

9th Edition

**How to
be an**



Even Better Manager

**A complete A-Z
of proven techniques
and essential skills**



Michael Armstrong



NINTH EDITION

How to be an Even Better Manager

A complete
A-Z of proven
techniques and
essential skills

MICHAEL ARMSTRONG



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How to be an Even Better Manager

Foreword to the ninth edition

This ninth edition of *How to be an Even Better Manager* covers 65 key aspects of management and has been extensively revised since the eighth edition was published in 2011. Nine new chapters have been added, dealing with how to be businesslike, how to conduct business model innovation, how to read a balance sheet, how to use financial ratios, how to herd cats, how to assess your own performance, how to be confident, how to be both efficient and effective, and how to network.

The book covers a wide range of the skills and approaches used by effective managers – what they need to understand and be able to do to be fully competent in their roles.

It will be an invaluable handbook for existing and aspiring managers, and will be particularly useful for those seeking to obtain qualifications such as NVQs in management or those studying for the Leading, Managing and Developing and Developing Skills for Business Leadership modules of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development qualification scheme.

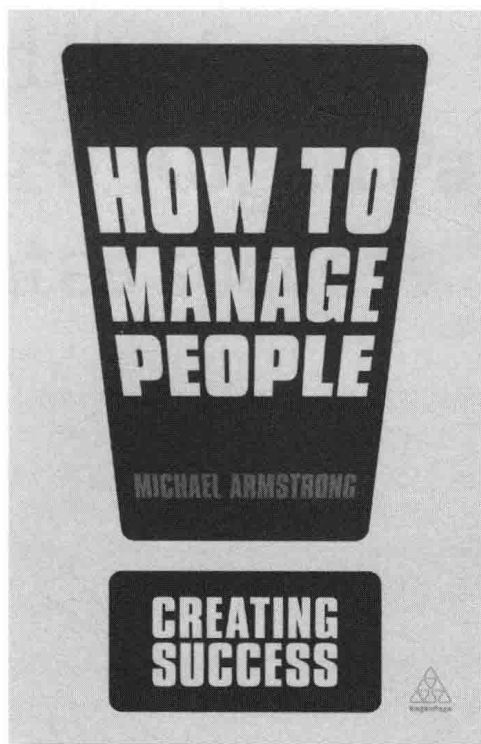
Preface

How to use this book

This book is for those who want to develop their managerial skills and competences. It covers all the key skills that managers use, and refers to the main aspects of managing people, activities and themselves with which they need to be familiar.

You can dip into this book at any point – each chapter is self-contained. But it would be useful to read Chapter 1 first. This defines the overall concept of management and the areas in which managers need to be competent, thus providing a framework for the succeeding chapters, which deal with the specific skills and techniques involved in managing people and processes.

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Introduction

Chapter One

How to be a better manager

Better managers recognize that the art of management is something they need to learn. No one becomes a fully competent manager overnight. There are, of course, many ways of learning how to be an effective manager. There is no doubt that experience is the best teacher – the time you have spent as a manager or team leader and your analysis of how good managers you come across operate. You can learn from your own boss and from other bosses. This means accepting what you recognize as effective behaviour and rejecting what is inappropriate – that is, behaviour that fails to provide the leadership and motivation required from good managers and that does not deliver results. There is an old saying: ‘People learn to manage by managing under the guidance of a good manager.’ This is just as true today, but to make the best use of experience it is helpful to place it in a framework that defines your understanding of what management is about, and helps you to reflect on and analyse your own experience and the behaviour of others. There is also a wealth of knowledge about the skills that managers need to use and the aspects of managing people, activities and themselves that they need to understand. None of these skills provides a quick fix that is universally applicable. It is useful to know about them, but it is also necessary to develop an understanding of how they are best applied and modified to meet the particular demands of the situation in which you find yourself. This is not a prescriptive book – ‘Do this and all will be well’ – rather, its aim is to present approaches that have been proved to be generally effective.

But they have to be adapted to suit your own style of managing and the circumstances where their application is required.

To become a better manager it is necessary to develop each of the 64 areas of skills and knowledge covered by this handbook.

However, you will be better prepared to do this if you have a general understanding of the process of management. This will provide a framework into which you can fit the various approaches and techniques described in each chapter. The aim of this introductory chapter is to provide such a framework under the following headings:

- what management is about;
- the aims of management;
- the purpose of management and leadership;
- the processes of management;
- managerial roles;
- the distinction between management and leadership;
- the fragmentary nature of managerial work;
- what managers actually do;
- what managers can do about it;
- managerial qualities;
- managerial effectiveness;
- developing managerial effectiveness.

What management is about

Essentially, management is about deciding what to do and then getting it done through people. This definition emphasizes that people are the most important resource available to managers. It is through this resource that all other resources – processes and systems knowledge, finance, materials, plant, equipment, etc – will be managed.

However, managers are there to achieve results. To do this they have to deal with events and eventualities. They may do this primarily through people, but an overemphasis on the people content of management diverts attention from the fact that in managing events managers have to be personally involved. They manage themselves as well as other people. They cannot delegate everything. They

frequently have to rely on their own resources to get things done. These resources consist of experience, know-how, skill, competences and time, all of which have to be deployed not only in directing and motivating people, but also in understanding situations and issues, problem analysis and definition, decision-making and taking direct action themselves as well as through other people. They will get support, advice and assistance from their staff, but in the last analysis they are on their own. They have to make the decisions and they have to initiate and sometimes take the action. A chairman fighting a takeover bid will get lots of advice, but he or she will personally manage the crisis, talking directly to the financial institutions, merchant banks, financial analysts, City editors and the mass of shareholders.

The basic definition of management should therefore be extended to read ‘deciding what to do and then getting it done through the effective use of resources’. The most important part of management will indeed be getting things done through people, but managers will be concerned directly or indirectly with all other resources, including their own.

The aims of management

Management is a process that exists to get results by making the best use of the human, financial and material resources available to the organization and to individual managers. It is very much concerned with adding value by the use of these resources, and this added value depends on the expertise and commitment of the people who are responsible for managing the business.

The purpose of management and leadership

The Management Standards Centre stated that the key purpose of management and leadership is to ‘provide direction, facilitate change and achieve results through the efficient, creative and responsible use of resources’. These purposes were analysed as follows: