

Movin' On Up

Rising Through the Ranks to a Leadership Role

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So you want to move up from carrying wrenches and getting dirty in the field or filing paperwork in the office and you look around at all your bosses making that fantastic money and going to lunch whenever they want to and you know they're really not all that bright or smart anyway and half the time you could actually do a better job since most of the time it feels like you're already doing their job.

Well...

...here's
some pithy
advice from
Yoda.

**“Do or do not.
There is no
try.”**



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Although, sometimes when you try, things can happen like they did to this guy...

- Lost job, 1832
- Defeated for legislature, 1832
- Failed in business, 1833
- Elected to legislature, 1834
- Sweetheart (Ann Rutledge) died, 1835
- Had nervous breakdown, 1836
- Defeated for Speaker, 1838
- Defeated for nomination for Congress, 1843
- Elected to Congress, 1846
- Lost re-nomination, 1848
- Rejected for Land Officer, 1849
- Defeated for Senate, 1854
- Defeated for nomination for Vice-President, 1856
- Again defeated for Senate, 1858
- Elected President, 1860 **SUCCESS!!**



So here's some pithy advice from that same guy on leadership...

- You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.
- I do not think much of a man (or woman) who is not wiser today than he (or she) was yesterday.
- I will prepare and some day my chance will come.





**KEEP
CALM
I'M YOUR
NEW
BOSS**

So now you've made the transition (or are about to) from co-worker to leader/manager.

Now what?

Now the person you and your co-workers used to complain about — is you.

You've always thought about being in charge. You always wanted to be the person to make all those needed changes and do things a lot better and smarter than your old boss.

So, here's your chance...

Oh yeah... Wait a minute!

First, there may be some possible downsides to your new adventure, like...



- More responsibility and higher expectations from others.
- Higher levels of management will be watching.
- A larger work load and longer hours.
- The complexity of your job has increased.
- There's a higher level of the possibility of failure.
- Always exciting office politics.
- Long-time friends may now see you as the enemy...

...but this new adventure can also have a very exciting upside; and possibly a great success. Although, there are a few things people often forget to tell you about this whole leadership thing.

First, you'll find you were never prepared for it.

Just being the best mechanic, technician or ten-key operator ever is definitely not the same thing as being a leader/manager as you now have entirely different responsibilities.

In this new job, all your work will be accomplished through others hands, **not** yours (well except for the paperwork), meaning you will now be measured as a success or failure on how well those others do their jobs.

However, it really doesn't have to be all that hard either, because—lucky for you—great leadership can be learned.

Yep. Surprise! Just like riding a bike, changing a tire, baking a cake (*actually that's not all that easy*) and swimming; leadership is a learned skill.

I know you've heard of natural born leaders, but often they're really just guys and gals with lots of ambition and charisma—and many times—don't actually know much about true leadership.

Vince Lombardi, the great football coach, once said, *“Leaders aren't born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work.”*

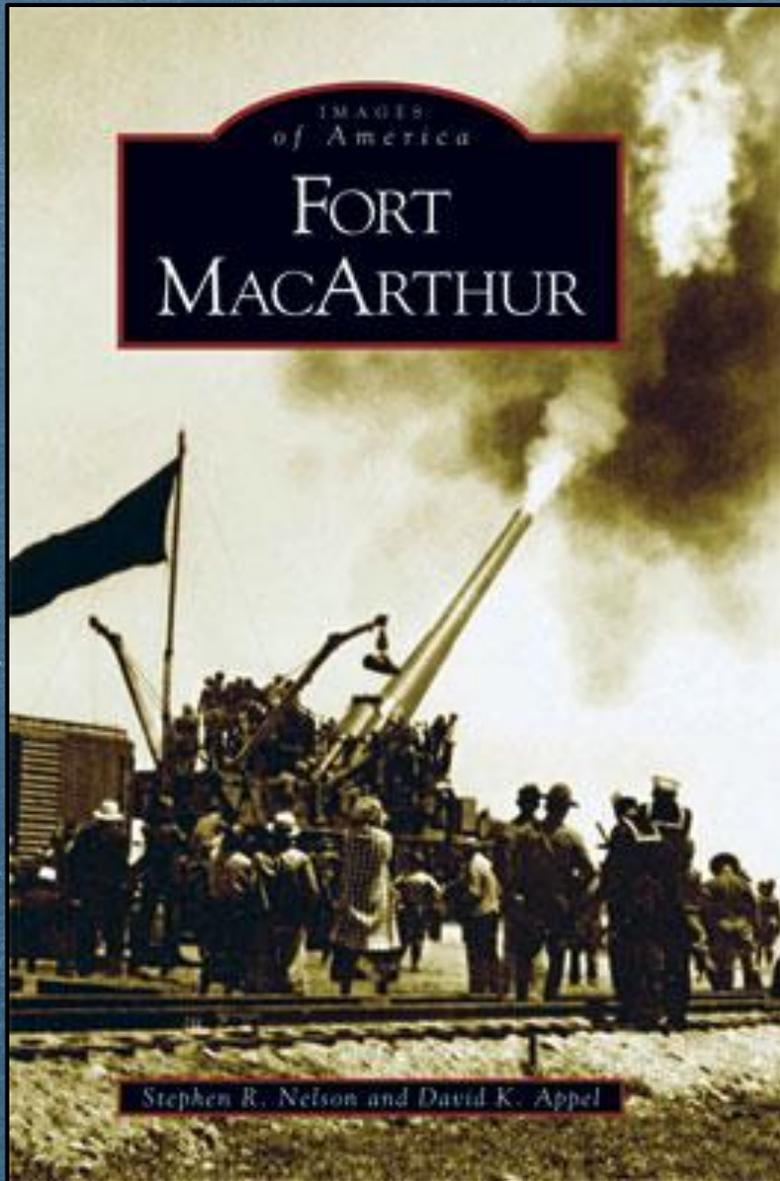
A common failing of many organizations is in recognizing that while training people to learn the hard skills of fixing widgets may be worth funding, actually funding training for the soft skills of supervision and leadership is just as—if not more—important in the long run.

After all, if one wants increased production, it's best to have team leaders that are trained to inspire their team mates to go above and beyond what's normally expected by encouraging innovative thought, critical thinking skills and a passion for service.



Andrew Rich via Getty Images

My story as a new manager:
Fort MacArthur, San Pedro, California



So now **you're** the new Boss. How should you begin?

- First, bring your entire team together in one group to talk about this new opportunity for both you and them.
- Telling everyone at once in an upfront manner begins the process of informing the team of your commitment to equitable treatment of all team members and your determination to not play favorites.
- You should set up one on one meetings to discover if your team is willing to trust and support you as their leader. This allows them to express any questions or concerns they'd like to discuss.
- If there is a team member unwilling to give their support (maybe someone who also tried for the promotion you just received) ask that person what it would take to possibly help them to get on board.
- Helping that person to come up with a plan to cope with the transition is what a skilled manager should do and will provide a benefit in the future to both that foot-dragging team mate and you as the manager.

Secondly...



- Newly promoted leaders—especially when they're leading their former co-workers—many times go easy on expressing their goals and expectations of the team at the beginning.
- Be open to each team member's concerns and share with them your understanding that change can be challenging, but the success of the transition to a new boss is pretty much dependent on each individual team member and their positive or negative actions.
- So ask these questions:
 - a) What do **you** want to see in our workplace?
 - b) What are **you** willing to do to get what **you** want?
 - c) And how can I help **you** get there?

Thirdly...

- To empower your employees to generate results, avoid pushing your own ideas and solutions (a very common new manager/leader mistake), instead, be a sounding board and guide to your team in helping them determine how they will reach their goals given the circumstances.
- Be aware of the folks who love drama on your team, (you'll know who they are from your past association). Push back against your natural urge to immediately fix issues. Listen and discuss, but don't commit to fixing all of those person's problems.
- Set up appointments to discuss progress on their own solutions and provide any needed input.



Things to bear in mind for a high performing transition:

1. Keep your boss informed of progress or the lack thereof.
2. Be upfront about what's going on.
3. Begin a well-documented program of training or remedial training.
4. Take the time to review policies and procedures if they exist.
5. If needed, design policies, procedures and operating manuals.
6. Document any feedback (both positive and/or negative).
7. Realize and identify your own capabilities and limitations.
8. Realize that you too also have room for growth and improvement.
9. Realize that at times friendships change and are not always equal.
10. Realize that it is more important for people to have respect for you than to actually like you.

And here's a great thought to help in your success! What if, as a new manager, you challenged negative assumptions by assuming your employees actually:

- Want to take responsibility for their work and want to do a good job.
- Care about their work above and beyond the money they get paid to perform it.
- Consider a big-picture view essential in performing their work.
- Are willing to take responsibility for their mistakes.
- Are capable of establishing their own structures in order to maintain focus.
- Want to contribute freely.
- Are fully capable of understanding budgetary and political realities.
- Do not just focus on their entitlements and rights.
- Are intrinsically honest and trustworthy.

Driving Fear Out of the Workplace

Kathleen D. Ryan & Daniel K. Oestreich (1991)

Questions & Discussion
