

Stepping into a manager's role ... and into chaos

Q: "My boyfriend, 'Doug,' was recently promoted, but he's having a lot of problems. He is now supervising his former boss, who is unhappy about being demoted. On top of that, the assistant manager applied for the job and resents the fact that Doug was selected. Their negative attitudes have spread to other employees, who are becoming insubordinate.

Doug is expected to clean up this department, which is a complete mess. However, he has no management experience, and these toxic people seem to feel they can run all over him. He is feeling really stressed out. Do you have any advice?"

A: Poor Doug. The transition to management is difficult enough without having to supervise the staff from hell. To survive this trial by fire, your boyfriend needs a clear plan for change and strong support from his manager.

First, Doug and his boss must agree on specific goals and expectations for the department. Once the objectives are established, the two of them should make a joint presentation to the staff. These rebellious folks need to understand that Doug has the unequivocal backing of higher management.

Next, Doug must develop a performance management strategy for each staff member. Good performers should be recognized and appreciated, borderline employees must have a coaching plan, and anyone who refuses to "get with the program" needs to go away.

With the most difficult employees, Doug should emphasize that he wants everyone to succeed, but the definition of "success" includes a helpful and cooperative attitude. If some people continue to be obstructive, then Doug should request management's support in facilitating their departure.

Managing performance can be tough for new supervisors. Here are some helpful coaching tips: [The New Manager's Coaching Guide](#) .

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