

You want to be a manager? Some would say “you must be out of your mind!” Because your central question is, WHY?

- I will make more money!
- I can make the office better!
- I enjoy “leading” other people!
- “My brother is one, why not me?”
- My boss thinks I would make a good one!

To start with, it is necessary to identify why you want to make this step? What are your reasons for doing so? What do you expect to achieve?

Once you have decided to become a manager, how do you prepare?

- Your company may have a 2-3 week training program to ‘indoctrinate’ you.
- You may start to read books OR
- Take a course at the local college OR
- Go online to Coursera and take a management course OR
- Watch your boss and do what he/she does OR
- Watch your peers and imitate them OR.
- Do unto others -- manage other people as you would like to be managed --  
think of all you dislike AND do the opposite OR  
think of all the things you like AND copy them.

Put simply, there are a lot of ways to prepare for “becoming a manager.” Each has strengths as well as drawbacks:

- Your company’s 2-3 week training program:
  - You get the company point of view, not the employee point of view.
  - Unless the instructors are managers, you get an HR bias.
  - Indoctrination is not instruction – simply put, there are many questions you are not allowed to ask.
  - Being with your peers, you must “look good,” and “not make waves.”
- You may start to read books:
  - A biography of Steve Jobs or Jack Welch or Richard Branson is interesting but
  - Most business books are about entrepreneurs or CEO’s -- they are at the top, you, sadly, are at the bottom.
- Take a course at the local college: [or an MBA ☹]
  - You “learn” accounting, or supply-demand economics, or the time value of money [finance] which has little if anything to do with what you are going to do.

- Your instructors probably have little experience in actually managing; they are presenting you with book information
- You will learn the “plan, organize, lead, and control” model, based on a French iron factory in the 1800’s – **WHICH HAS BECOME THE CORE OF MOST MANAGEMENT COURSES – AND ALSO IRRELEVANT.**
- **[See BA/McDonalds Power points for more information.]**
- Go online to **COURSERA** and take a MOOC [massive, open, online course]
  - Similar criticisms as above PLUS
  - Online courses require a disciplined approach, e.g., a time-frame requirement which may be difficult for a working professional
  - Once again, the instructor may or may not have any actual managing experience
- Watch your boss and do what he does [or the opposite]:
  - Is your boss respected, trusted or feared?
  - Is your boss “on the fast track” OR “going nowhere?”
  - Personality differences between you and your boss may make copying his or her behavior difficult or impossible. [you are a people person, she is not]
- Watch your peers and copy them:
  - They may be in the same dilemma as you.
  - They have little understanding of what they are doing.
  - OR what they should be doing.
  - The “blind leading the blind” metaphor.
- Do unto others.....
  - Other people are not you.
  - What you dislike, they like AND do the opposite.
  - What you like, they dislike.

So now you are beginning to understand your dilemma -- you want to learn, you want to improve, you want to know what you are doing – how are you going to go about it?

Perhaps the RIGHT questions to ask are:

- **what does it mean for me to manage**
- **these people**
- **in this company**
- **doing this task**
- **under this boss**
- **given this budget**
- **facing this competition**
- **at this time**

Answers to these questions are neither simple nor reductionistic. Mantra's from management manuals, college courses, or corporate training do not supply instant or the right solutions. To wit: you manage highly educated professionals in a hi-tech company with great profits and stock options and free food – your “team” works a 65+ hour week without complaint – “build the team” is your management goal. Or you manage high-school educated, part-time employees in a fast-food place with stiff competition across the street and a union demanding \$15.00 an hour wage. Two different situations which require two different approaches! A manager who is successful in the hi-tech situation, probably, would not be successful in the fast-food situation and vice versa.

I began my career as an enlisted man in the U.S. Marine Corps. When I was a private, I noticed the behavior of the sergeants which I did not appreciate. I was determined, when I arrived at that rank to be different. Eventually, I became a sergeant and said to my subordinate:

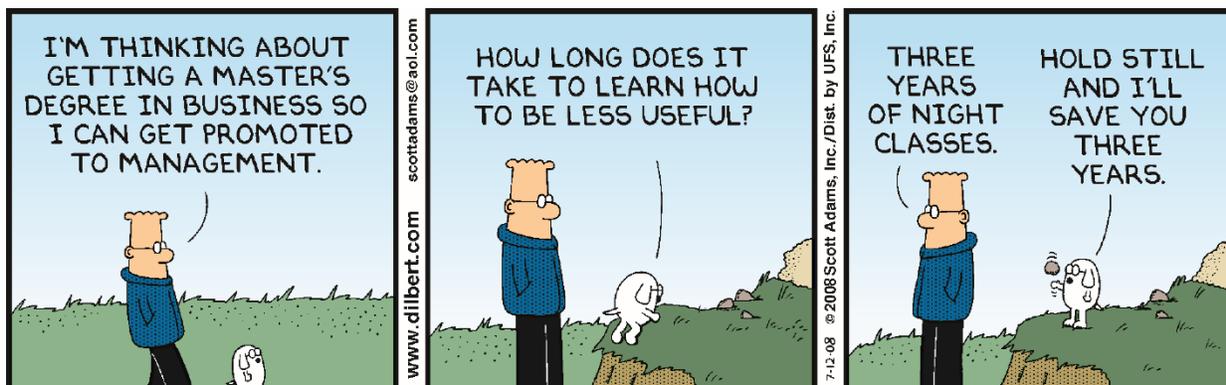
“You may call me by my first name: **SERGEANT.**”



While the questions above are the RIGHT questions there are other questions to ponder:

- **how do I go from being an outstanding individual performer to becoming a supervisor or a manager?**
- **what do I have to do differently?**
- **what must I stop doing?**
- **what must I start doing?**
- **what, in my family upbringing, affects this?**
- **what, in my personal style, affects this?**
- **how long should my transformation take?**

Deborah manages a major department with hundreds of employees, but she has higher ambitions. Instead of paying attention to her department, supervising her subordinates, she goes to meetings of the Executive Committee, volunteers for assignments with the top, and spends time working her senior network. It appears that Deborah is more concerned about her future than in running her department effectively.



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