

8 Areas to Assess Your Management Skills

Hello, and welcome.

Do you prefer to be known as a good manager or a bad manager? Will you be a manager of people and projects in the next few years?

Here's my philosophy on good management: it's not something that you acquire magically or instantaneously. It's something that you can, and must, develop and improve throughout your life.

Management is an art as well as a skill. As a manager, you're aiming at two complementary goals: meeting your programmatic objectives AND having your team (and individual members of your team) feel motivated and supported to achieve the objectives. It's about having a win-win for the communities you are working for, for the team as a whole, and for the individual members of the team.

Management is the function that coordinates the efforts of people to accomplish goals and objectives by using available resources efficiently and effectively.

In international aid work (both humanitarian and development work), the cost of poor management is high. Poor management sinks projects and usually leads to a toxic environment in the office, with



a particularly nefarious effect on younger colleagues. Conversely, positive and skillful management is a win-win for all concerned, and most importantly for the communities you're supporting.

In this guide, you'll find eight of the most important skills that are needed when you manage projects and people. This is a self-learning tool (rather than a performance tool). The only point of this exercise is to gain insight into who you are as a manager *now*. My goal is to help you identify areas of growth, not to become discouraged about your current management skills.

In support,
Charles

8 Areas to Assess Your Management Skills

Instructions:

1. Read each competency and the series of positive behaviors related to that competency.
2. On a scale of 0 to 10, score your satisfaction with your abilities in that competency area.
3. Take it further: identify one behavior or skill that you commit to improving over the next month. Come back in a month and re-assess.
4. Take it even further: identify up to five behaviors that you commit to improving over the next few months.

COMPETENCIES AND BEHAVIOURS

Communication:

(10= excellent communication competency, 1= poor communication competency)

- I communicate with clarity to my colleagues, ensuring that they have understood what I mean.
- I listen with full attention to colleagues' concerns and adapt my communication based on each staff member's personality style.
- I manage conflict in a way that all parties experience a satisfactory outcome. I promote easy access to information and feedback, and I let people know what is expected of them and when.

My Score (out of 10): _____

Feedback, recognizing success and taking responsibility for underperformance:

(10= great feedback and recognition, 1= poor feedback and recognition)

- Besides the periodic written evaluations, I provide regular (verbal) and constructive feedback in a way that motivates and guides both under-performing and high-performing employees to achieve the objectives.
- I never avoid discussing problematic issues with staff.



- I provide specific performance feedback, both positive and corrective, as soon as possible after an event, and I deal fairly and promptly with performance problems.
- I publicly and privately recognize others when successes occur AND assume responsibility when things don't go right (rather than blaming everyone except myself).

My Score (out of 10): _____

Decision making:

(10= great decision making, 1= poor decision making)

- I am perceived as making every decision, even the smallest one, in my unit/section/division.
- I usually make decisions based on all the information available at the time, based on options provided to me by colleagues (rather than impulse and "gut instinct").
- I never have a hard time making difficult decisions.
- I can and do explain the rationale of my decision and/or my decision-making process.

My Score (out of 10): _____

Vision (establishing direction) and alignment:

(10= clear vision and alignment, 1= poor vision and alignment)

- I communicate clearly in word and in writing the objective of my unit/section/ division to all those whose cooperation may be needed.
- I know (because thinking is not enough) whether my team members have understood (independently of whether they agree or not) the goals and objectives.

My Score (out of 10): _____

Team development:

- My team is productive (achieves objectives) AND positive (good interrelationship between team members).
- I ensure that my team steadily works together to identify and improve team competencies. I actively promote constructive interaction between staff and between work units.
- I actively ensure that all team members are treated fairly.

My Score (out of 10): _____

Change Management:

Change brings uncertainty and is often a stressful time for all involved.



- I actively demonstrate support for innovation and for organizational changes needed to improve the organization's effectiveness, initiating, sponsoring, and implementing organizational change.
- I help others to successfully manage organizational change.
- I help staff develop a clear understanding of what they will need to do differently as a result of changes in the organization. I help individuals and groups manage the anxiety associated with significant change.

My Score (out of 10): _____

Empowerment:

- I consciously give responsibilities to colleagues, allowing them to have successes or failures.
- I convey confidence in my staff's ability to be successful, especially at challenging new tasks; I delegate significant responsibility and authority; I allow staff freedom to decide how they will accomplish their goals and resolve issues.
- I give people latitude to make decisions in their own sphere of work. I encourage individuals and groups to set their own goals, consistent with business goals.
- I encourage staff and units under my supervision to resolve problems on their own, providing support but avoiding prescribing a solution.

My Score (out of 10): _____

Toxic behaviors:

(1= I have had some or all of these behaviors frequently, 10= I never exhibit these behaviors)

- I have exhibited the following behaviors with my colleagues (peers or supervisees), either in private or in public: Contempt, blame, defensiveness, demeaning, dismissive, aggressive, harassment, insult, disrespectful, or hostility.

My Score (out of 10): _____

If you'd like to discuss your results with this self-assessment and get further support, <I'd be happy to help.> [link to contact page]



About Aid Worker Support

[Aid Worker Support](#) is a coaching and consulting organization that supports individual aid workers and managers in the UN, NGOs, and social enterprises. Run by former international aid workers Charles Vincent and Kenden Alford, we offer support wherever you are: field, headquarters, or in transition.

We offer [personal wellness coaching for individuals](#), [professional development coaching for individuals](#), [team development services](#), and [meeting facilitation services](#).

We're committed to living simple lives focused on meaningful contribution to those in need—and helping others to do the same.