



7 Reasons Why It's Great to be a Manager

By Joseph Sherren, CSP, HoF

Over the next ten years, being a manager will be one of the most difficult and stressful occupations.

Why? There will be more generational diversity in the workforce than ever in history, with each generation having distinctive values and priorities. There is an extreme focus on personal fulfillment that appears to be creating "me" generations. Global financial issues, volatile markets and operating costs are requiring businesses of all sizes to become leaner.

Our education systems are not always preparing students for the real world of work. Many subjects being taught are not current or the curricula of relevant subjects are out of date; most school technologies are antiquated; and there is a critical lack of focus on behavioral issues such as responsibility, accountability and professionalism.

Nevertheless, there is still reason for optimism. Managing has many wonderful benefits and it can be one of the most satisfying careers you will ever choose.

Since this is the time of year for lists, here are seven benefits of being a manager:

1. The enjoyment you feel when you have helped someone grow and succeed. You have been a part of helping someone realize their happiness and dreams.
2. You are part of creating an environment where people can do their best work. Great managers create team environments that make it easy for smart people to do good things.
3. Animal lovers who care deeply about pets and wildlife will do whatever they can to optimize their health and well-being. Great managers care deeply about their staff

Thought Leadership Webinar on Feb 7th

In a world of increasingly commoditized products, your customers are becoming more sophisticated in choosing companies with which they do business. They consider many factors, including the confidence they have in your ability to deliver the business benefits. Thought leadership is a confidence-building strategy that can set your company apart from the competition. Done right, it can create new markets, renew your intellectual assets and the energy of your people, and attract new employees in droves.

Join master strategic planning facilitator Kristin Arnold at the first in the 2013 Webinar Series on February 7th at Noon ET.

In this webinar, we will:

- Define thought leadership as a viable enterprise-level business strategy.
- Articulate the benefits of a thought leadership strategy
- Provide a framework for businesses to embark on an intentional thought leadership strategy.

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and go out of their way to protect, train, care for and reward each member of the team.

4. A manager's primary responsibility is to prepare others for management positions. To see someone you have coached reach higher levels is a highly satisfying experience.

5. We all have weaknesses and great managers know their liabilities. I pity the manager who thinks hiring bright people is threatening. Having the ability and courage to hire people who are smarter or better in certain areas, then empower them to take over, will pay great dividends.

6. Great managers will not back down from a purposeful fight. They will stake their reputation on a principle and stand up to bureaucracy, unfairness or an unreasonable customer. Even if they lose, if it was the right thing to do, the good feeling will last a lifetime.

7. It sometimes happens that employees have not been treated properly by another manager or the organization. Great leaders ensure that justice prevails by doing their best to correct mistakes that have caused other employees to suffer.

As managers, please remember, you are always affecting others' lives, sometimes for good, other times less so, and you may never know.

Recently, I attended the funeral of a manager I had managed at a large corporation in the 1970's. I was so pleased when his wife recognized me and said, "You are probably not aware of this, but you saved our marriage, enabled our sons to grow up and get a good education and contributed to the wonderful life we enjoyed."

Once I recovered from the magnitude of her compliment, she continued to say that prior to my taking over as manager, her husband was about to quit his job because he believed the previous manager had a negative opinion about him and his abilities and was giving him a hard time.

Alternatively, my management approach was to be a coach. I expected him to be great, gave him the proper tools and resources to do his job and, as a result, he excelled. Within 18 months I promoted him. He then had the confidence to develop into one of our best employees. I never knew the extent of the positive impact



Planning for 2013

As a professional meeting facilitator who specializes in business, operational and strategic planning, I think it is only fitting that Joe and I recently went off-site to do our own planning. Because of the size, scope and complexity of our businesses, two days were enough to get the main ideas down on paper – then back to the office to fine tune.

First, we took a look at the *Business Plan* – the source document that describes the business that we are in. I call it the “business basics” that should be reviewed and updated every year. The key elements are a description of the business, your offerings, a market and competitive analysis, management and personnel, potential risks and problems, and financial statements and projections.

The *Operational Plan* is an extension of the business plan, basically answering the questions: What are we going to do this year and how are we going to do it? The resulting key activities then get folded into the annual budget. I call this part the “blocking and tackling” – taking what you know to be true about your business this year and then making a plan that takes the business “to the next level.” Typically, these plans forecast incremental improvement in

until he died.

So what are you doing to positively impact the future of the people you lead and manage?

Practical Team Activity: Check In to Start Your Meeting!

Have you ever noticed how people make small talk as they enter into the meeting room? Some people are "in the know" whereas others don't get a chance to hear what's going on.

Next time, start your meeting with a quick "check in" where you go around the room and allow each person to answer the question, "How's it going?" It allows people to share what's going on with them personally as well as organizationally.

When you allow people a few moments up front to share issues or "get it off their chest," it allows them to be physically and mentally present with the team.



From the Bookshelf

The speaker who was onstage before me at the JS Conference said, "You must read this book: *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman." And then he said something that really surprised me: "I'll even buy you one if you're too cheap to buy one; it's that good!"

And yes, it IS that good. Clocking in at 500 pages, I'm only halfway through – but it's a fascinating read,

the coming year.

The *Strategic Plan*, on the other hand, looks beyond the one-year horizon and extends your vision out three to five years. (Some extend even further out, but they have fairly robust strategic planning processes. Most organizations I work with are keeping to the 3-5 year timespan.)

Typically, there is a review of the business basics (some call this an internal scan) as well as an environmental scan – what's happening in the outside world that could affect the business. We then move into "Strategic Thinking" where we identify where we want to be in the next 3-5 years. It's a position to be attained (your "vision" of the future) and you aren't there yet! This means there is a GAP between where you are and where you want to be.

The Strategic Plan is created to close that gap. It also makes the assumption that you will continue to do what you have been doing through your business and operational plans (I call this "keeping the trains running"). You may opt to stop doing some things, change the way you're doing some things and even start doing some new activities to support the strategic direction of the business.

Rather than think this year to the next, strategic thinking requires you to think long term and then ask, "What do we need to do in order to be successful in that preferred future?" The strategic plan is about breakthrough improvements – figuring out where you want to be – and then determining the strategy to be successful in the long run. These key initiatives and activities are then folded into the long-term and operational budgets.

I have been in business for 20 years

considering the author is a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences and a professor of psychology at Princeton. You would think this would be a boring book – but it's not!

Kahneman explains the two systems that drive the way we think and shape our judgements and decisions: System 1 is fast, intuitive and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative and more logical. Through examples and stories, he shows where we can and cannot trust our intuition and how we can tap into the benefits of slow thinking.

I particularly like the parts where he shares different techniques to guard against the mental "glitches" that often get us into trouble. Reading this book is timely indeed for this year, I am building a critical thinking skills program called, "What Were You Thinking?"

What Would You Like to See [Here](#)?

For 2013 we welcome your input on this newsletter and the submission of your personal team/management dilemmas or questions. To each of you, your family and colleagues, all the best in the New Year.

now – and I plan to stay in business for 20 more years. It would be absolutely ridiculous for me to think that I can keep on doing the same things and stay successful.

Actually, that's a "go-out-of-business" strategy! So I'll invest a few days to work "on" vs. "in" the business and review and update my plans.

What about you?

Team Quotable

"People are always good company when they are doing what they really enjoy."

*Samuel Butler
American Novelist*



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