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Awakening Leadership Within

Tips for Moving from Peer to Manager

One of the most difficult transitions for professionals is the transition from peer to manager. This is primarily for two reasons. One reason concerns how your peers will accept your changing role. But even more importantly, there is a critical need to reinvent yourself as manager and that depends on how you view yourself in this new role.

Very often when you move from a peer-to-peer relationship to an employee-to-manager relationship, conflicts can arise in your relationships. You now are the “boss” and it will be necessary to set new boundaries and expectations. To minimize conflict, set those boundaries and expectations clearly, but without becoming dictatorial in an effort to assert yourself. Being overpowering and controlling will only serve to antagonize your employees. Consider that you may still find yourself in social situations with the same group of people, but you are now in a position to model a leadership role and that may take making adjustments to your relationship boundaries. Again, communicating clearly and directly will minimize future conflicts. People want to know where they stand and what the new relationship entails.

Get support from a mentor or coach on management skills. I often see individuals who excel at their jobs being promoted into management but not given training in the skills now necessary to succeed as manager. These skills are different than technical skills. Professional development around motivating employees, time management, written and verbal communications, and manager’s coaching skills and decision making are essential to the success in your new position. Ask for assistance and management training to supplement your on-the-job training.

Just as importantly, you need to create an internal identity for yourself. Look for a role model and ask that person to mentor you. Not only is it difficult to move up in one’s career due to preconceptions of women’s roles, but the lack of senior, visibly successful female role models makes it difficult to tap into the “network” that our male counterparts have traditionally had access to. And it is that mentoring and those alliances that can make the difference between struggling or advancing in your career.

Be comfortable with vocalizing your achievements as a manager while learning the art of delegating those day-to-day tasks that keep you from working at a more strategic level in your job. As a manager you will need to make time to think and act strategically. Empowering your employees will make you more comfortable with delegating the nitty-gritty tasks of the job.



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Delegating will allow for this “thinking time” and your shift from tactician to strategist will be noticed at the executive level.

Learn how to make decisions effectively and quickly. Each person has a style; work with your personal style not against it. Become comfortable with disagreement. Some of the necessary decisions may not make you popular but if done with integrity and consideration, good decisions will earn you the respect of your employees and your upper level management.

Trust yourself. Too often you doubt yourself even as your intuition screams at you. This is a “skill” that may not be as validated as time management, organization and other skills, but intuition and emotional intelligence are assets that women can tap into and develop.

Remember, your success in your new role begins with you and how you choose to re-invent yourself. Get support, communicate clearly and directly and keep learning, even from the mistakes that you may make. Look for a role model or mentor and nurture your strategic alliances. And although your mother told you never to “toot your own horn”, get tooting!

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