

Dear Dr. Mazie,

I was recently promoted to a Right of Way Manager position and want to continue being successful and advance in my career. My current manager has set a good example, but I've also had managers who were ineffective, disliked by their staff, and taught me what not to do. Do you have any tips to help me become an effective manager?



– Joanna in Wyoming

Congratulations on the promotion and even greater kudos for consciously thinking about what it takes to be a good manager. Thinking about it and wanting to do your job right is the first step.

A good manager motivates their people to seek excellence in their work, while helping them learn from their mistakes. When a manager holds themselves to their own high standard, they earn respect as a true team leader. To help clarify the differences in management styles, let's review the most common types.

THE CONTROL FREAK: holds tightly to everything that is going on and doesn't want others making decisions, no matter how small or innocuous, without first consulting them. They often withhold information, assign you to work on a task, but then not tell you everything you need to know to complete it. ***Control Freaks will never:***

- Allow you to make a decision without being involved
- Coach you on handling a problem independently
- Delegate responsibility
- Run into you in the hall and not ask about the status of a project

THE AUTOCRAT: is very self-focused and doesn't care about their employees. They're convinced that they're the only competent person in the company, and no one can do anything to satisfy them. ***Autocrats will never:***

- Admit to making a mistake
- Tell you what a great job you did or that you are appreciated
- Ask how you think a problem should be solved
- Empower you to make appropriate decisions at your level

THE BLAME FIXER: holds everyone else responsible for fixing their problem. They take no responsibility for their employees, department or results. However, this manager is the first to take credit for something that goes well. ***Blame Fixers will never:***

- Actually get something accomplished
- Create an environment of creativity and openness
- Share the credit with their team on a successful project
- Speak up and accept full responsibility for a problem or mistake of one of their employees

THE SOFT HEART: gives the impression that they are the nicest, most wonderful boss in the world. Do not be fooled. This person is actually spineless. They will tell you exactly what you want to hear, then turn around and do the opposite. They will leave you hanging out to dry and will be anything but supportive. ***Soft Hearts will never:***

- Be up front and open with you
- Give you honest and direct feedback
- Align their words with their actions
- Openly confront issues

THE POLITICIAN: is charismatic and fun to be around. They always have something positive to say, but there is rarely any truth or substance behind it. With no real competence, they got where they are by schmoozing the right people. They depend on competent staff to make them look good, and if an employee gets tired of being used, the Politician will turn on them and make them a scapegoat. ***Politicians will never:***

- Be competent at their job
- Tell the whole truth
- Work their way up the ladder by real work
- Not blame others

THE TEAM-BUILDER: is the kind of manager we all want to work for. Competent at what they do, they are open and solicit creative ideas from their employees. A pleasure to work with, they can make tough decisions, and do it in a way that is respectful and professional to all involved. ***Team-Builders will never:***

- Ignore what an employee has to say
- Not keep his word, tell a lie or withhold the truth
- Be disrespectful to an employee
- Take credit for something one of his team members did

While there may be other management styles, these six were taken from some recent research conducted by Resources for Humans. Regardless of the term used to describe the ideal manager, the Team-Builder is by far the most effective.

A nationally recognized speaker, workshop leader and trainer, Dr. Mazie Leftwich, Psy.D has a clinical background in applied psychology with expertise in organizational and personal development. She is Senior Vice President of Contract Land Staff, LLC, where she oversees training and team excellence programs.