



## Timely Information for Personal Success

# Things More Managers Need to Do

By Bernard Marr

**T**he gulf between manager and employee can often seem impossibly wide. Yet employees in these situations rarely feel empowered to offer criticism (even constructive criticism) to their superiors at work. But what would they say if they could?

Tiny Pulse asked 1,000 workers what they would change about their managers, and many of the answers came down to interpersonal skills. Unfortunately, people are often promoted based on their hard skills rather than soft skills. In my experience, I've seen eight distinct things employees tend to wish their managers would do more:

### 1. Communicate

It's the number one thing employees complain about when it comes to management: lack of communication. This includes communicating expectations, goals, deadlines, metrics, and more. If you can't communicate, you aren't going to be an effective manager.

### 2. Lead

It may sound redundant, but a manager needs to actively lead the team, not just hope things happen the way they're supposed to. This includes having a strong vision for projects, holding regular check-ins, and keeping employees accountable.

### 3. Buffer

Great managers help buffer their teams from outside forces. This includes protecting the team from

outside threats and losses, and removing barriers and obstacles that appear in the way of achieving the team goal.

### 4. Procure resources

Another main job of a manager is to ensure that the team has everything it needs to meet the goals. This could include financial and material resources, but also getting answers or input from other departments, getting more time for certain projects, or getting buy in from other departments.

### 5. Connect

A great manager is also a connector who helps people communicate and connect in smart ways.

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## Healthy Recipe: Cranberry-Raspberry Relish

### INGREDIENTS:

- One 12-ounce package fresh cranberries
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup crystallized ginger, minced
- 3 cups raspberries (2 pints), fresh or frozen (not thawed)

### NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 58
- Carbohydrates: 15 g.
- Protein: 0 g.
- Sodium: 2 mg.
- Fat: 0 g.
- Fiber: 2 g.

### DIRECTIONS:

① Pulse cranberries in a food processor until coarsely chopped. Transfer to a medium bowl. Stir in sugar and crystallized ginger. Gently stir in raspberries. It's fine to crush some of them.

② Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours to combine the flavors.

**Tip:** Cover and refrigerate for up to 1 week.

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### Questions and Answers

## Conferences are usually worth the Expense

**Q:** My employer has a hard time believing that attending a conference in your profession is worth the time and expense. What could I say to convince him otherwise?

**A:** It's true that most work organizations are operating "lean and mean" and so many employers see events like these only as opportunities to be "order takers" for their products or services – and if the "orders" don't look like they will offset expenses, it's off the table. They don't "get" that professional conferences offer tremendous opportunities for face-to-face networking that will end up paying for itself many times over. Unfortunately, the value is often more intrinsic than financial in the beginning, and many employers won't take the risk.

Explain to your manager that while the event might not bring in money immediately, over the long haul, the additional contacts *will* drive more business. Second, if your personal finances allow it, go to an important conference out of your own pocket, with the stipulation that if the event brings in enough money within an agreed-upon time frame to justify your expenses, your employer reimburses you. What would he have to lose? ■

### Things More Managers

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They facilitate relationship building both inside the team and outside the team with other key players.

#### 6. Praise

A little thank you can go a long way when it comes to keeping employees happy. Managers who notice when things are done well and thank or praise the responsible parties are much more likely to be well liked and trusted.

#### 7. Train

Most employees want to move up in the company or in their careers, and managers should take the role of helping to train and educate employees so that they can do their best now and in the future. If you're not available or qualified to train in a particular field, open up possibilities for your employees to take seminars or online courses to improve — and encourage continuing education.

#### 8. Trust

Micromanagement is one problem that will quickly erode employee satisfaction. Employees want to know you respect them enough to give them an important project, and that you *trust* them enough to do it. Be there to help as necessary, but allow the employee to figure it out. That shows great trust.

Of course, employees might also wish they could get a raise, or make other changes that are beyond a manager's direct control, but these eight qualities show up again and again in the great managers I've known and studied. ■

*Bernard Marr is a keynote speaker, best-selling author, and a regular contributor to LinkedIn and "Forbes" magazine.*