

Manager checklist — Are you a "good" manager?



“Am I a good manager?” Simply being the type of person who routinely thinks about this question points to an affirmative answer. Leaders willing to reflect upon their management skills demonstrate self-awareness. This self-awareness develops confidence in what they are doing well and keeps top-of-mind possible improvements to their managerial style.

People differ, of course, in their definition of a good manager. However, successful managers generally demonstrate competency in several basic areas.

The following manager checklist pinpoints some of the most important management skills. Each management area is followed by instances of it in action. Grab a piece of paper or open a notepad on your computer to keep track as you go and rate yourself for each item using this scale:

- 2 = I regularly do this.
- 1 = I sometimes do this.
- 0 = I never do this.

Manager checklist category: Constructive feedback

I schedule one-on-one check-ins with each direct report to provide individualized, constructive feedback. _____

I offer employees specific comments and examples rather than vague statements so they know exactly what they are doing well and what they need to improve upon. ____

I deliver objective, respectful feedback so as not to treat someone like a child or let emotions get the best of me. ____

I complete formal performance reviews in a timely, thoughtful manner. ____

I ask team members for constructive feedback on my leadership style so that I know what I'm doing well and where I can improve. ____

- Total for this category: ____

Manager checklist category: Communication

People can count on me for timely responses to their questions. ____

I have a system in place, such as a daily e-mail blast, that ensures all staff members receive pertinent news whether they work on-site or remotely. ____

I sit down to go over priorities with individual staff members to ensure each person understands exactly what he should be accomplishing. ____

After talking to an employee, I ask her to summarize the conversation or restate important points so that I'm certain the person truly understands. ____

I make a point of being the best listener possible by giving others in a conversation my undivided attention. ____

- Total for this category: ____

Manager checklist category: Organization

Meetings I call have a set agenda and a purpose. ____

My direct reports know our performance goals and the steps needed to reach them. ____

From information to objects, I can find what I need pretty quickly in my workspace. ____

I break down projects into manageable parts and check in with relevant employees at preset intervals. ____

I maintain a master calendar to manage time and stay on track. ____

- Total for this category: ____

Manager checklist category: Backbone

I possess clear standards regarding office conduct and am not afraid to call out inappropriate behavior. ____

I realize my job sometimes involves delivering bad news, and I know how to convey such information in a direct, mature way. ____

I enforce rules without being swayed by excuses or employee drama. ____

I am able to admit when I have made a mistake, and I apologize appropriately. _____

My team members can count on me to stick up for them in company meetings or in exchanges with clients.

- Total for this category: _____

Manager checklist category: Onboarding

I realize the importance of a direct manager's presence on a new employee's first day and make certain I'm available on the start date. _____

I encourage existing staff members to personally reach out to welcome a first-time employee during the person's first week. _____

I follow a formal onboarding program that ensures job duties, human resources paperwork, and the like are covered when someone starts a new job. _____

I know that new employees like to have someone at the company besides a manager to turn to, so I assign a mentor during the first week. _____

I welcome the eagerness of new employees and am certain to provide meaningful work for them to do from the first day on. _____

- Total for this category: _____

Manager checklist category: Awareness

I make a point of walking around the office just to get a feel for how things are going in the workspace. _____

I have a solid grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of my team as a whole as well as of individual team members. _____

I understand we all are not motivated by the same things, so I try to figure out what will spur each individual to maximum performance. _____

At any given time, I have a pretty good sense of the mood of my staff. _____

I know enough about each team member to sit down and hold a friendly, individualized conversation about something other than work. _____

- Total for this category: _____

Manager checklist category: Trust

I admit when I don't know something. _____

I am comfortable delegating work and giving stretch assignments because I know my direct reports will seek me out if any problems arise. _____

I hold everyone on staff to the same standards and do not play favorites. _____

I avoid micromanaging and instead encourage check-ins with me as needed. _____

I maintain an open-door policy. ____

- Total for this category: ____

Manager checklist category: Attitude

I smile and greet each team member every day. ____

I value teamwork and roll up my sleeves to pitch in however I can during busy times. ____

I give credit where it is due. ____

I say thank you and sincerely mean it. ____

Whether a mistake is mine or someone else's, I treat it as a learning experience, focus on improvement, and move on. ____

- Total for this category: ____

Manager checklist category: Work-life balance

I understand the need for flexible scheduling and do what I can to accommodate employee requests. ____

I do not send emails or texts in the evening or on the weekend because people need time to unplug, and I only call their cell phone if there is a true emergency. ____

Except in extenuating circumstances, I grant vacation time without a problem and try exceptionally hard not to bother the person who is away. ____

I encourage sick employees to stay home and get better. ____

I do not leave PTO on the books; I take days off in order to recharge. ____

- Total for this category: ____

Manager checklist category: Growth

I talk to other leaders at the company to learn more about the organization as a whole. ____

I maintain a relationship with a reliable mentor. ____

I read trade journals, attend industry conferences, or take professional development classes to keep my knowledge up-to-date. ____

I make time to expand and solidify my network. ____

I take time out to brainstorm. ____

- Total for this category: ____

Evaluating your score

Add together your points from each of the 10 categories. Since the successful manager checklist has a maximum score of 100, think of your overall number as a percentage. Then, just like back in school, you can convert to a letter grade (A: 90-100, B: 80-89, C: 70-79, etc.) to judge performance.

Dissatisfied with your grade? Look back through the manager checklist quiz. Were there certain categories in which you did not score many points? If so, set goals to improve in these areas. Maybe you'd benefit from taking a course on time management or listening to a webinar on [keeping negativity out of the workspace](#).

Or, maybe your responses point toward a need for greater consistency. Your actions and behaviors are on the right track; they just must become par for the course instead of something done occasionally.

And if you achieved a high score, congratulations!