

Google's Rules

To engineer better managers, Google pored over performance reviews, feedback surveys and award nominations, correlating words and phrases as only a data-drive company like it can do. Here is an edited list of the directives it produced – in order of importance – as well as a few management pitfalls it found.

Eight Good Behaviors

1. Be a good coach

- Provide specific, constructive feedback, balancing the negative and the positive.
- Have regular one-on-ones, presenting solutions to problems tailored to your employee's specific strengths.

2. Empower your team and don't micromanage

- Balance giving freedom to your employees, while still being available for advice. Make "stretch" assignments to help the team tackle big problems.

3. Express interest in team members' success and personal well-being

- Get to know your employees as people, with lives outside of work.
- Make new members of your team feel welcome and help ease their transition.

4. Don't be a sissy: Be productive and results-oriented

- Focus on what employees want the team to achieve and how they can help achieve it.
- Help the team prioritize work and use seniority to remove roadblocks.

5. Be a good communicator and listen to your team

- Communication is two-way: you both listen and share information.
- Hold all-hands meetings and be straightforward about the messages and goals of the team. Help the team connect the dots.
- Encourage open dialogue and listen to the issues and concerns of your employees.

6. Help your employees with career development

7. Have a clear vision and strategy for the team

- Even in the midst of turmoil, keep the team focused on goals and strategy.
- Involve the team in setting and evolving the team's vision and making progress toward it.

8. Have key technical skills so you can help advise the team

- Roll up your sleeves and conduct work side by side with the team, when needed.
- Understand the specific challenges of the work.

Three Pitfalls of Managers

1. Have trouble making a transition to the team

- Sometimes, fantastic individual contributors are promoted to managers without the necessary skills to lead people.
- People hired from outside the organization don't always understand the unique aspects of managing at Google.

2. Lack a consistent approach to performance management and career development

- Don't help employees understand how these work at Google and doesn't coach them on their options to develop and stretch.
- Not proactive, waits for the employee to come to them.

3. Spend too little time managing and communicating