

Tips for Managers to make the workplace a ‘fabulous and high performing place to work’.

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Tips for Managers to make the workplace a ‘fabulous and high performing place to work’.

Tip 1 - understand what psychological wellbeing actually means. It means people **feeling** clear headed, in control, able to concentrate, are motivated, energised, having freedom of choice (within reasonable constraints), **feeling** great and performing well. Peak performance is achieved only when individuals can focus on what they want to do and concentrate willingly on their tasks. Peak performance occurs when you **feel** psychologically well.

Tip 2 - engage your Board members in understanding that a workforce that is psychologically well, and appropriately motivated, is a workforce that can perform at its peak. Encourage your Board to place the workforce at the centre of Corporate Strategy, and at the top of Corporate Values.

Tips 3 - adopt The Wellbeing and Performance Agenda² in order to build the working environment that provokes the workforce to thrive and perform at its peak.

Tip 4 - understand that leaders and managers make the difference between poor to average performance and peak performance in individuals and organisations. Many managers are project managers; they don't take easily to managing people. People managers are found in the highly successful organisations. Become a people manager.

Tip 5 - understand that leaders and managers influence what the culture of the organisation is like. Leaders and managers are the controllers of the controlled community – otherwise known as ‘the organisation’! The culture is the atmosphere, tone, symbols, behaviours and attitude of the organisation and its people. A culture³ of success is an adaptive and positive culture that triggers the workforce to feel psychologically well and motivated to perform at its peak.

Tip 6 - adopt Psychological Responsibility⁴ as a basic principle that's embedded into the culture. Psychological Responsibility is a personal responsibility to remain psychologically well, and to ensure that you do no psychological harm to anyone else, by adopting Intelligent Behaviours. Ensure you understand the appropriate application of Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence techniques in implementing Psychological Responsibility.

Tip 7 - ensure your organisation and team adopt ‘Sharing Responsibility for the Future Success of Your Organisation’⁵ as a basic principle that's embedded into the culture. This responsibility is for everyone to be focused on the success of the organisation, and not on its leaders and managers (which would occur anyway if the organisation is a success). Everyone should feel accountable and responsible for the future success of the organisation; leaders and managers are **held** to account for its success. The rationale for sharing responsibility is that the combined intelligence of the workforce far exceeds the combined intelligence of its leaders and managers, and you need all the intelligence you can get to make a great success of an organisation.

Tip 8 - ensure that the purpose of their organisation and your team is expressed succinctly in outcome terms – in other words – in terms that clearly state the impact of their organisation and your team on its customers, clients or patients.

² See Derek Mowbray's Guide to the WellBeing and Performance Agenda ISBN 978-0-9573835-3-1

³ See Derek Mowbray's Guide to Corporate Resilience ISBN 978-0-9573835-1-7

⁴ See Derek Mowbray's Guide to Psychological Responsibility@Work ISBN 978-0-9573835-5-5

⁵ See Derek Mowbray's guide to the Manager's Role in Resilience ISBN 978-0-9573835-4-8



Tip 9 - ensure that the cultural values of their organisation and team match the personal values of your workforce. Values are the drivers that make people do the things they do. If these are reflected in the cultural values of their organisation and team they capture the drivers of individuals, and channels their energy and interest in the same direction as that of their organisation and team.

Tip 10 - ensure that their organisation and team have a vision of where you're going. If this is shared with the workforce it provides meaning and purpose to individuals – an essential aspect of psychological wellbeing.

Tip 11 - ensure that corporate values resonate with your workforce. Corporate values are the priorities that their organisation and team feel are highest. For example, does their organisation and team feel that the workforce is the highest corporate value or does it feel that customer or clients are? Or money? Or Shareholders? Or the Bank? Or quality? Or productivity?

Tip 12 - adopt Adaptive Leadership⁶, a process of leadership that is based on the principle of 'Sharing Responsibility for the Future Success of your Organisation' (and your team). This means encouraging and expecting your workforce to focus on the future success of their organisation and not on what you say; encouraging valid critique of any aspect of the organisation if it leads to future success; raising the dealing with 'elephants in the room'; expecting independent judgment from individuals in the workforce; encouraging and demanding that everyone learns from daily experiences and applies lessons that help to ensure tomorrow is more successful than today; adopt an attitude that all failures are successes waiting to happen.

Tip 13 - adopt Kinship Management, a style of management based on developing kinship relationships – sharing purpose; sharing goals; sharing responsibility; using intelligent kindness; providing mutual support; sharing success and failure; sharing celebrations.

Tip 14 - ensure that the recruitment process is based on the understanding that you want all the unsuccessful candidates to work for you, and that the successful candidate feels he or she has been made to demonstrate how good they are at doing the job as well as ensuring the future success of their organisation.

Tip 15 - ensure that all jobs directly link to the purpose of their organisation and your team; ensure that each job is expected to make a significant and valuable contribution to the future success of their organisation and your team.

Tip 16 - establish, from the outset, mutual expectations between yourself and each member of your team, as well as with your boss and others you interact with to do your own job.

Tip 17 - ensure that each job contains challenges that stretch the skills, knowledge and experience of the person filling the job, so that he or she feels valued by you and is expected to rise to the challenge. Do not make the challenge beyond the capability of the individual. Demonstrate your trust in the person by providing encouragement and support without interfering in their work.

Tip 18 - ensure that pay reflects the job holders' expectations. Most people know what they are worth and the monetary value of their job. Ask them what it is and try to deliver what they say.

Tip 19 - ensure that everyone works in a team. Teams built of people with complementary skills, knowledge and experience learn from each other and have strong reasons for working together. The principle is that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and, therefore, team members should knit together to create something far greater than what can be achieved as individuals working on their own. Teams should, also, be a place for feeling safe and secure, where individuals can discuss their feelings, ideas, and gain energy from others. They should

⁶ See Derek Mowbray's Guide to Adaptive Leadership ISBN 978-0-9573835-2-4

become the oasis in a fraught and difficult working world, as well as the powerhouse for consistent peak performance.

Tip 20 - ensure that everyone in the workforce is involved in your team as well as their organisation. Involvement is needed to implement the principle of Sharing Responsibility for the Future Success of the Organisation. It, also, helps to strengthen engagement between the individual and your team (and organisation), which plays directly to people feeling psychologically well.

Tip 21 - ensure that you are open and transparent in all your dealings with your workforce. This builds trust and commitment, which are two basic attributes that contribute significantly to psychological wellbeing and engagement with their work and organisation. Even when you know of difficult issues, keep being open about them. When you don't know what is happening - say so. You have to remain open all the time.

Tip 22 - ensure your communication with people is based on expecting them to respond to what you say, and for you to respond to their response. Communication is a means of eliminating ambiguity, and this requires opportunities for people to question the meaning of things. Good communication establishes trust (the absence of second guessing the motivation of others). Trust is a key ingredient of psychological wellbeing.

Tip 23 - ensure that your workforce feels they have the opportunity for career development and progression within your team and organisation. This provides a degree of confidence that their organisation will exist in years to come (therefore providing a future for the individual), demonstrates the value of your workforce to their organisation and provides the individual with opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and experience.

Tip 24 - ensure you encourage each member of your team on a regular basis, but not too often that the 'power' of encouragement is diminished. Everyone needs encouragement from time to time, and often don't receive it. You can change that.

Tip 25 - ensure that each member of your team is regularly and continuously appraised of their performance. Everyone wants to know how they're getting on with their work, and regular appraisal is a way of providing that feedback. Think about doing this in an informal manner, such as giving a thoughtful critique about something that has been completed by a team member. Your appraisal has to be perceived as valid to have any effect.

Tip 26 - ensure your team members each appraise you on a regular and continuous basis. This should be seen within the principle of 'Sharing Responsibility for the Future Success of Your Organisation' where the focus for the workforce is on the future success of the organisation and not your success. Therefore, your team appraising you should be in the context of your contribution to the future success of the organisation (and team), and the manner in which you manage your team to achieve future success.

Tip 27 - ensure that you respond to any domestic crisis your team members may experience. If you allow someone to work from home, sort out the domestic problem and provide other support as indicated by the crisis, you will discover that the individual strengthens their commitment to you and your team (and organisation). The crisis may appear trivial, such as waiting for a delivery, but such trivial matters can often disrupt whole days and cause anxiety and under performance. It is easy to put this right by responding positively to domestic situations.

Tip 28 - ensure that your team receive training and development opportunities on a fairly regular basis. This demonstrates their value to their organisation, in that the organisation is investing in their future. It plays to everyone's desire to acquire new skills, knowledge and experiences. It, also, enhances the skills for current day performance. The time taken for development is easily repaid in intensive engagement in current work as a consequence of feeling psychologically well and positive about the workplace.



Tip 29 - ensure your team thinks like a chief executive and feels they belong to your team and organisation; have an identity within your team and the wider organisation, and feel they 'own' the organisation – that it is theirs, and its' future success depends on them.

Tip 30 - ensure your workforce has access to healthy food; food that is not processed but food which restores energy and helps concentration. Ensure your team does not eat 'on the job' but takes a rest and eats elsewhere.

Tip 31 - help your workforce to remain alert by encouraging physical activity such as walking, going up and down stairs, keeping their cardio-vascular system pumping away. Encourage your team to stand up during the day.

Tip 32 - stop your team from sending emails to people in the same building as them (and if the building is huge, the same floor), and ask them to go and talk to the person instead, or leave written notes if people are otherwise occupied.

Tip 33 - ensure your team members start the day by completing a task before they look at their emails or get a cup of coffee. Completing something first thing is important to psychological wellbeing as you feel great at completing something and then being rewarded with a cup of coffee, or something similar. Ensure your team avoids reading emails first thing. It's depressing. Read emails after completing something successfully.

Tip 34 - ensure your team works intensively, without interruptions, for about 50 minutes in each hour; has a break of 10 minutes doing something completely different to cool down the brain, before starting another intensive 50 minutes. Ensure their email alert is off; they don't respond to emails during the 50 minutes, and that all calls go to a silent answerphone (to be checked in the 10 minute break). Obviously if the work is a rapid response type of work, the 50 minutes includes receiving communication and responding to it. The person in this type of work still needs the 10 minute break in each hour to do something completely different. Adopt the principles of this tip to your own work patterns.

Tip 35 - encourage your workforce to adopt the technique of mindfulness for brief periods throughout the day. This helps to cool the brain and give it a rest. It provides breaks in the build-up of general levels of pressure, and releases pressure allowing individuals to start again feeling fresh and energised.

Tip 36 - encourage your team to practice Intelligent Behaviours. You can do this by holding short Intelligent Behaviour sessions, where one behaviour is practised. This can be repeated at intervals throughout the day using different behaviours, until your team has embedded Intelligent Behaviours in their routine.

Tip 37 - ensure the physical environment in which your team is expected to work is fit for purpose. This means that the environment aids concentration, is ergonomically designed, and that the technology in use is effective in maintaining individual concentration. Performance is only achieved when individuals can willingly concentrate on their tasks. Ensure that those who work in open plan offices and engage in 'hot desking' are able to concentrate on their work and not be easily diverted onto others things.

Tip 38 - ensure that any mechanical and technical failures are fixed immediately. The whole point of using technology is to aid the individual in completing tasks effectively. Any breakdown means performance breakdown and should be fixed immediately to enable concentration to be regained and performance continued.

Tip 39 - ensure your meetings are fun. Meetings are enormously expensive, but provide an opportunity for social interaction and entertainment. They can be pressure valves as well as achieving matters of significance in ensuring the future success of the organisation.

Tip 40 - ensure each of your meetings has an agenda that is either a single or several questions to be answered. This enables those attending the meeting to understand their contribution and why they are there. It, also, ensures that meetings have a valid purpose.

Tip 41 - ensure you can sell tickets to your meetings. If you can't sell tickets, then, obviously, no one thinks the meeting is worth the money, and should be cancelled.

Tip 42 - ensure you seldom chair your meetings. Allow team members to take turns in chairing meetings; change the chair-person during the meeting, if necessary, to allow individuals to both chair and contribute to answering the questions on the agenda.

Tip 43 - ensure your team learns something every day by coming together at the end of the working day to go over what has happened. Remember to reinforce the culture that all failures are successes waiting to happen.

Tip 44 - ensure your team plans for tomorrow by reviewing today and making a list of key things to do tomorrow. Encourage your team to put the list away and get some rest when they go home. Emailing each other should be forbidden, except in a genuine emergency or to help with arrangements for tomorrow if something has gone wrong overnight.

Tip 45 - encourage your team members to identify how their organisation can be more successful tomorrow compared with today. Remind them to think like a chief executive. Support your team members when they make critical comments about anything by challenging the validity of the observations and helping them sharpen their observations.

Tip 46 - encourage your team members to offer unsolicited ideas of how their organisation and your team can be more successful. Remember, no idea is a bad idea, they are all good ideas. Some will not work. Also remember – all failures are successes waiting to happen!

Tip 47 - ask your team to write down in a notebook all the things they think will make their organisation more successful. Come together and implement as many of the ideas as you can. Draw in others from other teams and spread the ideas as far and wide as possible.

Tip 48 - write down, at least once a week, why you are the 'elephant in the room'. Ask your team members to do the same. Come together and discuss what you have written and resolve the issues that arise.

Tip 49 - delegate as much of your own job as you can – make yourself dispensable. This shows your team that you value them and consider them capable of doing your job. It, also, provides you with the time you need to do all the other tips in this list!

Tip 50 - encourage your team members to job shadow people from outside the team. This enables them to become involved and engaged in the wider organisation, and provides them with the opportunity to make observations about how the organisation can become more successful in the future.

Tip 51 - encourage your team members to understand how the organisation works. In addition to job shadowing, discuss with your team all aspects of the organisation so they can understand how each part dovetails with each other to create a whole organisation designed to achieve its declared purpose.

Tip 52 - reward your team when their organisation demonstrates success. Do the same when your team is successful. Rewards should have little to do with money and more to do with consolidating kinship amongst the workforce.

Tip 53 - nurture talent.

Tip 54 - encourage your team to do some horizon scanning – working out what might be just beyond the horizon. This will prepare them for potential changes, as well as strengthen their involvement in ensuring a successful future.

Tip 55 - when you embark on a change programme, explain why change is needed and encourage the involvement of your team in ensuring the change goes well for everyone, even those who may be displaced as a result. Always be open. If you don't know what's going on, say so, and ask someone who does know to come and explain everything to you and your team.

Tip 56 - help your team develop their resilient attitudes⁷⁸ to challenges. Provide each member of your team with exercises to strengthen their opinion about themselves and about their ability to deal with different types of challenge. This is the way to help your team feel in control of themselves when faced with a challenging event or difficult behaviour.

Tip 57 - read all the tips again, and again, and again until they become embedded in your routine. By then you will be working in a fabulous and high performing place to work.



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Derek Mowbray is a Chartered Psychologist and Chartered Scientist with a doctorate in leadership. He specialises in the primary prevention of stress at work (a major inhibitor to performance) by focusing on elevating psychological wellbeing in the workforce. He emphasises the requirement for a positive working environment that provokes the workforce to feel well and perform at its peak, by reducing the challenging events and poor behaviours that may trigger stress in others.

Acknowledged as one of the inspiring psychologists of his generation, Derek Mowbray draws on his personal experiences as a chief executive of several organisations in the public and private sectors with his academic and research experience in organisations, leadership and stress. He is the originator of Psychological Responsibility, now being applied in many organisations, which places on the individual a responsibility for feeling psychologically well, as well as a responsibility to do no psychological harm to others. He is, also, an advocate of 'sharing responsibility for the future success of the organisation' as a principle underpinning organisational success and high achievement.

Derek Mowbray is an expert, high impact, facilitator of change in organisations, people and individuals. His clients come from all forms of organisation in the UK and abroad, from multi-national corporates to small groups of professional practitioners; from large public sector bureaucracies to small private sector businesses. His work and approach is common sense, but not common practice.

His mission is to help.

His specialties are troubleshooting organisational and workforce problems by mentoring leaders, managers, OD and OH specialists in building organisation-wide Positive Work Cultures, adaptive leaders and effective managers. He is an expert in personal resilience and his Resilience Development Programme has been delivered throughout the UK, Ireland, USA and Europe. His experience as a Chairman, Chief Executive, and Managing Director, as well as being a consultant of long standing and high reputation, is combined with his academic credentials to provide the kind of advice that is effective in practice. He is visiting Professor of Psychology at Northumbria University and the University of Gloucestershire.

⁷ See Derek Mowbray's Guide to Personal Resilience ISBN 978-0-9573835-0-0

⁸ The internationally acclaimed Personal Resilience Programme is now available for everyone with access to a PC, Tablet or Smart Phone. Email info@mas.org.uk for details.

About MAS

Our focus is on the prevention of stress at work. Stress has one of the greatest negative impacts on the performance of individuals and organisations. The cost of people being at work in body but not in mind is huge. The *prevention of stress* is a cost effective solution. Not only is stress prevented but the processes involved in prevention help individuals and organisations attain optimum performance – consistently and sustainably.

We make the psychological connection between workforce wellbeing and organisational performance.

Organisations that are designed to provoke psychological wellbeing will stand the best chance of sustainable corporate resilience and achieving optimum performance. Psychological wellbeing is idiosyncratic, but there are common elements that organisations can incorporate into their culture which will provoke psychological wellbeing, namely trust, commitment, kinship, motivation and social engagement.

Our purpose is to help organisations achieve peak performance and productivity; to strengthen corporate and personal resilience and to prevent stress from occurring in the first place.

Our approach is to help organisations establish psychologically healthy workplaces by facilitating the implementation of our WellBeing and Performance Agenda framework.

Our services include consultancy; applied organisation health psychology; facilitation; assessments; cultural change; leadership and team development, tailored interventions.

Our programmes include topics such as:

- Manager's Role in Resilience,
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- Adaptive Leadership and
- the WellBeing and Performance Agenda.

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