

Good Work Design: Knowing your team



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Knowing your team is the key to being a great manager

Research shows that workers who view their managers and supervisors positively are more likely to be engaged, productive and committed to their work.

Why it matters

Your team is made up of people with different strengths, skills, motivations, working styles and personal lives.

By harnessing individual differences, you can have the right person doing the right work and create a high performing team.

‘There is one quality that truly sets great managers apart from the rest: They discover what is **unique about each person and **capitalize** on it.’**

Marcus Buckingham

How it's done

A great manager who knows their team consistently does four things.

1 Focus on strengths

When we use our strengths to perform our work, we are more focussed, energised, motivated and confident. In contrast, focussing on fixing weaknesses invites feelings of inadequacy and other negative emotions that drain energy. Employees who **use their strengths** are more likely to be engaged in their work and perform well.

- Know what your own strengths are and share them with your team.
- Ask your team members what their strengths are and pay attention to what they do well.
- Let people know what you think their strengths are.
- Give people opportunities to use their strengths, including through planning how specific strengths can be used to deliver different work.
- Remember that every team member has **more talent and skill** than you are aware of, even if you already feel that you know them well.



What great **managers** do





Take the time to find out what your employees' strengths are



2 Tap into motivations

People work for different reasons including financial security, social connection and the satisfaction gained from achieving results. People are also motivated by different things. For example, some are motivated by tight deadlines whereas others enjoy collaborative projects or extra time for innovation.

- Find out what motivates your people to work well.
- Use these motivations to drive and support each person's performance and productivity.

Ask your team

- 'What do you like about working at this organisation?'
- 'What do you find inspiring about your work?'
- 'What aspects of your work do you enjoy doing?'
- 'What drives you to do your best work?'

3 Help people do their best work

We all do our best work in different ways.

- Take the time to understand how your employees do their best work.
- Give each person opportunities to work in the way that supports them to do their best work. This may mean providing different working environments and varying levels of support.
- Understand that being adaptable to the different needs of your team will help you get the best work from each person.
- Share how you do your best work with your team.

Ask your employees how they do their best work. Consider:

- **work environments** such as quiet spaces or loud collaborative ones
- **working style** such as autonomy or detailed instructions
- **ways of working** such as collaboration, innovation or working on their own
- **time of work** — are they a morning or afternoon person?





Understand what else is going on in your employees' lives



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4 Understand what else is going on in their lives

Each of us has different health, interests, personal commitments and responsibilities. **Showing you care** about people's lives is essential to building trust and a culture of psychological safety. You are more likely to find out about your team if you also share who you are as a person — not just as their manager.

- Be open and share information about yourself and your life outside work. You don't need to share everything, but enough to help your team get to know you.
- Show interest in the lives of your team members, for example, by asking questions like 'How was your weekend at the coast?'
- Listen to what people choose to tell you and be responsive and supportive.

Some people may not want to share anything with you and that's OK. Respect their choice and don't be intrusive but do continue to be friendly. Once trust is established, people will open up to the extent that they are comfortable with.

Knowing your team is important because they are your most valuable resource.

'The inventory, the value of my company, walks out the door every evening.'

Bill Gates

Did you know?

- 2 in 5 people have a lived experience of mental illness
- 1 in 5 people have disability
- 1 in 5 people have multiple chronic conditions such as arthritis or back pain
- 1 in 10 people care for someone with disability
- 1 in 10 people care for an older person

