

# Thinking Habits For Great Managers



**Being an Inspirational Manager is as much about Mindset as Methods.**

Your managers can wheel out their finest verbal management techniques but if their actions are not underpinned by an enabling mix of positive attitudes and perceptions, your organisation will fail to prosper as it should.

Mancroft International has spent over 25 years researching the intangible human characteristics and values that bring great management to life. Here are just a few thought-provoking learning points from our *Thinking Habits For Great Managers* programme.

focus

creativity

proactivity

personal accountability

target achievement



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## What are the Mindsets that Help or Hinder Success in a Management Role?

### Mindset that helps success

- Being **mentally comfortable with success** both within the current peer-group and in the presence of former peer-group colleagues whom you now manage.
- Expecting (which is positive thought at subconscious level) respect and co-operation so that the manager's choice of words and body language are supportive of and congruent with what staff are requested to do. This links with the course session on Self-Image, particularly **managing from a standpoint of stature rather than status**.
- A feeling of oneness with company/departmental policy and goals. This flows from a true understanding of the personal reasons for complying (even if reluctantly) with company/departmental policy. This enables "letting go" of any negativity associated with asking others to comply – and liberates more mental energy for constructive thoughts about implementation.
- Regarding everything as "neutral" for long enough to apply Mancroft International's MUMMS principle (Make Up My Mind Slowly). This allows the manager to choose the most appropriate emotion (rather than the habitual one) for dealing with the situation. As someone once said, "I can now decide if I'm going to have no worry, a five minute worry or a ten minute worry!"
- As an example to others, doing every part of the job with good grace and without complaint (course session on Personal Accountability refers). To quote Ashleigh Brilliant, an amusing commentator on the human condition, **"The great thing about my job is there's always a choice. I can do it willingly or unwillingly."** A manager should not be surprised when his/her attitudes are reflected in the attitude of others.



### Mindsets that hinder success

- Generally the reverse of those shown above, with **expecting lack of co-operation** and its knock-on effect on the manager's body language, among the most harmful.
- "When I become successful, I'll take on board some of these positive attitudes you're talking about." This perplexing statement from a potential Winning Edge delegate reveals his mistaken belief that positive attitudes are the result of success. Unfortunately, this topsy-turvy view of the way life works is by no means uncommon.





## What are the Mindsets among Staff being Managed that Positively and Negatively Affect Outcomes?

### Positive mindsets

- Trust in and respect for the manager *as a manager* (do not confuse with **liking** or **not liking** the manager as a person).
- A feeling that the manager can understand what it feels like to be a member of staff. At Mancroft International we have never subscribed to the view that managers and directors should be able to *do* what their staff do. Should the chairman of ICI be able to make a pot of matt white emulsion from raw materials? He would do well, however, to show he has an appreciation of what it might **feel like** to work on the paint production line.
- A belief that the manager's requirements and guidance usually lead to successful business outcomes. Positive expectation helps create further successful business outcomes and builds willingness to co-operate with the manager on subsequent occasions.



### Negative mindsets

- Generally the reverse of those shown above, with lack of trust and respect being among the more damaging mindsets.

## How Should Staff Mind-Sets Be Managed For Better Results?

- This question reminds us that you cannot force someone to adopt a mindset. Douglas Hurd, when Home Secretary said, "You can't legislate people into being nice."
- Trust and respect are the result of managers exemplifying the characteristics discussed during the course e.g. honesty, loyalty, courage, empathy, personal accountability. These qualities must, however, come from the heart, not from the "book of prescriptive management techniques". In other words, they should be underpinned by **consistency and congruency**.

In a management context, consistency means always behaving in the same value-based way in a given set of circumstances rather than in a variable, expedient way based on the desire to please, appease or impress others. Congruency is similar but has more to do with behaving without conscious thought in a way that corresponds both with your true values (the ones embedded in your psyche) and those you *claim* to have.

- Develop and show an understanding (between as well as during appraisals) of staff members' universes. What does it feel like to be in their lives and jobs?
- Promote managers' strengths. Staff are sometimes unaware of their manager's strong points – or selectively blind to them if a negative culture exists. If you have a company newsletter, make sure all levels, including managers, receive positive attention.

## What Are The Emotional Drivers That Underpin Effective Management?

- Just like you, everything a manager does is driven by the need for increased personal emotional comfort, so the question is really asking, “What are managers’ *personal* feel-good factors that result from being a good manager?” These include – satisfaction from a job well done; recognition/praise from others; raised status/stature; promotability; greater value in the job market; the desire to see others do better (as a result of his/her effective management); pride; vanity; satisfying his/her sense of fairness by providing good service in return for the salary; keeping their job if redundancies are likely.
- Before trying to understand managers’ motivations, remember that there are two types of people – those whose dominant thoughts are predominantly based on *moving towards emotional gain (desire-based)* and those whose dominant thoughts are predominantly based on *moving away from emotional discomfort (fear-based)*. All the feel-good factors given above can therefore be viewed in two ways. For example – “I work hard at being a good manager because doing a great job makes me feel good” or “I work hard at being a good manager because I don’t want to suffer the awful feelings of underperforming.”

### Food For Thought

- Are your managers aware that fear-based thinking sets up negative dominant thoughts? (Simple example: “I don’t want to fail” creates mental images of failing. Better to think, “I intend to succeed”)
- Are most of *your* thoughts and actions desire-based, both at home and at work?
- Are your managers’ thoughts and actions desire-based?
- What can be done to better understand your managers’ thinking styles and embed a wholly “*moving towards*” management culture?



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