

### 3 Communication Tips for First-Time Managers

By Lisa Harvey Roach, MM, PMP, ACG, ALB



It's a new year and a new decade. If you have the right attitude, opportunities abound! Perhaps you were recently promoted to manager. If so, congratulations! This can be an exciting and challenging time. Often, people are promoted because of their technical abilities, not because of their people skills. Do you have the necessary skills to manage people and excel as a leader?

In this article, I will share three tips to help you excel as a first-time manager. Hint: success starts with effective communication skills. You can hone your skills on the job and improve as time goes by. You can also accelerate your progress by participating in [Toastmasters](#).

#### Managing People

Managing people requires a very different skillset from doing the technical work. It requires:

- 1) Providing ongoing support and direction to your team.
- 2) Motivating your direct reports to do their best work daily and achieve larger organizational goals.
- 3) Being fair and diplomatic.
- 4) Excelling in your communication skills.

Per Don Rheem, author of "[Thrive By Design: The Neuroscience That Drives High-Performance Cultures](#)" (ForbesBooks, 2017) and CEO of E3 Solutions, there are certain strategies managers and leaders should use to drive employee performance and maximize employee engagement. His research is done from a brain-based perspective. Rheem talks about the importance of humans needing engagement and the importance of satisfying the needs of the limbic system. Rheem says the limbic system focuses on threat detection and the need to belong. The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of the limbic system is: a group of subcortical

structures (such as the hypothalamus, the hippocampus, and the amygdala) of the brain that are concerned especially with emotion and motivation.

Rheem says the limbic system in the brain is always asking 2 questions. See what they are in Tip #1. Tip #2 also comes from Don Rheem's research. Tip #3 is based on my personal work experiences.

### 3 Communication Tips

- 1) Per Don Rheem's research, strive to answer two questions for your direct reports:
  - Question #1: What's next?  
People want predictability and consistency. Explain what's next as far as program and organizational goals are concerned. Then share what's next as far as their future is concerned.
  - Question #2: How am I doing?  
People often want their worth validated. A simple acknowledgement with a smile or by saying good morning can have a huge impact on someone's day. Letting people know that they matter and are making a difference is key.
- 2) Provide constructive feedback.  
Constructive feedback is defined as an on-going 2-way conversation between a manager and their direct report. Studies show it takes five positive comments to neutralize one negative comment. I say catch people doing something right before providing constructive feedback about something they did wrong.
- 3) Seek to understand different perspectives.  
It is extremely important to realize that each employee brings their own personality, perspectives, and experiences to the workplace. As a first-time manager seek to understand these differences as well as the strengths and weaknesses of your direct reports. Schedule routine 1:1 meetings to stay connected. Gain trust by doing what you say you will do and forge an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration.

Gallup surveys reveal, "People don't quit jobs, they quit bosses." I challenge you to change your approach; go from a boss to a coach (with great communication skills) and watch your team flourish!

For more information, contact me through:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisaharveyroach/> or Email: [Lisa@LisaHarveyRoach.com](mailto:Lisa@LisaHarveyRoach.com)