

The logo for CAPE, with 'C' in teal, 'A' in orange, 'P' in teal, and 'E' in teal. The background features abstract shapes in dark teal and navy blue.

CAPE

People Management what it's really like.

An honest and eye-opening journey into how it feels to become a people manager and what really helps managers and their teams to thrive.

Foreword

“Real-life experiences”

The concept of leadership training at the point in your career when you need it most, has largely been missed. There's been a gap in the market. Individuals that are on a leadership

runway are doing so by nature of their talent – the best investment a business can make is in its people – particularly at such a significant point in their career. This report highlights how important it is for employers to back their talent to be the best they can be by developing their leadership style through a structured and conscious focus.

The report highlights their challenges and its recommendations offer a solution to emerging leaders.

What's most interesting about this report is that it's backed up by research which draws on the experience of those that have gone through the journey highlighting their challenges and fears. It addresses what we all know about the first steps into management, but all too often overlook.

Holly Shiel-Redfern, Commercial Director at Explain Market Research

The passion for helping people to thrive in their new management roles shines through, in both the research the authors of this report have undertaken and the analysis of the responses.

Paul Leighton, Finance & Shared Services Director, Univar Solutions

A successful business starts with your people, if you can inspire and motivate your people, they'll look after your customers and the financials follow. We shouldn't underestimate

how daunting and lonely it can be if you are new people manager, or if you don't feel that you've got the skills or experience to build a successful team. If we want to create successful businesses we need to help and support our people with this journey and equip them to be successful.

The report that Naomi and Lynsey have produced really builds the foundations for success by helping develop

and empower brilliant people managers.

Andy Cumming, European Managing Director at InSites Consulting

Being part of this research gave me a valuable opportunity to reflect on my time as a first-time manager and as an experienced manager. I truly believe a blended mix of on-the-job learning, mentoring, coaching and learning from peers enables new managers to develop their management skills and self-belief to become an authentic and effective manager and in turn watch their new managers grow and develop.

Sarah Muirhead, Strategic & Operations Manager, Not for Profit Sector

The importance of training and supporting people managers cannot be underestimated. Employees look towards their managers as the fountain of all knowledge both on a professional and personal level so its essential that they are equipped with handling everything that comes their way. Many businesses, especially SMEs, don't have the resources, time or knowledge to properly train their new managers and it's simply a case they are left to learn by trial and error which is never the best way. Invest in your people at all levels - happy and engaged employees create an enjoyable and productive culture which is ultimately driven by managers.

Ashley Olliver, Director & Co-Founder at Compass Contracting & Employment

It was great to be asked to reflect on my time as a people manager, and after nearly 20 years of managing people, it is still clear how difficult the first step in managing another human's time and career can be. This report shows that I am not alone in the difficulties faced making the step up from being technically competent to the world of juggling managing my role, other people's role and also their personal development and day to day issues. Plus, this report provides great insight in how to make that transition from "colleague" to "boss", which can be both odd and daunting as well as exciting and fulfilling.

Jonathan Solomon, Marketing Director at UK Flooring Direct

Being a manager of people is perhaps the most challenging thing I have ever done. I am still looking at ways to become a better people manager, calling upon colleagues and peers for advice, direction and guidance. My early career was shaped by some inspirational managers and leaders and I am looking to impart similar skills and insight to those I am fortunate enough to be working with as I start to reach the latter end of my career. Time (or more pertinently, the lack of it) is often the reason for not to managing, supporting and guiding colleagues properly - but unless we embrace it then we are failing in our professional and moral duty to support others. It really is that simple.

Simon de Vere, Director Strategic Real Estate Consultancy at Stantec UK Ltd

This is a must-read report for HR and Organisation Development practitioners or anyone who is a leader of managers. Promoting people into management roles because of their technical competency has traditionally been the pathway to leadership - but we can and must forge a better way to support managers in order to accelerate people and business performance.

Debbie O'Brien, Head of Internal Communications at Ervia

This report draws together the real-life experiences, learning and knowledge from a range of people managers. The research had no agenda, it was aimed at capturing the honest views and opinions of first-time management experiences in order to identify the key behaviours, approaches and support and guidance mechanisms that are required to be a successful people manager.

The feedback shows that no matter what age, sector or type of organisation you manage people within, there are some very similar key aspects which will shape an individual's approach, and potential success or failure, as a people manager.

Ashley Innis, Major Projects Development Manager, Birmingham City Council

The CAPE report focuses on key factors that contribute to early-career success in people management, as well as those that will serve individuals well as they progress to more senior leadership roles. I look forward to seeing the CAPE programme evolve!

Dr Kim Aitken, AdvDipCoach, MAC

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About the authors and the research

Why being a people manager matters.

Naomi and Lynsey met over fifteen years ago when working in corporate roles, they are now career and leadership coaches passionate about helping people reach their potential and be fulfilled at work. They both experienced self-belief impacting challenges when they became people managers for the first time many years ago. At a stage and for varying periods afterwards, these experiences had a whole range of impacts on how they viewed themselves in their roles. These experiences contributed to the reason that they both became coaches and felt drawn to better understand and help others in management and leadership development.

Based on this personal experience and the insights shared by their clients, they believe that one of the most significant career steps for people is the move to being a first-time people manager. These early experiences often shape how we progress in our career, our self-confidence and the type of manager we become. This in turn influences how successful we are at work and in turn the success of the businesses we work for.

In the Summer of 2020 Naomi and Lynsey explored the impact that people managers have by reviewing existing research. They also set out to undertake their own primary research by interviewing over 30 managers across different

sectors, industries, and sized businesses. The purpose of this research was to find out what it really feels like to be a people manager and what really helped those managers to thrive.

What they found was an eye-opening account into the feelings, facts and impact that managing people for the first time had on the interviewees which Naomi and Lynsey share in this report. To allow for depth of honesty the quotes shared in this report have been anonymised. The stories they heard were so consistent and

conclusive they wanted to take this a step further and develop a solution – a programme that focuses on supporting people managers – CAPE.

“ **These early experiences often shape how we progress in our career, our self-confidence and the type of manager we become.** ”

Naomi Regan PCC

Naomi is a performance driven coach and facilitator. She draws on her 15 years of commercial and leadership experience and her natural energy and creativity to develop bespoke ways to support individuals and teams. She is particularly passionate about bringing a focus to increasing self-awareness, self-belief and in turn performance.

She has designed and delivered tailored and interactive learning for a significant number of clients across a range of industries and sectors and has coached individuals across all levels (from Board members, to senior, new and emerging leaders, to graduates) within the public and private sector and within several charities.



She believes that some of the key ingredients of great managers and leaders are authenticity, creativity, and most of all curiosity. She works with individuals and organisations to develop these. Naomi holds a PCC accreditation with the International Coaching Federation.

Lynsey Kitching MRICS

Lynsey Kitching is an accredited coach and facilitator with a passion for human centred leadership. Specialist areas include leadership development, engagement and communication, personal brand, developing a confident mindset and creating effective teams.

With over twenty years' commercial experience in leadership and management roles across corporate property, communications, change management and business strategy, Lynsey has first-hand experience of real business challenges. This translates into an outcome focused coaching approach that supports clients in adding value for their organisations and building successful careers for themselves.



Lynsey works across all levels and sectors providing career, outplacement, and leadership coaching. She runs workshops on developing effective business relationships and is a volunteer coach for an employability charity. Lynsey has a Post Graduate Diploma in Organisational Leadership from Oxford University, is a Chartered Surveyor and a member of the International Coaching Federation.

What impact do managers have on business performance?

Managers make a difference in nearly every aspect of business success.

Gallup (2020) research shows that the quality of a manager accounts for 70% of the variance in team engagement. A 2017 Gallup poll of over 1 million US workers found that the number one reason why people leave their job is due to a 'bad boss' or immediate supervisor (75% of people).

Businesses recognise the impact that people managers have on performance which would explain why billions of pounds are spent on manager development each year across the globe. However, much management training fails to prepare people and provide them with what they need, 77% of what is learnt is forgotten 6 days after leaving the classroom (Gallup 2019). Most manager training is

still delivered by focusing on building knowledge through online or face to face training.

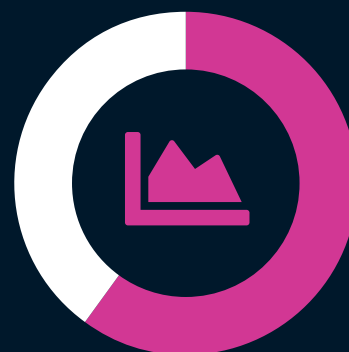
Over the past 18 months during the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen those managing others take on new and significant challenges such as managing people remotely, dealing with changing customer demands and rising mental health concerns. Unprepared and ineffective managers can experience burnout themselves and contribute directly to the burnout of their employees.

For an experienced manager, this complexity is challenging, for those at the start of the transition to managing people it can seem completely

“ If you don't have a good manager, you are going to struggle to find your way



75%
of people leave their job due to a bad boss



60%
of managers underperform in their first 2 years

overwhelming. This shows in some astonishing performance statistics - roughly 60% of managers underperform in their first two years (Forbes, 2018). It's not surprising then that in a recent CIPD HR Outlook survey 53% of leaders said that their managers performance management skills were ineffective.

With only 40% of people having any people management training and for SMEs (2-249

people) this figure falling to 26% the likelihood of receiving training or that training being effective is not aligned with the significance that managers have in a business.

This was backed up by the research interviews carried out as part of this study with multiple individuals referencing the impact that 'poor' managers had on how able they were to do their jobs, and how engaged they were.

“ There have been multiple occasions over my working career where I can think, I didn't really want to be speaking to that manager because of how they approached me. I didn't really feel that they were fair with how they judged me. They intervened or belittled me a little bit in certain situations where I failed.



40%

of people received people management training



26%

of managers in SMEs have received people management training



How does it feel to become a people manager?

All of our interviewees shared that their experiences of becoming people managers was difficult or challenging.

Not one person said it was easy. In fact, some said it was 'horrendous'.

When asking people to think back to their first time of managing others we found that their memories were often very vivid. They remembered how they felt at this time and can pinpoint key positive and not so positive experiences. What was surprising was the level of honesty they were able to bring to these reflections several years on with one interviewee sharing 'I was an awful first-time manager!'.

We noticed that people often felt very unprepared moving into managing others, the challenges were very different to the ones they were used to being 'one of the team'. They questioned their own abilities as a manager even though they had been very competent in their previous roles. Underpinning a lot of the responses was a 'seed of doubt' in their self-belief. They felt that the people skills we develop with experience were missing at that early stage and it was these that would have been most helpful.

For some their early experiences positively shaped the manager that they are today and the way that they coach their own new managers. For others, the enjoyment of managing people was missing early on and now it might be a necessary part of their job, but not one they relish. One interviewee decided not to progress in people management roles due to their early experiences.



The consistent theme throughout the interviews was the thought of could they really be a good manager when they had never done it before?

Did they have the belief in themselves to do something as significant as having responsibility for managing other people?



What we heard – how it feels to become a people manager?

Feeling like a bit of a fraud. I would hear I was the leader of a team but not necessarily knowing how I was meant to be the leader of the team. Having to put a brave face on things and give them the impression that I knew what I was doing. Because if I didn't and in that environment as well, having been promoted from within, if I then showed any weakness or any sign of not knowing what I was doing, I was going to be immediately ridiculed and undermined.

I was asked if I would join a management training course. I would have been about, probably 26/27, something like that. Hated every minute of it. Because it was role playing and all that sort of stuff. And I had been involved in that type of sort of training before. I was nervous, I didn't want to make a mess of it or look like a fool in front of other people, not realizing that there isn't necessarily any such thing as a right way of doing something.

At 24 I didn't have the life experience and empathy, and the wealth of conversations and experience that you benefit from the older you get. Also, I think the other real problem that I had, was that you tend to be promoted on the basis of being competent your job. And not necessarily in your ability to be a good manager.

The team that I managed, probably at least half of them, had worked in the business longer than I'd been alive, which was quite a challenge. We were going through a process at the time, trying to centralise recruitment. I was met with quite a bit of challenge and pushback, you know, people sort of saying that we've been through this before, and it's just not going to work. I found that quite draining. And, you know, trying to convince people that this was a great idea, and it's what the business wants to do. (I felt people were saying) you're really young, naive, and we've done all of this before. In terms of support. I'm not sure there was an awful lot, except perhaps looking at the template that I had from my manager.

I realised that I was expected to be a manager, but I'd never learned management. So, I thought I'll do a Management Studies diploma. But it was very academic. The challenge I had as a new manager was, I was trying to think, how do I apply what I'm learning? How do I use that? When I'm stood outside of a depot at seven o'clock in the morning waiting for some guy I've never met, and then I'm going to drive around in his van all day and watch how he works and manage him? I couldn't work out how I bridged the two?

I think from talking from my own experience, and people that have worked for me who manage people, I think people tend to struggle with the difference of being liked and the mate versus being a boss.

One day, you're not managing people, and then the next day, they're coming to you for answers. They're coming to you for guidance, and you don't always have those answers. But as soon as you add manager to your title, it's almost like people think you've become this superhuman power, like a superhero that you know the answer to everything and can do everything.

I remember, feeling two things. One was quite excited. I felt that there was recognition, there was obviously a view that I was capable of taking on more and having a team and, that was quite exciting. And I also remember thinking, where do I start? So, I think I then said we need to just sit down and spend some time to get to know each other and agree how we're going to work.

I look back on that situation 12 years ago and look where I am now. I still have that niggling thought in my head, if I hadn't been in that place at that time, would I be where I was? Or did they choose me to do this because they thought, well, actually, there isn't anyone else? But I think the manner in which it was done always leaves you with that little resonating doubt of, really, can I do this? Am I good enough?



The key characteristics of a great people manager.

The interviewees were asked what they believed were the most important qualities that a great people manager should have from their experience.

The responses we received were varied. Some people were clear that there were one or two non-negotiable characteristics. For others, the list was longer, and all of the elements needed to be there for a manager to truly be effective. There were 8 characteristics that were mentioned most frequently as shown in Fig 1. with Empathy being listed as key by nearly half of the interviewees.

What we noticed from the responses was that seven out of the top eight characteristics were those often referred to as 'softer skills' or human qualities. There's very little mention of technical management skills or being able to navigate performance management or sickness absences – typically the type of content that's found on management training.

The full list of characteristics mentioned was extensive as shown in Fig. 2, with the combination of qualities and importance varying between interviewees.

When reflecting on these findings we recognise that there is quite a high expectation of what a people manager should be like and be able to do. For a new people manager, potentially this could feel overwhelming and something that could not be achieved in a short time or without adequate support.

Fig. 1
Top 8 characteristics in order of number of mentions

- > Empathy
- > Effective/open communication
- > Ability to listen.
- > Authenticity
- > Ability to set clear direction/vision.
- > Self-awareness
- > Supportive
- > Organised

Fig. 2
Other characteristics listed

Compassion

Self-belief

How to challenge people

Energy

Integrity

Drive

Build rapport and engage people

Consistency

Resilient

Inclusive

Positive role model

Strategic

Collaborative

Trustworthy

Trusts their instinct

Recognises achievement

Presence

Warmth

Humour

Empowering

Inspirational

Honest

Curious

Innovative

Ability to delegate

Manages conflict

Commercial

Optimistic

Likes people



What we heard – the key characteristics of a manager?

Compassion, empathy or care – understands circumstances, has a recognition of what is important to others and can put themselves in someone else's shoes. Coupled with vision and a drive to do things collectively. I guess one of either of those on their own would leave you probably falling short of where you need to be. If you're just nice and compassionate and caring, it's just not going to be enough. And equally, if you're just about drive and vision and delivery it's not going to be enough – it's a blend of those two 'how do we achieve good things together? And what do you need from me in order to do that?

Inclusive in their leadership style – trying to find the best qualities in everyone. I think a really good people manager or leader of a business or organisation wants to bring the best out of everybody and therefore bring everybody along rather than just championing a select few. Where I've seen that done really well, it's where somebody is really a hearts and minds person and therefore that has an effect on the next layer of managers who have the same style and, and it kind of works its way down, has to be at quite a high level of intuition and instinct of really trusting your own abilities.

Ability to organise what they want as the outcome but be able to enable the team to deliver the specific outputs that get you there – giving people the opportunity to think for themselves and then in turn them taking more ownership for the outputs.

Open, good communicators, organised, because you've got to be able to balance deliverables and people management and make time for it. Also being willing to seek advice, so if you're not sure how to handle a situation not just being kind of blinkered and single minded and thinking that you know the right answer, because actually, it can be quite useful to get input from other people. And being somebody that people trust, as well so that people can tell you things and know it will remain confidential.

A manager that listens to your opinions, your point of view, someone who doesn't act on impulse. Someone who is approachable. I've had a lot of experiences where you don't knock on that person's door, unless it's a real necessity. I think you should be able to approach any manager within a business and be able to openly talk to them about whatever problems or issues you've got, whether it's something trivial, or something, that's a pressing issue.

Honest, with themselves and with others. Energetic, and it feels unfair, because for some people the energy comes naturally, other people have to work at it. But we all look to our leaders and our managers to bring energy to the table. Clarity of purpose. Knowing what they're trying to achieve and being able to consistently pass that message on to their teams.

High EQ – at least empathy, if not sympathy and degree of compassion, willingness to support and look after their staff, not always putting themselves first. Managers that are willing to manage conflict. And also, to think about their own development, to make sure that they've got someone to talk to, and to make sure that they put time aside for their own development.

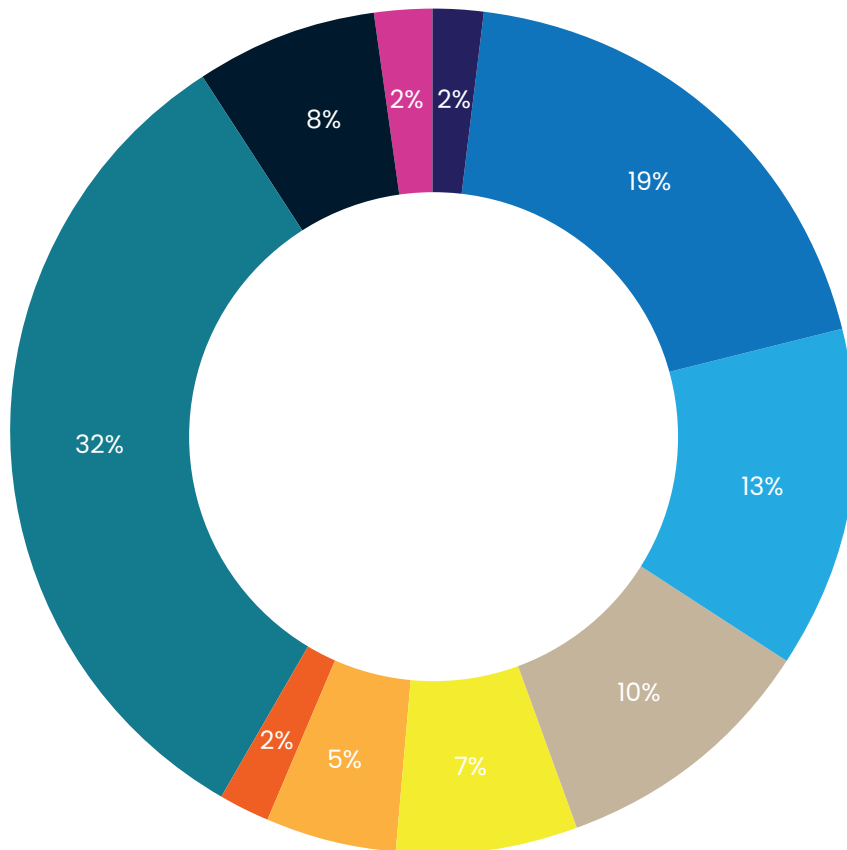
Authentic. What I mean by that is somebody who is true to themselves, and they're honest, so you know where you stand with them. And someone that's forward thinking, so that they push you outside your comfort zone, and offer different solutions. Consistent active listener, can give constructive criticism and organized, effective communicator, leads by example.

If you want to be an effective person manager, you've got to get delegation right. Being good at your job gives you that technical edge, so you can review people's work critically. But then, how do you coach, how you get that person to improve from where they are? Now, that's a different skill to just being good at your job. Being a people manager is different. Often, I think organisations just pick people because they're good at that job. And they're not the same thing. Just because you're good footballer, doesn't mean you'll make a good football manager.



What really helps managers thrive?

One of the most important areas we discussed with the interviewees was, given all of the challenges that managing people brings, what do they believe had the most impact in helping them build their capability and self-belief.



- A** Support from others
- A** On the job learning/experience/shadowing
- A** Role Models in the business
- A** Learning with peers at similar stage
- A** Management/leadership development programmes
- A** Understanding personality types
- A** Seeing people succeed
- A** Coaching & Mentoring
- A** Space outside the business/external network
- A** Team building exercises

In our initial research and based on the experiences of many of our clients we found that the traditional classroom-based interventions didn't go far enough in equipping them to be confident managers. Not surprising then that only 7% of the responses in this research identified development programmes as key to helping managers thrive.

32% of responses cited learning from coaching and mentoring as important.

Interestingly no one mentioned learning from management books or online learning programmes.

The intervention with the largest response was coaching and mentoring being cited in nearly a third of all responses. Followed by learning on the job mentioned in 19% of responses. Learning from role models – either those positive or less favourable behaviours were cited in 13% of the responses. Learning with peers at a similar stage and having a space external to the business to learn were also important for our interviewees.

Many interviewees listed a combination of interventions would be most effective and that one of these things alone would not be enough. Many responses also mentioned that providing the right resources and support needs to happen over a longer period of time rather than just a single point.



What we heard – what helps managers thrive?

The practice of doing and learning through doing, but in a conscious way. So consciously doing rather than just flailing around and having a go at things. Consciously choosing and operating and reflecting.

Understanding personality types, it sort of equips you with a bit of understanding as to how you could best respond to the different personality clashes. And that's actually been the most helpful thing of all the training that I've done. Because it just helps with the insight into what people might be thinking. I think that the understanding challenges, how you apply this in different situations and how people respond is extremely important.

Brilliant bosses, having good managers, having someone to model what good looks like and feels like. And personally, I learnt my management style early on from managers that I was inspired by. I've learnt the most from the people that have demonstrated to me, how to manage well. And what that means for me is that I've had someone early on who gave autonomy, and trusted me, always clear in expectation, and was open and available to have honest conversations.

I think it's shared experiences. It's mentoring, with key people within the organisations I've worked with, and that isn't necessarily them finding me or a formal process in place, it's about asking for it, recognizing the value around it. I think a lot of organizations talk about it..... but aren't actually doing it for everyone.

Space away from the business, different tone to inhouse management, supportive and coaching style.

Magic wand answer - give each one of them access to a coach, and not just the next three months, and not just the one hour a month, that's not useful. I would be giving them whatever they need in terms of access to a coach. I would also make sure they are properly mentored. I would look at making sure they've got that broader support network, external connections, internal counterparts that have been through that transition and know what it's like, Junior members of staff that they can bounce ideas off each other with impunity.

I guess my own personal development journey has been really key. Understanding what's important to me, my values absolutely fundamental. Knowing the kind of person that I am, and why I am that way, my likes, and dislikes, you know, has helped me understand actually more about the team of support I need around me. So, I can be a good manager. And in earlier roles, I had no support. And that wasn't necessarily about training, you know, there's an element of practical training that you're given. But then there's just how to engage with people. And I had none of that. So, as I went on a personal development journey, and through my own coaching and things like that, I then started to think about the network of support that I had.

I think what influences you is who you have as a line manager, I've had some really good line managers, and I've had some really difficult line managers. Working in different organizations, you get a different perspective again. The size of the organization, is really pertinent to that as well.

I'm not sure you need to spend a lot of money on these things. Personally, I think what you need to be able to do is almost get them out there doing the day job or getting to appreciate the day job is going to be different. Give them the space and the time, the support, where they can learn the skills that are going to need. Identifying a sort of gap analysis of what some people might need.



What do experienced managers know now that they wished they knew then?

Looking back enabled our interviewees to have some perspective – ten, fifteen or more years later.

They have seen other people experience first-time people management over these years too. We asked them 'knowing what you know now, what advice would you give yourself at that point of when you first started managing people?'

There were four key areas that emerged from the research;

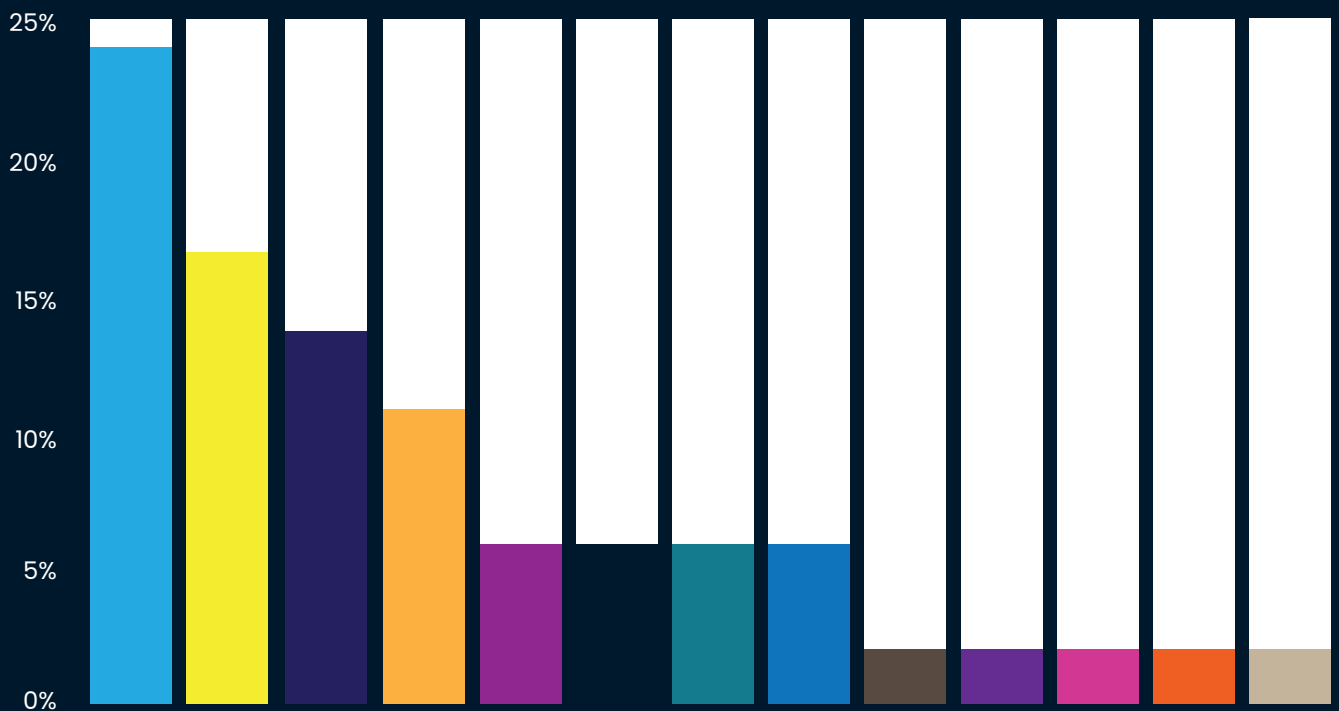
Trust in your own abilities, go with your instinct and don't doubt yourself.

Take time to build relationships with the people you manage.

Be genuine, be authentic to yourself and develop your own style.

Don't be afraid to ask for support, feedback, and development.

Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give yourself at that point of when you first started managing people?



- A** Trust yourself/instinct/don't doubt yourself
- A** Take time to build relationships
- A** Be yourself/authentic
- A** Ask for support/feedback
- A** Don't worry about getting it wrong
- A** Give people ownership
- A** Think about your own resilience
- A** Don't take things personally
- A** You don't need to know everything
- A** Find work you love
- A** Take time to communicate well
- A** Take others careers seriously
- A** Listen more



What we heard – what advice would you give yourself now for when you first managed people?

I think authenticity – be yourself, don't try to be somebody else, bring your own ideas, because you're naturally going to have your own ideas. And to feel that your own ideas are okay. It's okay to break the mould.

Take the time to build relationships in your team, and by doing so your team works more effectively.

Don't be afraid to ask for support as part of your development plan – it's not a weakness to identify areas for improvement.

Take the careers of the people around you more seriously. We're so self-focused in our early 20s. And that lack of empathy, I think, makes you poor manager. I wish I took other people's careers as seriously as my own.

I think it probably would be don't worry about getting it wrong. Which sounds a bit silly, because you don't really want to ever get something wrong when you're managing a person. But the reality is, we're all human. And actually, you are going to get it wrong. So just don't worry about it. Build the relationship that allows you not to worry about getting it wrong.

I think it would be about having a bit more self-belief, and not thinking that I had to necessarily fit a mould. But think a bit more how I could have some real confidence in and belief in myself. And rather than worry too much about what I thought other people might expect of me.

It's not all about you. If something doesn't work, it's not necessarily your fault.

I think it would be just to give people a whole thing to do. I think it's ownership.... I've been in roles before where you've only got a little bit. And you've been given the scraps whereas I think if you want to be valued, you want to deliver the whole thing.

I wish I really had some guidance around resilience when I was just starting out, because what do you do when you feel you've been stretched too far. And it's how you handle it that counts. As your career develops, you're constantly being pushed harder and how far you go, in some ways is determined by how much you can cope with.

Just listen more, not talk more....
Because you'll learn. I think that would have helped me, as a young people manager, going into an organisation with no support, you feel to manage people that's telling people what to do, isn't it? You know, what to do? Actually, no, it's not. It's completely the opposite. And I had no guidance, no direction.

You're in the role because you're capable of doing the role, not just because you happened to be there at the time.

I would just say that it would be go with your instincts. I think the problem is when you're younger, and you're less experienced you doubt yourself a lot.



The fundamentals to being a fulfilled, effective people manager.

People manager's impact on a business and their teams is generally undervalued. The methods used to transition people into their new roles is often ineffective, if any support is provided at all.

Early Experiences


The experiences of people at this stage often impact not only their own career fulfilment but those of the people they manage. It can feel like as soon as 'manager' is added to your job title there is an expectation that you have all the answers. But in reality, you may feel like a bit of a fraud. There is a seed of doubt inside most people managing others. If this isn't tackled it can grow. The key to being a happy, healthy, and confident manager is developing self-belief.

The transition to managing other people is a career defining moment which people clearly remember many years on. It can positively or negatively shape their career going forward. With

statistics showing that 60% of new managers underperform in their first two years this is also a time where there is a big impact on business productivity.

Here are a couple of quotes from our interviewees that capture the essence of what we heard.

“ We have such a responsibility in terms of early on in an individual's career - this is the stuff that we can positively give them, some experiences to help them develop, or later on in their career they're just going to have to negatively deal with the consequences of that.



“ If you take the analogy of a plant or a flower. If that plant is not doing very well, it’s not growing, you don’t micromanage it, you don’t shout at it, what you try and do is to change its environment in order to let it bloom, and I think that’s the way sometimes that we need to be thinking, how do we change the environment around people to let them succeed.

What really makes a great people manager?

The priority characteristics of a great people manager are those which are often referred to and perceived as ‘softer’ skills; empathy, open communication, listening, authenticity, self-aware, supportive, and organised. How does a person acquire these qualities early in their management career with limited experience – not forgetting the thirty plus other qualities identified by the interviewees. Is this an unrealistic expectation – especially if support is inadequate or there is none at all? Or are these characteristics part of what makes us human, what we all have the ability to access, use and develop. However due to lack of self-belief, self-confidence or outside influences new managers feel like they should be someone else. They feel they should be the manager that knows every aspect of their team’s jobs, can not show vulnerability or can not be their authentic selves.

What helps managers thrive?

We heard that traditional management training is not the effective way to develop people managers. On the job learning, role models, mentoring, coaching, learning with peers and an external network were those interventions cited as really making a difference in a manager's development.

This is reinforced by external research on the disadvantages of classroom knowledge-based learning or a 'one and done' type approach.

Recommendations



Support the transition

The transition to people manager and the impact on the business should not be underestimated. It is the interest of the business and the individual to provide the right support at this stage.



Develop human qualities

The key areas that people managers need to develop are not technical or procedural skills. They are the human skills that enable people to listen, understand, connect combined with the ability to support people and organise them to clear outcomes.



Provide the right resources

Classroom, knowledge-based training isn't enough. Support needs to be for a longer duration of on the job learning with a peer network, mentoring, coaching and positive role models.



Enabling self-belief is the key to unlocking capability

The key to enabling effective people managers is to help them develop self-belief early on. Through creating an environment where they can develop their own authentic management style, be provided with support and feedback, and coached on how to understand people and build relationships.

For more information on the report findings or if you're interested in how CAPE can help your people managers, please contact info@wearyourcape.co.uk.

For more information, please visit www.wearyourcape.co.uk

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