed.

No matter what form they take, conflicts can be quite intimidating and uncomfortable for new managers. As a manager you can help negotiate and resolve conflicts through the following means:

- early intervention, helping individuals define their particular interests in order to work collaboratively towards a solution
- encouraging people to assume responsibility for their problems
- clarifying issues and separating the people from the issues
- using workplace goals, principles and values as a guide to resolving complex or people related issues.

If the above approaches do not work, you may need to consider using alternative dispute resolution approaches. Seek the support and resources of your HR representative or line manager if you believe the conflict is escalating.

Appendix E: SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a way to consider the strengths and weaknesses of your team or workgroup within the context of the opportunities and threats of the current or future environment.

Strengths	**Internal team factors** What has the team got going for it: knowledge, skills, attitudes? What are the strengths of the systems and processes that support the team? What are the strengths in the way the team is structured? What are the strengths in our leadership? What are the strengths in the way we deliver outcomes?
Opportunities	**External/internal environmental factors** What are the current or impending environmental factors (such as changes in organisational structure, financial resources, new technology, stakeholder needs, political/policy environment) that could provide our team or department with opportunities for change, growth or development, or to influence policy or direction?
Weaknesses	**Internal team factors** Consider this question from the perspective of political imperatives, social trends, future trends within your particular field, or current organisational trends. Consider the above questions from the perspective of weaknesses.
Threats	**External/internal environmental factors** Consider the above questions from the perspective of potential threats.

Some Points to Consider When Using SWOT Analysis

- If using the SWOT to undertake an assessment of your environment, it may be easier to consider opportunities and threats first and then consider the relative strengths and weaknesses of your team or workgroup within that context.
- If you're new to your area, a SWOT analysis may provide more in-depth information if you undertake it in collaboration with your team or manager, who will have more experience

of your workgroup's context. The outcomes of this analysis can be converted to goals and action plans.

- Once you have completed the SWOT analysis you will have a picture of where your team currently stands. From there you can plan the growth, development and productivity of your team, within the context of what may lie ahead.
- Some of the challenges that emerge from the SWOT may be more extensive than your role as manager can or should be responsible for. Where this is the case, your strategy should include identifying and involving those people who are responsible or who can influence aspects.
- Keep in mind the broad goals of the workgroup or organisation to help you explain the findings of your SWOT analysis and manage any resistance to subsequent plans.
- As the new manager in the group it is a good idea to get support for your ideas from a well-chosen source. Depending on the issue or the idea, you will need to decide whether that support needs to come from your manager or from your team and peers.

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