

SEVEN TIPS FOR PROFESSIONALS MOVING INTO MANAGEMENT



For professionals exploring a management opportunity, there's a lot to learn. Keep the following tips from **Stacey McCreery, MBA**, founder and president of ROI Search in Fishers, Indiana, and **Nicole D. Harper, PhD**, director of revenue cycle improvement at Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis, in mind as you lay the groundwork for your career move:

Maximize mentors. Even if your favorite manager has agreed to be your mentor, don't stop there, McCreery cautions. "Make sure you have two to three mentors," she says. "Don't rely on one person, because each mentor will give you a different flavor; each person does things differently."

Hustle harder. There's no easing into management. Be prepared to work harder than you've ever worked, according to McCreery. But always keep in mind that the payoff will be worth it.

Delegate well. Most people aren't good at delegating. As a new manager, it can be a challenge to learn to let go of tasks that have been part of your professional identity. But hanging onto the past will hurt you and your team. It'll clutter up your schedule, prevent you from giving your full attention to your managerial duties, and cut your team off from learning opportunities. On the flip side, delegating isn't about being a taskmaster; it's about being a mentor and a teacher. "Half of your time should be teaching your staff how to do things that you used to do and delegating to them," McCreery says. "It's easy when they don't know how to do it for you to do it on your own, but then you're not going to teach them how to do it and you're not going to be effective."

Honor commitments. Managers new and old can find themselves overwhelmed with meetings and looking to cut back. Although it might seem easy to skip meetings with your team—after all, they know how to reach you and might work with you every day—they're the last people you should bump from your schedule. Team meetings and one-on-ones give you and your staff the opportunity to have real conversations, get to the bottom of immediate challenges, and discuss long-term goals and planning. These are conversations that are difficult to have on the fly. Keeping those meetings on the books lets your team know that you value and respect them. "The investment you make with your own team members is incredibly important," McCreery says.

Don't leave empty chairs at the table. If you have a vacant position, make sure it's filled as soon as possible by the right person. Filling that position should be your number one priority, McCreery says. "When you don't, somebody's got to get the work done; you're divvying up all the work in addition to their normal responsibilities," she explains. "So that's weighing on your staff."

Come clean. As a manager, you'll probably hear bad news before other staff members. Perhaps a beloved department director is leaving. Maybe a restructuring will break up close-knit teams. Or maybe the organization will be switching EHRs in six months. There are times when you won't be able to share news immediately, but once you get the green light to speak to your staff, do it—stat. When changes are afoot, word will get out. Your team will want to hear bad news from you, not through the grapevine. By being up front, you'll limit rumors and may be able to help your team find the silver lining. "No matter what is going on in the department, make sure that transparency and communication is there," McCreery says. "Even the bad news, it's so important to share that with your staff. Before they hear it from anyone else, they need to hear it from you."

Be present. You'll have many priorities and expectations as a manager. While all of them are important, always remember the most crucial part of the process: the people responsible for helping you accomplish your goals. "No one person can be truly successful completely on their own. As such, make sure you take the time to show up for your team; listen to their ideas and input where possible," Harper says. "Bring their visions to life, let them be an active part of solutions, and focus on feedback and encouragement and/or constructive criticism to help them to grow. When you invest in their future and their success, they will invest in you. After all, there's no such thing as a leader who has no followers."

AUTHOR BIO

McCreery is founder and president of ROI Search Group, an executive search and leadership consulting firm. She is a contributor on various human resource topics. She is also a board member of the Indiana Healthcare Executive Network and a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives. She has a passion for teaching executive education for emerging healthcare leaders at Indiana University's Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs and Richard M. Fairbanks School and giving back to her community. For more information, please visit ROI Search Group's website at www.roisearchgroup.com or contact McCreery at stacey@roisearchgroup.com.