



Lesson 23: People management

Level: Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B2 and above)

Time: 60-90 mins

How to use this lesson:

This lesson is designed to be done in class. The topics in this lesson will be of particular interest to students who have had work experience or who are involved in business in some way. You will need to consider the needs and experience of your students – if they have very little experience, for example, you should encourage them to think more about leadership styles in, for example, a project or a team. Those with more experience could focus on management in the workplace. In either case, encourage students to share their own experiences throughout the lesson.

Worksheet A

Begin by asking students what they already know/believe about management styles. You could ask questions such as:

- ▶ *What qualities do you need to be a good team leader / project manager / football manager?*
- ▶ *Do you think it is important to be strict if you are in charge of other people? Why? / Why not?*
- ▶ *Would you be able to organise a group of schoolchildren on a day trip? What about a summer camp? Why? / Why not?*

- 1 Students should be able to do the matching exercise in less than five minutes. Those who finish quickly can compare their answers with a partner. When they have all finished, check the answers and make sure everyone understands the finer differences between the word meanings.

Answers

1 f 2 b 3 h 4 d 5 c 6 g 7 a 8 e

- 2 Point out to students that, when managing people, the way you communicate your message is important and can make the difference between motivating workers and creating a negative atmosphere. Read out the example and make sure students understand the difference between the two versions. Point out that all the items are either too blunt/direct or are very insensitive and tactless. Items 3 and 6 are openly threatening, while item 4 is a direct accusation. All of these things are to be avoided.

Allow up to five minutes for students to write more tactful versions of the items. As they finish, they can compare notes with a partner. When everyone has finished, elicit suggestions from the class, writing more formal and tactful phrases on the board. There are many ways to use language tactfully, including moderating what you say with *I'm afraid ... / I feel ... / I'm sorry to have to tell you ... / You should bear in mind that ... / etc.* Encourage your students to recognise some of them and avoid being too direct. Point out that hypothetical language is often used to 'soften' the impact (e.g. *It might be better if ... / If this were to continue ... / We would need to see a dramatic improvement ... / etc.*). Make sure students are prepared to use such language as they will need it in exercise 3.

Suggested answers

(Your students may well offer different suggestions.)

- 1 I'm afraid we're going to have to let you go. *(answer provided as an example on Student's Worksheet A)*
- 2 I feel that you are performing below your best. If this were to continue, then we might have to re-think your position here.
- 3 I have to warn you that continued poor timekeeping could lead to your dismissal.
- 4 It might be better if you kept your internet use to a minimum.
- 5 I find it difficult to collaborate with him. I don't feel that he is a team player.
- 6 I'm afraid that there are no other alternatives/options left open to you.



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- 3 In this role-play activity, students have the opportunity to practise some of the more tactful language they discussed in exercise 2. Put the class into pairs and tell them to decide who is Student A and who is Student B.

Student A uses **Worksheet A**. Hand out **Worksheet B** to Student B. Allow a few minutes for students to read through their roles in each of the four situations. Tell them to begin thinking about what they might say. They may need a further few minutes to organise their thoughts.

Depending on the size of your class, you could have all the pairs practise the role-play for 5-10 minutes, before asking individual pairs to act out situations in front of the class. For smaller classes, you might wish to choose one pair to act out a situation while the others listen.

Whichever approach you use, make sure there is plenty of time for discussion on how effective and appropriate the language is in each case. Invite suggestions for alternative ways of expressing some of the points.

Worksheet B

Half of the students should be given **Worksheet B** earlier than the other half (see instructions for exercise 3).

- 4 Use the questions to conduct a class discussion on different leadership/management styles. Make sure students understand the difference in each case and encourage them to provide examples where appropriate. Ask them to tell you which is best in each pair, and to give reasons for their choices.

Allow for some differences in opinion here. For example, some of your students might think that asking, rather than telling someone what to do is much better, while others might think it is necessary to tell people.

- 5 Allow a few minutes for students to read the text. Invite them to tell you what they feel about the different styles. Then refer the class back to exercise 4 and ask them to use some of the phrases from that exercise to talk about the different management styles. Elicit sentences similar to the following:

- ▶ An **autocratic** manager would **give orders** and probably **inspire fear**.
- ▶ A **democratic** manager **delegates responsibility** and **helps people to develop**.
- ▶ A **consultative** manager **inspires cooperation**.
- ▶ A **laissez-faire** manager **asks people to do things** and probably **gives credit where it's due**.

- 6 Use this exercise to round up what students have learned in the lesson. Allow a few minutes for students to work alone. They can then compare with different students around the class. Elicit suggestions from the whole class. You might want to compile a list on the board as students suggest items. The following can all be found in the lesson (although opinions will vary as to whether some of them are good or bad qualities):

Good bosses, managers and leaders ...

... motivate people
 ... command respect
 ... interact with others
 ... can negotiate
 ... don't let their private life influence their work
 ... can persuade people to do things
 ... can moderate in disputes
 ... can maintain discipline
 ... ask people to do things
 ... give credit where it's due

... delegate responsibility
 ... inspire cooperation
 ... encourage people
 ... help people to develop
 ... make decisions
 ... share work out
 ... choose the right people for each role
 ... involve people in the decision-making process
 ... put the power in the hands of the team



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Worksheet A

1 Match the words in bold to their meanings.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 If you want people to work well, you need to motivate them. | a act as a kind of 'referee' |
| 2 He is well liked as a manager and finds it easy to command respect. | b make people give |
| 3 As head of the department, you'll need to interact with people above and below you. | c have an effect on |
| 4 The ability to negotiate is very important if you want to succeed in business. | d discuss something and reach agreement |
| 5 It's difficult not to let your personal feelings influence your professional life. | e keep |
| 6 Sometimes, you just have to persuade people to work harder. | f give someone a reason to want to do something |
| 7 She has a proven ability to moderate in disputes between management and workers. | g make people do something (by talking nicely to them) |
| 8 If you can't maintain discipline in your department, you will never reach your targets. | h communicate |

2 Look at the phrases below. Say why they are not appropriate and suggest how you could express the ideas better. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 You're fired!

[example] *I'm afraid we're going to have to let you go.*

- 2 You're just not working hard enough.

- 3 If you're late again, that's it. You're finished.

- 4 I know you're not working at your computer. You're just surfing the internet, aren't you?

- 5 I can't stand him. He's impossible to work with.

- 6 Those are your choices. If you don't like it, you can leave.



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Worksheet B

3 Role-play Student A

Look at the situations below. Your teacher will give you instructions.

- 1 You are Student B's manager. His/Her work has suffered badly in the last month. Ask about the problem, listen carefully, and suggest a solution.
- 2 Student B is in charge of a project you have been working on. Explain that you have a problem with one of the team members. Give details.
- 3 Student B is your manager and he/she is going to give you some bad news. Listen and respond appropriately.
- 4 You have to write an assessment of Ben, who works with Student B. Ask Student B about Ben. Specifically, you want to know if he is reliable, hard-working, and honest. You need to find out if Ben is a useful member of the team.



Worksheet B

3 Role play Student B

Look at the situations below. Your teacher will give you instructions.

- 1 Student A is your manager. He/She is going to ask you why your work has been poor for the last month. Explain what has been happening in your personal life and how it has affected your work. Listen and respond to Student A's suggestions.
- 2 Student A is going to explain a problem he/she has with a project. The problem is with another member of the team. You are the project manager. Listen and suggest a solution.
- 3 You are Student A's manager. You have to give him/her the bad news that the company is making cutbacks. You have two alternatives to offer: Student A must agree to either a large cut in salary or a 50% reduction in working hours.
- 4 Student A is going to ask you about Ben, your colleague. You don't like Ben at all and you have plenty of reasons. Answer Student A's questions and say what you think should happen to Ben.



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4 In pairs, discuss the questions below.

What's the difference between ...

- ▶ telling someone to do something and asking someone to do something?
- ▶ demanding respect and commanding respect?
- ▶ taking all the credit and giving credit where it's due?
- ▶ giving orders and delegating responsibility?
- ▶ inspiring fear and inspiring cooperation?
- ▶ driving people and encouraging people?
- ▶ exploiting people and helping people to develop?

5 Read the descriptions of different management styles and say which phrases from exercise 4 you would associate with each one.

What kind of manager would you be?

There are many kinds of manager but here are just four types to think about. Which would you choose?

Autocratic

The manager makes the decisions and the workers have very little say in things. Typical of the armed forces. This is the simplest style because fewer people are involved in decision-making. A possible problem to consider is that talented or ambitious workers might not stay long with the company.

Democratic

Work is shared out among the employees, who feel motivated as a result. It can only work well if the right people are chosen for each role. Projects generally take longer than with an autocratic style.

Consultative

All members of a team or department are asked for their opinion in the decision-making process, leading to a high level of motivation. However, this motivation may be lost if the final decision is different to what an employee suggested.

Laissez-faire

The power is in the hands of the team – the manager hardly ever gets involved. This is clearly popular with workers but is also leads to the lowest productivity.

6 Think about good bosses, managers and leaders. Using vocabulary and ideas from this lesson, make notes below.

Good bosses, managers and leaders ...

... *motivate people.*