



The Leadership Letter

From Buddy to Boss: Making the Transition

Congratulations are in order! You've achieved one of your professional goals and are now a manager in your program. Sounds great, doesn't it? **Why doesn't it feel that way?** Why are the colleagues who I considered my friends suddenly pulling away and distancing themselves from me?

Making that transition from "buddy to boss" is a lot more difficult than you thought it would be. When the dynamic in the workplace changes, your relationship with former co-workers will change. You're now the manager of a team and here are some ideas about how to make that transition less awkward for everyone.

- 1) **Stay Confident:** There was a reason that you were promoted to manager and it ultimately had to do with your skills and capabilities, including your ability to lead others. The promotion hasn't changed that and you need to remember that those skills and abilities are the tools that you will use to make your role as a manager successful.
- 2) **Ignore the Gossip:** You know how staff talk and there's likely to be someone who is critical and offensive in their comments. Even if there's speculation about why and how you got the promotion, ignore it. Let your actions prove that the promotion

was well-deserved.

- 3) **Confront Silences Early:** One of the first things you need to do upon becoming manager is to sit down with your former colleagues and discuss how it's going to work. Put it on the table in a positive way and let your colleagues know about your vision and goals for the new position and team. One of the worst things you can do is let things "hang" in the air.

- 4) **Be as Frank as You Can Be—But Not Too Frank:** As a manager you will have access to information that should remain confidential. You are now responsible for directing and evaluating job performance and you must be objective and even-handed in your approach to all your staff. Friendship must take a back seat here. **If you can't talk about it, just say that you can't!**

Because you already know the people you'll now be managing, you're a step ahead of someone who's coming from the outside. This transition can be a "win-win" for everyone. It won't take long before that transition from "buddy to boss" is complete! *Source: From Buddy to Boss: Making the Transition from Colleague to Manager, <http://www.experis.us>, Retrieved 3/25/14*

Inside this issue:

<i>You're a New Manager? What Not to Do!</i>	2
<i>Delegating: You've Got to Trust Someone!</i>	3
<i>From Treasurer to President: The Same as Buddy to Boss!</i>	4

Leadership Commission Members

- Anita Dailey, GA
- Marti Nicholson, OK
- Susan Barnes, VA
- Crystal Campbell, SC
- Jeffrey Leffler, MS

You're a New Manager? What Not to Do!

You've assumed a new position with your program/office and you've got lots of ideas. You're also an untested manager who's got to learn the ropes and **it's usually OJT** (on-the-job training)!

You may naturally possess the skills to make you an effective manager or you may have some skills that will need polishing up a bit before you get to that point. Obviously, the person or board who hired you saw potential and it's easy to identify some of the potential pitfalls that can be avoided as you develop into that leadership role.

- ◆ **Over-supervising:** New managers tend to over-supervise initially. You're afraid that if a mistake is made, your ability as a manager will be questioned. Stop and think about the staff who were your former colleagues. Who needs a little more support. Who can do it on their own? You know your people, let them do their jobs.
- ◆ **Under-supervising:** Same argument as above. As a manager, you are responsible for outcomes. Develop a system that clearly delineates your expectations, measure them and support your team. Managers can't stand at a distance and expect good results.
- ◆ **Failing to delegate:** We all know that you can do it better than anyone else but, as a manager, you just won't have the time! Learn who can manage what tasks with minimal

supervision and let those tasks go. Just make sure you're checking up periodically on all staff, regardless of the amount of supervision needed, to ensure accountability.

- ◆ **Overlooking the problems and concerns of employees:** Your staff will be the gauge about how well your transition is going. Take the time to listen and act if necessary. You're learning as you go, so accept constructive criticism when it's offered. Things can always change and improve.
- ◆ **Sharing confidential information:** Nothing destroys the boss/staff relationship faster than sharing information that staff considered to be confidential. You're now in a different role and those discussions on the playground or in the staff lounge cannot include you. Staff will be confident in your leadership abilities if they know that they can trust you.
- ◆ **Blaming upper management for unpopular decisions:** **Guess what? You're now management** and you represent the management of your program. Hard decisions are often made with a broader organizational vision in mind and sometimes it's difficult for staff to figure out how those decisions will benefit them. Don't use the phrase, "*They are making us do this.*" That just undermines your authority, confuses your staff and

makes for a negative environment for everyone. Work hard to explain the basis on which the decision was made. (Make sure you understand why the decision was made and can clearly explain it.) That doesn't mean that employees/staff shouldn't be able to express their opinions. Just let them know that their concerns will be communicated to management but it is unlikely to change that decision in the short term. Let the new policy work for a while and then review with your boss.

- ◆ **Providing preferential treatment to favorite employees:** Yes, she was your best friend and you worked with her for many years; however, you are now responsible for treating all of your staff with consideration and fairness. You can still be friends, you just can't treat her any differently than you do your other staff. If you were used to socializing with your friend and colleagues during the work day, you can still do that. Just make sure that you socialize equally with all persons and groups.

These are easily avoided mistakes that new managers can make. **You want to be considered that "good boss" by your former colleagues.** A little time and thoughtful relationships with your new team will make sure you fall into that category. *Source: Making the Transition to Management, www.people.rice.edu.*

Delegating: You've Got to Trust Someone!

Does manager equal doing all the work yourself?

A new title of manager means the exact opposite. Delegating or learning to delegate is necessary for you to be successful in your new role. Obviously, you have a skill set that led to your new leadership role and it may be the case that you can do it faster and more correctly by yourself; however, you need to consider what you're losing in the process.

- ⇒ If you micromanage and keep tasks for yourself, you've lost the opportunity to develop trust and loyalty among your employees. If they know that you trust them to get the job done, in most cases they'll meet those expectations.
- ⇒ If you're trying to do it all, burnout is inevitable. Management of people and resources is a time consuming, often stressful job and it won't be long until you're wondering why you ever consented to move into the position.
- ⇒ Young staff who need growth opportunities will be left out of that process. Yes, mistakes will be made, but those are typically situations for learning. Can you delegate and mentor the professional growth of new staff who may someday assume your position?

Tips for Learning to Let Go

- 1) **Decide What to Delegate:** What needs your full attention and what tasks can be performed equally well by others? Start small...maybe a project

that's not time sensitive and as critical to operations as some others. Is there leeway in this first project to learn along the way? Can mistakes be made and corrected easily without adverse consequences? Do you have the time to mentor and train as others assume these duties?

- 2) **Pick the Right People:** You've worked with them. You know their strengths and weaknesses. It's not favoritism to assign tasks to those you know will complete them correctly. That's just good management. Make sure that you work to give all staff an opportunity along the way.
- 3) **Communicate Clearly:** If they don't know what's expected, you can't assume they'll produce. Make sure you give clear directions, provide the training/mentoring support needed to learn the task, and set clear and definitive deadlines.
- 4) **Check-in:** You are accountable for results so you have every right to check-in periodically to see how it's going. Just don't watch over someone's shoulder every day. Give them time to be successful. If they aren't getting the job done, your management job is to make a change.
- 5) **Be Patient and Understanding:** No yelling or angry outbursts, hurtful criticism or demeaning remarks if things aren't going well. Stay patient as long as possible but make a

change if the delegated tasks aren't being completed. You may not have chosen the right person for that task. Is there something else in which they excel that you could assign to them?

- 6) **Give Credit Where Credit is Due:** Nothing discredits a new manager faster than claiming credit for something that someone else has done. A simple "thank you" goes a long way to making people feel valued and important. Public recognition of jobs well done encourage loyalty and creativity among staff. If your management gives you credit for a successful job, make sure your staff understands that you couldn't have done it without them. You're all in this together: no one can do it alone.

Delegating may not be natural for you and it may take a while to learn how to do it effectively; however, it's worth the time and effort to both develop the personnel you manage and support your growth as a manager.

It takes practice and you'll experience a few failures along the way. Failures can be positive experiences that help support professional growth. Be open to possibilities and know that you can't do it all yourself. Make the most of everyone's talents and skills and you'll have a wonderful experience as a new manager!

Source:

6 Tips for Delegating Success, Dailey Muse, www.forbes.com, Retrieved 3/24/14

More Resources

Building the Governance Partnership

www.boardsource.org



In a constructive partnership with the board, the chief executive works hard to provide leadership that engages the board in exceptional governance — work that requires a lot of time and energy. *Building the Governance Partnership* offers practical tips and perspectives to help you manage this considerable investment of time and build a partnership with your board that is based on support, trust, honesty, forthrightness, respect, and understanding.



SOUTHERN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

PO Box 55930
Little Rock, AR 72215-5930
1-800-305-SECA (7322)
Fax: 501-227-5297
Email: info@southernearlychildhood.org

Promoting Quality Care and Education for Young Children and Their Families
SECA is a "Voice for Southern Children"

www.southernearlychildhood.org

The Leadership Letter January 2014

- Top 10 Qualities of Great Leaders
- Leadership Traits
- Men or Women: Better Leaders?

Find it on the Leadership page of the SECA website.



Leadership Transition: Challenges and Opportunities

Some Thoughts on Leadership

Leadership Transition	Leadership Transition: Members
• John Quincy Adams	• John Quincy Adams
• John Quincy Adams	• John Quincy Adams
• John Quincy Adams	• John Quincy Adams
• John Quincy Adams	• John Quincy Adams
• John Quincy Adams	• John Quincy Adams

From Treasurer to President: The Same as Buddy to Boss!

Being President just isn't what I thought it would be...I'm not prepared for it. What happened to my friends? All of a sudden I'm the bad guy.

We've been talking about a workplace situation in which a staff member has been promoted and is now a "manager." Making that transition from being a member of the association board to the association president carries all the same challenges and opportunities.

As you move into a leadership role with your state or local, you'll find that you're now on the "outside", responsible for helping to guide members as they make organizational decisions. You'll also find that your leadership style will help to dictate whether that transition is easy or difficult.

You can practice the skills that we've mentioned throughout this newsletter but there are a few more tips that you may find helpful.

Don't cheapen your role. Don't tell your fellow board members that things won't change and your relationship will stay the same. Things will change. Help them to understand that you are in a new position and that you intend to exert leadership. Be collaborative but clearly act as the leader.

Make boundaries. There may be times when your buddy is on the wrong side of an issue. Make sure everyone understands that your job is to represent the board as a group and majority rules. Avoid any appearance of favoritism. Get "out of the loop" of gossip and innuendo.

Ask. Shut up. Listen. Three of the most important leadership skills. Solicit input, keep your opinions to yourself and listen to what members have to say. Use your skills to help guide the discussion and reach a consensus. Most association by-laws allow the President to vote only in the case of a tie. **You're not the final word.**

Moving from a "friend" status to a leadership role can be rewarding. Remember that your role is to lead and to be fair and equitable as you make decisions about how to move your organization forward. Leaders aren't dictators: they convince others to follow them.

Source: *Leadership: How to Go From Peer to Manager in 5 Easy Steps*, www.leader-values.com, Retrieved 3/24/14