

Managing people in Difficult Times

What You Can, Should, Would, Have to, Need to and Must do...

Activity One - Read the text and answer the questions:

We all have our ideas about what makes a good manager. In most big companies managers receive extensive training on the subject. Many techniques and different theories, books and articles have been written on the subject. However when times are hard and challenges are tough, you don't just **have to be** a good manager, you **need to b**e a brilliant manager!

When times are hard people are under much more pressure and so all of the usual difficulties we encounter in the daily running of our business are exaggerated and seem worse. Added to that, when money is scarce and profits are down companies need people to be more efficient and better at their jobs. The pressure seems to come from all sides. Workers feel less secure and fear for their futures. Middle managers **have to** to achieve better results with an often de-motivated and anxious work-force. Upper management are under great pressure and often **need to** deal with harsh realities.

In such an environment a bad management decision **could** be lethal! The workforce **needs to** be lead by a strong and confident leader. Communication **should** be open, honest and consistent. Questions **have to** be answered and there is more need than ever for training, coaching and support on every level.

A bad manager in a difficult time **can be** like the match that sets alight the whole potentially explosive situation. On the contrary a good manager can lead a company through the difficult times towards a stronger future and the team spirit and strength of feeling this generates will lay the foundations for future success.



- Can you relate to this kind of situation?
- Do you feel under pressure yourself?
- Do you agree that good management is they key to success in difficult times?
- Do you agree that the contrary is true too and that bad management leads to failure?
- Is there an extra feeling of solidarity in such times or do people tend to turn against each other?
- What aspects do you think are particularly important in managing teams in difficult times?
- Do you know of any management techniques which are particularly well adapted to hard times?

Activity Two - Expressing Possibility and Necessity in English.

Modal Verbs: Modals (also called modal verbs, modal auxiliary verbs, modal auxiliaries) are special verbs which behave irregularly in English. They are different from normal verbs like "work, play, visit..." They are used to indicate modality. They give additional information about the function of the main verb that follows it. They have a great variety of communicative functions.

Some people find them confusing and are not really very sure which to use, when. It's a good idea to practice and to highlight Modal Verbs when you see them in use. People often use 'have to' when they should use another modal verbs, or else forget that most modal verbs are followed by the root verb without 'to'. (Apart from Need to and Ought to which are exceptions).

Activity Three - Read the following text and try to find the correct modal verbs to fill the gaps:

When a manager is stressed and anxious, his team can feel it. If he or she chooses not to talk about issues then the employees are left in the dark and feel insecure. So managers ..... either hide their stress or explain the situation.

When an employee does not understand why a certain decision has been made by his manager, then he will probably not agree with it. It's impossible to expect employees to just do as they are told without explaining the meaning of decisions. This is why a manager ..... explain decisions.

Everyone has a different perspective and way of understanding things so it's essential to explain in a way that people understand. This is why a manager ..... relate to people and adapt their communication style to each person.

I ..... never be a good manager if I didn't believe in the values of my company.

You ..... be a good manager if you don't respect the people who work for you.

CAN'T -COULD - SHOULD - HAS TO - MUST

Modal verbs are used to express **functions** such as:

- Ability
- Permission
- Obligation
- Prohibition
- Lack of necessity
- Advice
- possibility
- probability

Remember: Modal verbs are followed by an infinitive without "to".

Modal Verb	Meaning	Expressing	Example
must	to have to	100 % obligation	I must stop when the traffic lights turn red.
	to be very probable	logical conclusion (deduction)	He must be very tired after such a lot of work
must not	not to be allowed to	prohibition	You must not smoke in the hospital.
can	to be able to	ability	I can swim
	to be allowed to	permission	Can I use your phone please?
	it is possible	possibility	Smoking can cause cancer !
could	to be able to	ability in the past	When I was younger I could stay up all night and not get tired..
	to be allowed to	more polite permission	Excuse me, could I just say something?
	it is possible	possibility	It could rain tomorrow!
may	to be allowed to	permission	May I use your phone please?
	it is possible, probable	possibility, probability	It may rain tomorrow!
might			
	it is possible, probable	weak possibility, probability	I might come and visit you in America next year, if I can save enough money.
need	necessary	necessity	Need I say more?
should/ ought to	used to say or ask what is the correct or best thing to do	50 % obligation	I should / ought to see a doctor. I have a terrible headache.
	to suggest an action or show it's necessary	advice	You should / ought to revise your lessons
	to be very probable	logical conclusion (deduction)	He should / ought to be very tired after such a lot of work
had better	to suggest an action or to show that it is necessary	advice	You 'd better revise your lessons

Activity Four Read the text paying attention to your intonation and stress:

When times are tough, and everybody at work is nervous, managers **must** help employees stay engaged, focused and motivated. A memo won't suffice. No team-building exercise or pat on the back can completely restore workplace confidence. But here are a few ways to help maintain productivity: Everybody handles stress differently, so managers need to take a one-on-one approach. Talk informally with employees to find out what each needs to stay on track.

Keep your door open. Employees **may** need frequent assurances. Give them access to your time and be honest with them. Don't be evasive or promise anything you can't fulfill. Be candid but also let them know there are things you can't discuss.

Don't bear down on employees because you're stressed out. Ordering employees around like a drill sergeant is counterproductive. You **should** offer direction while allowing employees to come up with their own processes.

Praise and recognize hard work. There are plenty of simple but effective ways employers can recognize hard work, including emailing an appreciative note. You **have to** encourage other employees to follow your lead. Organize recognition events to honor bigger accomplishments at luncheons, banquets or company picnics.

Help employees fulfill career goals. Sit down and find out what employees want to get out of their jobs and the company in general. If the employee wants to take on more responsibility or move into a different department, you **should** investigate the possibilities and get back to them with options. Offer clear paths each time. If advancement requires a degree, tell them about tuition assistance or scholarships the company may offer.

Move dissatisfied employees. Some employees **can't** be motivated and their discontent can draw a disproportionate amount of time and energy away from managers. They **can** also bring down the morale of an entire unit. You **should** how you can help improve their work experience. You **could** also offer to move them into another work area, a different department or even a different company.

Plug leaks. Intercept rumors immediately since they can grow into unsubstantiated concerns that can lower productivity.

Keep your own worries to yourself. As a manager, you have two difficult jobs: empathize with employees and deal with your own stress. It's important to keep your feelings private since your own apprehension can panic employees. Source: WSJ.comNow

NOW Make some sentences based on the text using modal verbs. Add your own ideas for advice. **For example** - "You should keep your own worries to yourself...."



Activity Five: Inspiring Quotes.

Read the quotations and add your own.

- "Tough times never last, but tough people do." - **Robert H Schuller**"A problem is a chance for you to do your best". – **Duke Ellington**
- "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." – **Michael Jordan**
- "Happiness is not the absence of problems; it's the ability to deal with them." **S. Maraboli**
- "The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it." **Moliere**

Activity Six: Rôle Plays : Handling tricky situations!

A/ You find out that one of your employees is telling everyone lies about you. They claim that you have a secret career as a cabaret dancer and that you arrive at work late every day and are in a really bad mood because of the lack of sleep. You know that they are saying this to discredit you. You confront the person to find out why they have spread these rumors.

B/ You know that your company is reducing staff hours but at the same time the managing director has just bought a new Jaguar which he has parked in the main car park. Everyone has seen it and you feel that you need to talk about it openly so you organize a meeting.

C/ You have just been on holiday to the Caribbean and when you get back to the office you find that everyone is on strike because the company has reduced their end of year bonus by 75%. You were away for three and a half weeks because you had to use up your holiday time so you were not aware of the situation. You try to find out more by interviewing one of the striking staff members.

D/ You have decided to take a cut in pay in order to avoid making some of your workers redundant. You make an inspiring speech about your decision with the aim of motivating your team to work really hard.

E/ You have a meeting with your boss to tell him about a problem at work: There is a lot of dissatisfaction regarding the decision to stop hiring new workers for vacant positions. You explain to your boss that this is not a good decision longterm.

Activity Seven: Positive Thinking.

Listen to the song - **R.Kelly - I believe I can fly -Do you think that music can inspire and motivate people? Have you ever used music in meetings to help your staff to feel motivated? Which are your favorite motivating songs? Do you use motivational video presentations in meetings?**
Now watch this video and share your thoughts (YouTube Business Innovation and Reinvention.) -
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjFHhLwKo64