

Developing an Engineer into an Effective Manager Harvard Case Solution & Analysis

How Google Sold Its Engineers on Management

Mercedes Glass Wednesday, October 15, 2014 \$1.25

NOT Another Manager...

Are Managers Needed?



Most engineers, not just those at Google, were so spent their time designing and debugging, not communicating with bosses or supervising other workers' progress.

In their hearts they've long believed that management is more destructive than beneficial, a distraction from "real work" and tangible, goal-directed tasks.

Google's Challenge

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Project Oxygen

1. Hire the right people	2. Hire the right people
2. Hire the right people	3. Hire the right people
3. Hire the right people	4. Hire the right people
4. Hire the right people	5. Hire the right people
5. Hire the right people	6. Hire the right people
6. Hire the right people	7. Hire the right people
7. Hire the right people	8. Hire the right people
8. Hire the right people	9. Hire the right people
9. Hire the right people	10. Hire the right people

They said...YES



So...What does this all mean?

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Google's Challenge

How do you get engineers to take on management responsibilities for their subordinates?

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Project Oxygen

Google's new program that focuses on the most effective managers and helps them become even better.

What Google's Good Managers Do:

- Be a good coach
- Develop the team and their performance
- Engage, motivate, and inspire
- Be inclusive and build trust
- Be a good career coach - focus on individual development
- Help with career development
- Give a clear vision and strategy for the team
- Help set personal goals that help them to hit what the team is doing

They said...YES

Project Oxygen was designed to offer specific feedback to managers on the most effective management practices in the industry. It provided specific, actionable behaviors that brought these results in.

These are the Google engineers that go to their managers and give them the program. They're Google's most effective managers. They're the ones that Google is trying to replicate across the organization.



So...What does this all mean?

At its core, Google is a company where the staff consists almost entirely of "A" players. Managers have a complex, demanding role to play. They must go beyond "managing" the day-to-day work and support their employees' personal needs, development, and career planning.

This means:

- Providing great feedback
- Coaching and mentoring
- Having a clear vision
- Being a role model
- Keeping a good eye on the team's progress and providing support through assignments, and carefully managing resources.

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Google's Challenge

If your highly skilled, handpicked hires don't value management, how can you run the place effectively? How do you turn doubters into believers, persuading them to spend time managing others?

**CHALLENGES
AHEAD**

Priest Nyssen

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**CHALLENGES
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Project Oxygen

comprehensive program that measures key management behaviors and cultivates them through communication and training

<http://hbr.org/2013/12/how-google-sold-its-engineers-on-management/ar/4>

What Google's Best Managers Do:

- Is a good coach
- Empowers the team and does not micromanage
- Expresses interest in and concern for team members' success and personal well-being
- Is productive and results-oriented
- Is a good communicator—listens and shares information
- Helps with career development
- Has a clear vision and strategy for the team
- Has key technical skills that help him or her advise the team

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Project Oxygen colead Neal Patel recalls, “We knew the team had to be careful. Google has high standards of proof, even for what, at other places, might be considered obvious truths. Simple correlations weren’t going to be enough. So we actually ended up trying to prove the opposite case—that managers don’t matter. Luckily, we failed.”

They said...YES

Project Oxygen was designed to offer granular, hands-on guidance. It didn't just identify desirable management traits in the abstract; it pinpointed specific, measurable behaviors that brought those traits to life.

That's why Google employees let go of their skepticism and got with the program. Project Oxygen mirrored their decision-making criteria, respected their need for rigorous analysis, and made it a priority to measure impact. Data-driven cultures, Google discovered, respond well to data-driven change.

