



## Trends

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### What's at the Foundation of Your Management Style?

I am sure that you get asked this question often. Potential employers and others want to know how you would manage a staff, a department, a process, or an entire company. You may be a "hands-on" type manager, a "strategic" thinker, a "firefighter", or a combination of these qualities or others.

Not too long ago, a colleague asked me this question. So I wrote this note to tell him about the 5 points that constitute the foundation of how "I" manage.

**Depth:** You can't rely entirely on your subordinates' opinions; their positions can't become automatically yours. As I am certain that you got to be manager by being deep in your domain, you must keep current in your industry. You might ask, how would you possibly have time to know everything going on in your domain? The next point tells how I do it. As Ronald Regan once famously said, quoting a Russian proverb; *Trust, but Verify*

**Zoom up and down** as needed: No manager can take care of everything personally (that's why we are called managers), but a manager MUST know what is going on. Focus in on an issue, identify what should be done, or how you should take care of it and then hand the issue over to one of your employees. If they consistently succeed, give them a bonus, a raise, or promotion. These are your "keepers" and they need to be rewarded. I also make it a point to study a process, a person, a project or a technique everyday. Today for example, I met with a business analyst to understand what exactly is involved in his job, and in particular, how he derives estimates. So, know about everything, but don't get bogged down by any one issue, pass them on. If you don't, these issues will become a 900 pound gorilla, and it will crush you.

**Can't see the forest for the trees?** Perhaps one of the toughest parts of being a manager is strategic thinking and planning. One must be more proactive than reactive. Do you see what's ahead for your domain? Did you write it down and share it with your team? Ascertain what key initiatives need to be addressed and pick them off one by one while flying the (business) plane (handling day to day production). If you don't have a strategy for your franchise, everyday chores become tactical nightmares. The "zoom lens" technique can be a good tool to zoom up to the 30,000' level to see the big picture. If a manager doesn't possess this critical quality, he or she won't survive in their management role.

**Be realistic --- Demand The Impossible:** Once you identify your 'keepers', be demanding. This caliber person LIKES to be challenged and pushed to achieve. Indeed they are unfulfilled if you don't have high expectations of them, and end up moving on. Let me illustrate this point. In a previous role, I had two problems in Network Services; Citrix instability, and the cost of Cisco support costing. I hired a strong Cisco engineer who I knew will save us the vendor support bills, but I also knew that he had the

right character, attitude, and aptitude to be challenged with other responsibilities. Within 90 days, he took over the Citrix job (in addition to his Cisco job). The result: we had a very solid Cisco and Citrix operation, 2 for the price of one, AND he was very fulfilled with his responsibilities. So, choose your employees well, and challenge them to do more. They will thank you.

**Own your franchise:** You should consider yourself a franchise owner. Your boss may be the territory manager, but you are in control of your destiny. And here is the deal, as long as you buy into your boss' business philosophy; he or she shouldn't care how you run your shop. As a matter of fact, as long as you're paying your "franchise fees", a good boss doesn't want to bother seeing how you make your burgers.

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