

MTD Quick Tips

Help! I Am Managing People Older Than Myself

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Help! I Am Managing People Older Than Myself

I got asked such a great question last week when delivering a management course that I just had to tell you about my reply!

The manager was called James and he asked me for tips on how to manage "older" members of staff.

James was only 22 years of age and now had to manage and lead people in their 30's, 40's and 50's.

He was a little daunted by it all due to the fact that he was still a little wet behind the ears and now had to command the respect of people twice his age!

Here are my thoughts on this.

There is a fine line between success and failure when a younger person is put in charge of older members of staff with more experience.

It's a delicate challenge but if you have a plan of action you will come up smelling of roses!

Here are my top tips:

Establish the ground rules right away

If you have just been appointed the manager of an experienced team, hold a team meeting right away to discuss the way forward.

Mention that you are going to rely on them because of their knowledge and experience etc.

Discuss roles and responsibilities and make sure it is a two-way process.

Negative people

If you prove yourself to be a good, supportive manager who truly does value their input and feedback, even the most negative of workers will eventually come around. They may even be your strongest supporters in time.

Involve your team

Make it a habit to ask for the input of your experienced co-workers, and acknowledging their contributions. They will contribute generously and help you accomplish great things.

Effective one-to-ones

Hold meetings with each team member on their own. Discuss what they bring to the table and also what you will bring to the table.

Be open and honest.

Act confidently

Make sure that the sharks do not sense blood!

Even if you are shaking inside, make sure that you look and act confidently.

Your first impression

The way that you handle yourself when you first meet your older team members will make or break your relationship with them.

Pay particular attention to this.

In summary:

My first ever managerial role was when I was 21. I was working for Barclays Telephone Banking as a Team Leader.

I was on the 3:00pm - 11:00pm shift with 20 team members to look after.

Because of the shift, most of my team were part-time mothers aged 30+. In-fact the youngest person on my team was 36 and the oldest was 58!

And here was me, just 21!

I made a conscious effort to look the part and act confidently with my first encounter with them.

I remember talking to them all together and then I spent 30 minutes on my own with each of them to get to know them better. They soon knew that I was not there to make their life harder or to be the "BIG I AM" with them. They knew that I was there to make their time at work easier and to sort out any of the crap they were constantly facing.

As soon as I started to get results for them on day 2, they knew that I was true to my word and my credibility shot up.

Think about what they need and then help them achieve it. All of my team were very experienced members of staff. What they needed help with was being made to feel like that they were part of the company instead of feeling like second class citizens because of the hours that they worked.

So this is what I worked on straight away.

I hope this helps you too?

Live, love and laugh

Sean

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About Sean McPheat



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Founder and MD of international management development firm MTD Training, Sean McPheat is widely regarded as a leading authority on modern day management and leadership.

Sean is a bestselling author, and has been recognised for his own business building skills through the **British Business Awards** and has been featured in the **Who's Who Of Britain's Business Elite**.

He has been a regular judge for the UK's Young Enterprise Programme but was not as horrible as Simon Cowell (well almost!)



Sean has been featured on **CNN International, the BBC, SKY, ITV, The Guardian, Forbes, Arena Magazine, Marketing Weekly, Business Zone, Winning Edge** and radio stations such as BBC WM and LBC (London's Big Conversation).

Sean has over **250 media credits** to his name and his weekly email tips go out to over **60,000 people** interested in management and development strategies.

Sean is also a **much sought after media figure and motivational speaker** on all topics related to management, HR, business improvement and entrepreneurialism.