



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD



WHITE PAPER

High Impact Manager Accelerator Programme:

Telltale Signs Your Team Needs
Management Training (And What to Do About It)

Business Leaders Often Struggle with Developing and Training Their Mid-Level Management Teams

In fact, **managers are often the most poorly trained employees in an organisation.**

A 2023 Chartered Management Institute (CMI) study showed 82% of new managers had no formal training. Some refer to this under-developed group as “accidental managers”.

And it is not like these team members make up for their lack of training with some natural proclivity to manage. Gallup reported **only 1 in 10 people inherently possess management talent**. This disconnect should be a huge concern for small business leaders. Management teams act as the operational connection between executive leadership and the organisation’s ground-level employees. They oversee the execution and oversight of company objectives and goals. Yet they are dramatically unprepared to perform their jobs well, because **most small business leaders don’t spend enough time teaching their managers** how to actually manage other people.



The Important Differences Between Management and Leadership

There is a notable difference between the talents and activities of your leadership team and those of your management team. In his recent article on Entrepreneur.com, The Alternative Board President & CEO Jason Zickerman explained:



*“**Leaders are visionaries** who inspire and motivate their team toward a shared future goal. They possess a clear sense of direction and purpose and see the bigger picture. **Managers focus on executing the vision** set by leaders. **Leaders prioritise innovation** and are open to exploring new ideas and approaches. They encourage creativity and are willing to take risks to drive change and progress. **Managers work within established guidelines** to maintain uniformity and consistency.”*

These distinctions matter. When business owners conflate the goals and objectives of leadership with those of managers, not only do the requirements of the roles get muddled, but the entire system falters due to lack of clarity, harmful blind spots, and inefficiencies.

Managers are not the creators of vision or mission. Instead, your management team should be almost exclusively tasked with the day-to-day execution of strategies, operations, and oversight of the employees who accomplish those activities.



Is Bad Management Hurting My Business?

The cost of management team dysfunction can be deal-breaking. According to Ben Wigert, Director of Research and Strategy for Workplace Management at Gallup, **the cost of lost productivity due to poor management is estimated at \$8.8 trillion per year**, which is equivalent to about 9% of global GDP. That staggering number more than suggests that every small business leader should be considering the training, efficacy, and inefficiencies of their management teams.

These massive losses are mostly related to high employee turnover, lower productivity, and customer churn. Poorly trained managers quietly miss deadlines, disincentivise high performance, and create ambiguity where opportunity should exist.

Good managers free leadership up to work on high-level strategies; poorly trained managers can mire down a small business in apathy, inefficiencies, and disengagement.

Which sounds better to you?

What Motivates a Leadership Team?

Low motivation throughout an organisation is a common symptom of weak management. **Unmotivated teams are often mirroring or negatively reacting to their managers' behaviours.**

Managers who are guilty of demotivating their teams often do so by exhibiting unclear priorities, lack of recognition, poor delegation, and micromanagement (a subtle but powerful motivation killer).

Employee motivation requires so much more than setting goals or giving an occasional team-meeting pep talk. It turns out that motivation and employee happiness are most directly related to how managers communicate and treat the workers they are charged with overseeing.

Your management team wields an awful lot of power in the productivity of your small business. Have you prepared them well for the job?



"Management's job is to convey leadership's message in a compelling and inspiring way. Not just in meetings, but also by example." – Jeffrey Gitomer, Sales Expert & Author



How Do I Know If My Managers Need Training?

The first signs of a management team in need of training often appear in the manager's own habits and approaches. Negative behaviours like inconsistent decision-making, lack of accountability, poor communication, and resistance to change are all telltales of an underdeveloped manager.

From a systemic perspective, symptoms of management team dysfunction might include repeat employee complaints, high employee turnover, recurrent errors, and work silos.

You can't expect your management team to be perfect, but when mistakes turn into patterns, then it is arguably time to consider advanced management training and development. Few small business owners doubt whether they need leadership development for their executive team. The same consideration should be given to your managers who are overseeing the trenches every day.

When Managers Create More Problems Than They Solve

Untrained managers are not just inefficient; they can actually initiate and escalate conflict. For example, micromanagers create tension and job dissatisfaction among the employees they oversee. Poor managers often overcomplicate workflows and create bottlenecks rather than efficiencies.

Management team dysfunction can take many forms, but the aftermath almost always leads to workforce disengagement and poor productivity. **It often forces small business leaders to spend more of their invaluable time fixing messes rather than working at a higher, more strategic level.** Which, ironically, was the reason they hired a management team to execute their vision in the first place.



How Poor Management Impacts Culture

The executive suite often gets blamed when company culture is construed in a negative light. And while this might certainly be true in some cases, a nosedive in **culture doesn't always start at the top**. Cultural erosion often ripples from middle management out, because in many ways managers are the gatekeepers and messengers between the executive suite and the rest of the team. Middle management should reinforce culture daily, but if they are the problem due to misalignment or lack of training, then trust is eroded and disengagement spreads like wildfire. Then everyone is left wondering what went wrong, except perhaps those frontline employees who were repeatedly exposed to the negative consequences of management team dysfunction.

It just takes one poorly developed manager to negatively influence many workers or departments. Now consider the multiplier effect of an entire management team who lack proper skills and training, and the substantial impact the spread of that virus can have on your company culture, not to mention your bottom line.

Managers are also often looking for career advancement. By providing them with the tools they need to succeed in their current roles, you are better positioning them for further growth within your company. This type of opportunity is a huge morale and culture booster.





What Great Management Looks Like

Contrasting poor management with outstanding management can be a little tricky without sounding overly sensitive or unnecessarily critical. And some of these qualities are more subtle than overt, making them harder to identify in real-world small business settings.

We have covered a lot of what weak or poorly developed management looks like. Now let's look at how great managers set themselves apart.

Here are some common characteristics, talents, and behaviours of strong managers:

- ★ **Communicates clearly both up and downline.**
- ★ **Understands how to listen effectively and empathetically.**
- ★ **Possesses ability to make timely decisions in alignment with leadership.**
- ★ **Takes accountability for themselves and their team.**
- ★ **Is adaptable and resilient even when the pressure is on.**
- ★ **Acts fairly, consistently, and respectfully with everyone in the organisation.**
- ★ **Empowers employees through delegation of tasks.**
- ★ **Models company vision and cultural alignment.**

It is important to note that while some managers might innately possess some of these qualities, being a great manager is not a personality trait, but rather a set of skills that can be taught and developed.

Why Experience Alone Just Doesn't Cut It

Star employees are often promoted to management positions as sort of a natural trajectory of their roles within a business. **But years on the job or success in sales don't automatically equate to the skills, talents, or experience it takes to be a great manager.**

When hiring outside the business, **CVs can also be misleading**, as being a strong manager can be challenging to qualify and quantify. What looks good on paper (I managed a team of 35 employees) might not tell the whole story, even when backed up by seemingly impressive sales or productivity indicators, unless you have a baseline to compare it to. And who knows, maybe the employees were great despite their manager's shortcomings. Again, it is just hard to tell.

Even seasoned and effective managers often need training and development, as workplace norms and technologies are changing today at a record pace.

Proactive Management Training Is the Key

With so much at stake, developing your managers should be a priority to support the long-term success of your business. Consider management training not as an expense but as an investment into the future of your business. As mentioned, statistics almost guarantee that your management team is not as trained and aligned as you might believe them to be. Putting off management training until you realise your operations or culture have taken a hit is both costly in the moment, as well as the in the slow bleed that often runs silent and deep for years.

A proactive approach to management training can reduce the risk of problems before they arise, and it creates consistency across your management team. Many small business owners who implement a management training programme see almost immediate and tangible improvement in operations, productivity, communication, and employee morale. And the positive outcomes keep coming.

The reason is simple. **Every day that your management team lacks the tools and talents they need to be successful is a lost opportunity** for substantial long-term improvements throughout the entire organisation.



Elevate Your Managers with the HI-MAP ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME

TAB's High Impact Manager Accelerator Programme, or HI-MAP, equips management teams with both the concrete and soft skills they need to perform their job confidently and effectively. Using a proven approach, management teams and the organisations they work for experience **improvements in operations, efficiencies, and long-term success**. HI-MAP delivers measurable outcomes and drives major wins like:

- Increased productivity and profits.
- Better employee retention.
- Improved company value.
- Attracting and recruiting high-quality candidates.
- More engaged employees who take initiative.
- Higher workplace satisfaction rates.
- Inspired and innovative thinking.
- Stronger risk mitigation.

HI-MAP consists of four skills development paths. Businesses leaders can choose one path they want their management team to focus on, they can mix and match paths, or most commonly, they can execute all four paths. Whatever works best for their unique needs.



60%	Percentage of Millennials who want leadership training
94%	Employees say learning opportunities are a major reason to stay in a job
9 hrs	Total training nearly 50% of managers with over 10 years of experience have received



HI-MAP PATH OVERVIEW

PATH 1

The Improvement Path boosts productivity, communication, and coaching. In this path, managers sharpen effective communication, time management, and mentoring within TAB's exclusive PAVE Your Way to a Competitive Edge framework.

PATH 2

The Influence Path educates managers on how to lead with clarity, confidence, and purpose. Participants practice and improve methods of facilitating meetings, negotiating power, inspiring leadership, and building a high-performing culture.

PATH 3

The Talent Path is designed to find and grow the right people. Managers learn the importance of how to attract and keep the best talent, including recruiting and hiring, retention, team development, and navigating challenging people and relationships.

PATH 4

The Team Action Path positions your team for next-level thinking. Managers learn how to execute strategy with focus and discipline. This path provides essential insight into strategic leadership, critical success factors, goals, action planning, and KPIs.





HI-MAP offers SMB owners a comprehensive and accessible approach to developing stronger, more confident, and more effective managers. The positive impact of the programme increases exponentially as it ripples throughout the entire organisation, with notable improvements in performance, productivity, and culture. All essential elements of long-term success and an effective, next-level management team.

The Absolute Value of Better Management

Having an ineffective or untrained management team can be an expensive mistake for business owners. Poor management development often leads to unmotivated teams, operational inefficiencies, lagging performance, and a myriad of other costly systemic issues. It can undermine the performance of the business at virtually every level.

Take time to **consider how aligned and effective your management team currently is**, and whether you have truly equipped them with the tools, insight, and training they need to drive your business forward.

Remember, **the stronger your managers are, the more successful your business will be.** Today, tomorrow, and well into the future.

If you are interested in learning more about implementing HI-MAP for your management teams or any of TAB's business building and strategic leadership services, contact us.

