7 Strategies for Being a Better Manager

To reach your leadership potential, you need to be a fearless, bold, and effective coach. Aspirational, right? Check out 7 strategies that will help you become the manager your employees (and company) need you to be:

1. **Talk less, listen more**
   We have two ears but only one mouth; great managers should keep that ratio in mind as they help employees grow.

   Instead of talking at employees, use that time to listen. They all have career ambitions they'd like to achieve, but that won't happen if managers are more focused on their points of view. As a manager, you should guide the discussion, but ultimately, it's the employee's voice that needs to be heard.

2. **Play to your (and your team’s) strengths**
   Understanding your own strengths and weaknesses can really change how you coach and give feedback. While you, the manager, might be a great verbal communicator, you'll need to acknowledge when your direct reports may not have the same skills. Tailor your relationship to what enables them to be the most open about their goals; if possible, leverage your learning & development solution to strategically address weaknesses and encourage their personal growth.
Manage teams, not individuals
Performance reviews typically look at individuals, but managers are ultimately responsible for their team’s performance. By identifying individual strengths and skills gaps, you can encourage team members with complementary skills to team up; this promotes teamwork, learning opportunities, and increases the likelihood of project successes.

Accentuate the positive
We all know our professional strengths, but our weaknesses represent our best chance for growth. Celebrate employees’ talents, but also acknowledge areas that need to be developed. By addressing them through training, you may turn a negative into a major strength.

Be inspirational
The most successful companies have one thing in common: they inspire more success by publicly acknowledging employee achievements and talents. Whether an employee earned a new certification or learned a new skill, celebrate this among the team. When team members see their colleagues being rewarded for growing, they’ll take it upon themselves to seek out development opportunities.

Give feedback frequently
Acknowledging achievement is Management 101: give feedback frequently - it means more in real time than 6 months later - and do it publicly when appropriate. And when you need to correct the occasional misstep, be direct. Just ensure you make it clear you’re talking about the employee’s action, not them as a person. Above all, honesty will make sure your feedback carries the most weight.

Make performance reviews about people
Performance reviews are ultimately about blending employee goals with company strategy. Demonstrate how their efforts drive the bottom line so they feel less siloed and that their work is a big part of the company’s growth. This boosts engagement and productivity.