



Top 10 Success Strategies for Managers!

Thank you for your interest in this article. Please email me with any comments or questions at info@lynnkjones.com.

Do you feel like Hansel and Gretel lost deep in the woods, spreading bread crumbs along the way, as you try to manage people in your organization?

In the article, [The Importance of Management](#), Katherine Wertheim, a leading national fundraiser for nonprofits, says: "If you've never had any training, coaching, or education in how to manage people, you'll be lost in management. Managing others is not instinctive: there are many techniques that have been studied that lead to successful outcomes.

Can you name ten? If you can't, you need to learn management. It's not enough to manage people: you have to learn how to do it effectively and efficiently if you want measurable, repeatable results."

So, here is my answer to Wertheim's challenge: My **Top 10 Success Strategies for Managers**. These strategies were learned as a result of: Being an executive of nonprofits for 25 years; from coaching and training leading executives to be at the top of their game; and from the leaders in the management field.

1. Zip Your Lips

If you do nothing else on this list but *zip your lips*, you will be miles ahead. *But, you are in a management position, which means you should have the answers when your staff comes to you with their thorny problems, right?* Wrong. The most important thing you can do when people come to you is LISTEN! Hold back from making helpful suggestions, from sharing your own experiences or telling them your tried and true way of handling that situation. *Why not?* Because what works for you, *won't* necessarily work for them. And I will tell you a really, neat little trick that works *every* time (no lie) and that is: if you listen long enough they will come up with their own amazing way to handle the situation, that *will* work for them! The reason why this works is this: When people are listened to deeply and appreciatively, they are able to think. I learned this from Nancy Kline's excellent book, [Time to Think](#).

2. Give It Away

So many managers I coach are reluctant to delegate. Don't be! Delegating to your staff is one of the most empowering things you can do. (And you want empowered staff, don't you?) *But it will take me twice as long for me to teach them how to do it, I might as well do it myself.* Oh, if I only had ten bucks for every time I heard that, I would be rich now. I know that you have heard this Chinese proverb: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Well, it is true. Spend the time it takes to teach someone a task, they will be empowered and you will be freed of it for the rest of your time.

3. Meet, Meet, Meet

Do you have a regularly, weekly scheduled supervision time with all your staff? Yes, you heard right: regularly, weekly and scheduled! *But I meet with my staff all the time!* I don't care. Regular. Weekly. Scheduled. And I mean it! You need to be connecting with your staff, developing relationships with them and that takes diligence. When the, you know what hits the fan, you will be glad you did, because you will have a relationship of trust and understanding that allows you and your staff to be nimble and effective. *But I don't have time for all those meetings!* Guess what? Those meetings will save you time. Instead of staff running in to you every two seconds, they can be redirected to your meeting time. All you have to say is, "That is a really great question, let's put that on the agenda for our meeting later in the week." (And here is the secret about that, 9 times out of 10, by the time your meeting time comes along, they will have already solved it. Now that *is* empowerment!)

4. Ask, Don't Tell

OK, I know you have a lot of experience and expertise. That's why you are in the manager's job. But the funny thing is that you get your manager's job for your experience and expertise, but that experience and expertise doesn't really make you a good manager. It's true in a lot of professions, not just management. I got my university teaching job because of my expertise in my subject area, but does that make me a good teacher? Nope. Not one bit. As a manager, you will be better off if you don't tell folks all you know. You need to ask them: "What do you think?" And here's the thing about that, work all of a sudden gets a lot more fun. Guaranteed. What will happen is that your staff will come up with a way of handling something that you never did before and would never have thought of. That will spark something in you that you didn't even know was there. Next thing you know, your staff will be doing something great, everyone is excited, and guess what? You get the credit for supporting such brilliant staff!

5. Don't Let 'Em Push Your Buttons

I am lucky because thanks to my introverted personality I don't (usually) show what I think on my face. (If I could only learn not to roll my eyes!) Everyone gets annoyed or irritated at some point in the workplace and it is really good not to show it. Then, it is important to learn not to go into fight or flight mode. When you are in a tense situation

you reflexively go fight or flight and that is a problem because you can't think clearly and you *will* make mistakes. Relly Nadler, an expert in Emotional Intelligence and author of [The Leader's Playbook](#), has a little tool called the Emotional Audit. It is nifty and it works. Here are the five simple questions to ask yourself to prevent what he calls an "amygdala hijack":

- What am I thinking?
- What am I feeling?
- What do I do now?
- How am I getting in my way?
- What do I need to do differently?

(And if you want some business size cards with the Emotional Audit on them to carry with you and keep at your desk for quick reference I will send you some for free—just go to the [store on the Dr. Lynn K. Jones website](#) .)

6. Love 'Em or They'll Leave Ya

It really is true that you have to appreciate and thank the people that you work with. One thing I have learned as a coach is how much more you need to appreciate and thank people than you think should be necessary (or that you have time for!) It is unfortunate that we are not wired to hear the positives, but we sure do pick up on any hint of the negative. So, despite the fact that you feel that you have been appreciative and generous with your thanks, you probably need to still amp it up and hit them with more thanks and from more directions. Try: public and private appreciation, in writing as a note, and as an email with people that are important to them copied. After all that, maybe (and it still is a maybe!) they will believe it. This is nothing to *only* do when you have extra time--this is something that *needs* to be a priority. Sharon Jordan has lots of fabulous ideas in her book [Love 'Em or Lose 'Em](#) about how to make appreciation part of the culture of your organization.

7. Context is King

This is so simple, but believe it or not, many people make the mistake of not doing it: When you make a decision, always make sure that you explain clearly what the context and the reason for the decision is. It doesn't matter how straightforward (and obvious) you think the decision is, you still need to explain it. *Oh, common on, I have to explain that?* Yes, you do. The reason is that when we are so immersed in our jobs and thinking about it as much as we do, our brains starts taking shortcuts. Our brains make fast connections for us to save time. So, what seems obvious to you may not be obvious at all to others who haven't been working on these ideas the way you have. You have to connect the dots for them. You'll be glad you did. People really appreciate being clued in and getting the big picture. Don't we all?

8. Attitude of Gratitude

Taylor Reaume, CEO and founder of the [Search Engine Pros](#) says that the most important principle of his highly successful search engine optimization business is to

have an “attitude of gratitude.” He is pretty darn smart for a young guy and it turns out the research backs him up on this. When you cultivate an attitude of gratitude, and Taylor *really does* do this, you and your staff will have a lot more fun and you will be surprised how many things will come your way without you even having to ask for them! Taylor has a free weekly seminar for anyone that wants to come about search engine optimization. I participated in his seminar and I know how I feel about Taylor’s generosity and of his willingness to give freely his trade secrets that most people pay big bucks for. And because of his generosity I happily promote Taylor. (Look at the promotion he is getting here without even knowing about it!) How can you connect with your clients, donors and staff the way Taylor does with his customers with an attitude of gratitude?

9. Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time

I have been a nonprofit executive and I know that the mantra is to do more with less and that there never is enough time. Well, since it is a given that there is not enough time, then you need to work smarter, not harder and an easy way to do that is to manage your energy, not your time. Pay attention to your circadian rhythms for a week or so and jot down when during the day you have the most energy and when you don’t. *Are you a morning person?* If you are, then you want to schedule your most challenging tasks, the tasks that require the most thinking and attention to detail, then. *Not a morning person?* Then schedule lighter stuff, like sifting through your email, and save the heavy lifting for when you are at the top of your circadian game. If you are like a lot of people, you hit a wall between 3pm and 4pm. When that happens, schedule something light or even better yet, do number 10 on this list and take a break!

10. Take a Break Today and Do More With Less

The Harvard Happiness guy, Shawn Achor has written a great book called [*The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work*](#). He tells a story in this book about how he learned the hard way that you can’t just keep working harder and harder to achieve success. The way to achieve success, (which is totally counter to the old Puritan Ethic that we were all raised on) and he proves it through research, is that when you take breaks that you have breakthroughs. Your work makes quantum leaps and you actually have not worked nearly as hard. So when you feel that you are really in a grind, figure out a way to take a break, maybe even a vacation, and while you are at it make it an unconnected (as in no email and no cell phone, *shudder!*) vacation.

You’ve got your 10 Success Strategies that Wertheim said you should have. Want some help implementing them? I would love to talk to you about how I can coach you to become the manager that you want to be by implementing these success strategies. Call me for a complimentary session or [Schedule a Session](#) here on my online calendar.

Appreciatively,

[Lynn](#)