

5 Management Tips for Overwhelmed Team Leaders



The number of people you supervise doesn't have to stress you out.

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Management principles such as instilling a growth mindset in your employees or leading with empathy can pose a noteworthy obstacle in and of themselves, but when you are responsible for managing a large team, that challenge can become even greater. The larger your team, the harder it can be to give each person the individual attention they deserve while still finding time for other important management tasks. If you're not careful, it becomes all too easy to get overwhelmed or to let certain responsibilities slip.

The good news is that overseeing a large team is far from impossible. By incorporating these five essential management practices, you'll be better prepared to lead your team to success.

1. Open up communication channels.

With larger teams, it becomes more difficult to hold regular one-on-one meetings. This doesn't mean that communication should go by the wayside. Even the most entry-level member of your team needs some attention to feel like their contributions are valued. As a solution, utilize additional communication channels like Slack and Basecamp to stay connected to your employees, in addition to regularly making the rounds in person. When team members understand that these additional channels are available for two-way communication, they will be more likely to reach out for updates and assistance.

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2. Delegate whenever possible.

As your team grows, so does the workload, and you can't handle it all on your own. Delegating to the right people will help you avoid burnout, improve the team's overall productivity, give you more time for managing individual team members and even free up some personal time. In fact, a study from *Frontiers in Psychology* found that delegation improves feedback-seeking behaviors among employees, leading to stronger results.

Andrew Carnegie became the world's richest man at the turn of the 20th century. Among a host of other attributes, one of his biggest secrets was delegation. Upon hearing a friend brag about arriving to work at seven in the morning, he famously replied, "You must be a lazy man if it takes you 10 hours to

do a day's work ... Within an hour, I have disposed of everything, sent out all my suggestions. The day's work is done, and I am ready to go out and enjoy myself."

3. Watch out for potential conflicts.

Unhealthy conflict within large teams can prove just as destructive to the group dynamic as within a smaller one. People take sides, and unity is quickly disrupted, which could lead to increased employee turnover and a poor customer experience. As your team's leader, you must set clear expectations for how to address conflict within the team and be willing to take an active role in resolving disputes. Staying in touch with the workplace environment will help you identify potential issues so you can take action before they get out of hand.

4. Look at the big picture.

With a larger team, the ability to objectively assess the quality of everyone's output becomes more important than ever. Looking at processes, communication methods and even individual roles from a big-picture perspective will help you identify areas where the team is perhaps less cohesive or effective than it should be.

Micro-management tasks are still important, but taking a step back and zooming out will help you better identify needs for realigning your goals or making adjustments to improve team effectiveness. Changes that positively influence office culture and workflow for all team members can have an even greater overall impact on productivity and workplace satisfaction.

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5. Unleash the power of mentoring.

The best leaders also serve as mentors who elevate the performance of those around them. Unfortunately, with a large team, you may not have the bandwidth to provide mentoring to each new hire. A key delegation option is to assign more experienced members of your team to serve in this capacity. As GM Chairwoman and CEO Mary Barra once said, “All good leaders should be invested in the career growth of their team members ... Colleagues have great insights about you that you may have overlooked.”

Many of the principles of successful leadership remain the same regardless of the size of the team you manage. However, by accounting for your team's larger scale, you will be better prepared to help each member of the team – and your company as a whole – achieve new heights.

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