

Becoming a Technical Manager

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Presentation Outline

- 🔑 Things to consider
- 🔑 Learn
- 🔑 Grow
- 🔑 Practicing a management role
- 🔑 Life as a technical manager
- 🔑 Food for thought



Things to Consider

Make sure you want to be a manager

- 🔑 Consider the following when deciding to become a manager:
 - ❖ Most people go to school to learn a specific profession that interests them.
 - ❖ Over time, as they gain expertise, experience, and an understanding of their profession and industry
 - ❖ As a manager, now, instead of doing the work, you will be managing people and overseeing the work performed by your team.
 - ❖ You should make the conscious decision that you would rather be a manager than an individual contributor.
 - ❖ That said, being a manager can be extremely rewarding and fascinating, if it is right for you.

Things to Consider

Grow in what way?

🔑 To move to a management role, you need to grow in two ways:

- ❖ First, you must learn to be a manager
 - ❖ Learning to lead people
 - ❖ Learning company processes

- ❖ Second, you must learn the business of Information Technology (IT)

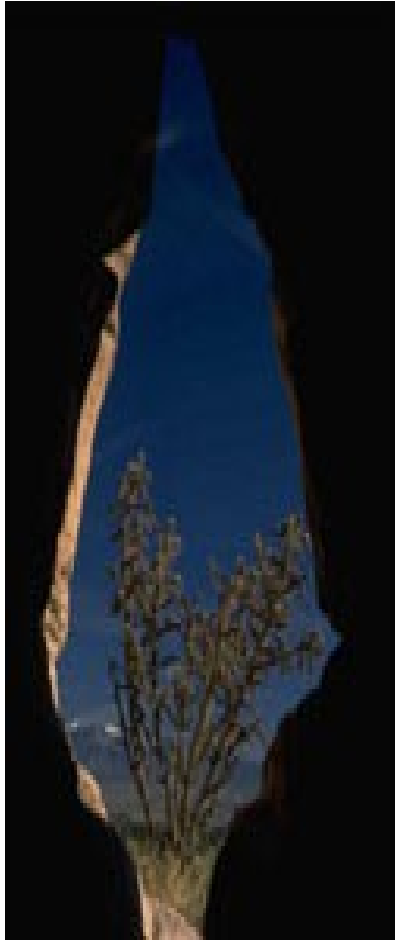
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**"It's the latest innovation in office safety.
When your computer crashes, an air bag is activated
so you won't bang your head in frustration."**

Things to Consider

Leadership versus management (Part 1)



- Various opinions exist about the differences between leadership and management.
- Leadership is proactive and management is reactive. The best managers have a combination of both.
- Management
 - ❖ A good manager reacts appropriately to management requests, business issues, and business processes.
 - ❖ Management requests are special requests for analysis, cutting your budget as needed, and other similar activities.

Things to Consider

Leadership versus management (Part 2)

Leadership

- ❖ Leadership is the ability to formulate vision and articulate that vision in such a way that other people understand it, embrace it, and move toward its reality.
- ❖ In a corporate setting, leaders are the agents of change, the internal entrepreneurs, and the risk takers.
- ❖ Leadership in a corporate setting also reveals itself in another way, namely through the respect, loyalty, and trust of your staff. In its truest essence, leadership is the ability to take control, and to lead people who wish to follow.

Learn

Learn about your future job



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Learn

Your future job description

🔑 As you consider moving to a management role, it would be to your advantage to read the job description of the job into which you would like to be promoted. It may include:

- ❖ The specific responsibilities
- ❖ Required certifications
- ❖ Professional credentials
- ❖ The required knowledge and experience



🔑 Once knowledgeable of the job description contents, you can formulate a plan on how to properly prepare

Learn

Learn company processes

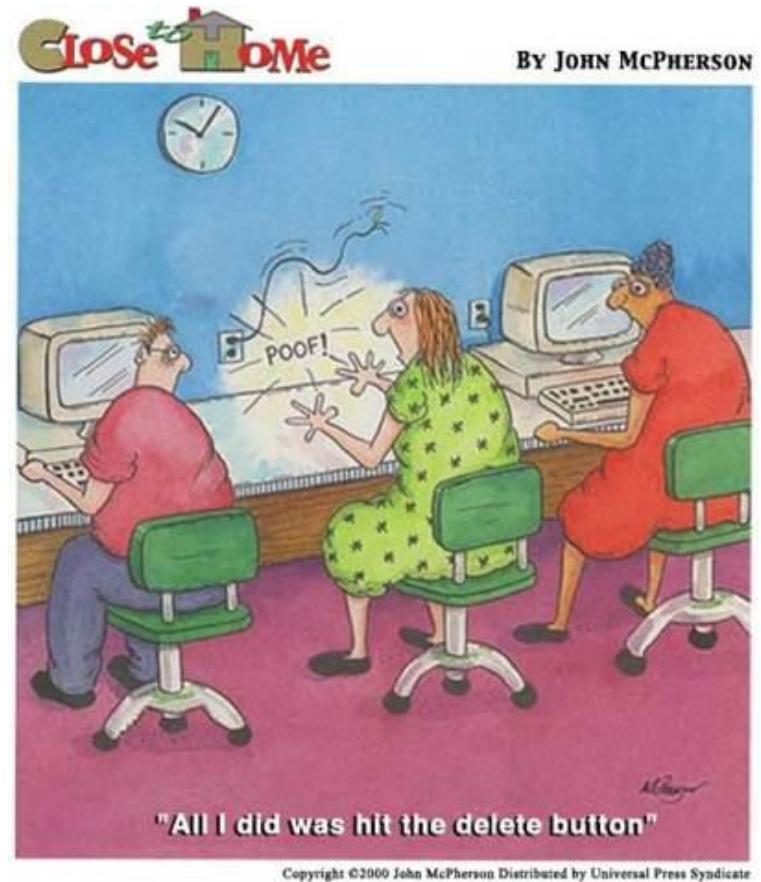
- 🔑 When you become a manager, you may be required to help facilitate processes including budgeting, salary planning, etc.
- 🔑 If possible, it would be worthwhile for you to learn about and participate in these activities prior to becoming a manager.
- 🔑 This participation will have the following advantages:
 - ❖ By already being familiar with these processes, it will reduce your learning curve when you actually have to use them.
 - ❖ It may save you from making the simple mistakes that are generally made when first learning new processes.
 - ❖ It will illustrate that you are serious about becoming a manager.
 - ❖ It will be one less thing that you will need to learn when you step into your new management role.

Learn

Learn more about your profession

🔑 Almost all jobs can be categorized as being within a specific profession, and you must increase your knowledge within that profession.

- ❖ Programming
- ❖ Testing / QA
- ❖ Web design / ergonomics
- ❖ Project management
- ❖ Business analysis
- ❖ Database design and/or admin
- ❖ Production control
- ❖ Help desk



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Learn

Learn more about your profession (cont.)

- 🔑 We are in a world of specialization. Each professional role has specific knowledge that is required to perform it. You will need to gain a deeper understanding of that specialization's trends, accepted practices and rules. This is important for two reasons;
 - ❖ As the manager of that specific specialization, the company will be relying on you to bring this professional knowledge into the company
 - ❖ You will be better able to teach and mentor your staff if you have a deep understanding of your profession.



Learn

Learn more about your company

- 🔑 The role as manager generally brings with it the requirement to interact with people in other parts of the company
- 🔑 For example, as the manager of Accounts Receivable, you may be working with people in the following departments.
 - ❖ **Sales** - to tell them which clients owe the company money
 - ❖ **Customer Service** - to have them remind specific customers that they owe the company money
 - ❖ **Shipping** - to tell them to stop sending products to customers that have not paid their bills
- 🔑 Understanding various company department functions will help you be more effective in your new management role.

Learn

Learn more about your industry

- 🔑 As a new manager, you will find the need for knowledge beyond the specific tasks you performed as an individual contributor.
 - ❖ As an individual contributor you are responsible for executing processes. As the manager, you will be responsible for designing the process.
 - ❖ Learning more about your industry will allow you to work more effectively with managers in other parts of your company.
 - ❖ As you grow professionally and take more senior management roles, you will be less and less involved in specific processes and more involved in company policies and company direction.

Learn

Cross training

- 🔑 While still an individual contributor, if possible, it would be well worth your while to cross train on other jobs performed within your department.

- 🔑 There are two advantages of you knowing how to perform multiple jobs within your department .
 - ❖ It provides your current manager with increased flexibility. If someone calls in sick or goes on vacation you can perform the work
 - ❖ Should you, in time, become the department manager, then it is one more function within your department that you will understand.



Grow

So you can attain your next professional step

Snapshots at jasonlove.com



"Of students surveyed, 64% prefer English and 32% prefer math. The fact that these numbers do not add up to 100 may help explain why."

Grow

Professional certifications

- 🔑 Depending on your industry, company, and technical role, additional professional certification may bring you additional compensation, widen your value to your company, and/or position you for promotion.
- 🔑 In industries that are less regulated, professional certifications not only enhance your professional credentials, but studying for the exams will also increase your professional knowledge.
- 🔑 Having these professional certifications;
 - ❖ Shows a level of commitment to your profession
 - ❖ A self-starting nature
 - ❖ A willingness to improve yourself.

Grow

Education level

- Educational level is a funny thing, it may not always help you, but not having it can really hurt you.
- This means that just because you have a college degree, you will not automatically get the job.
- Conversely, not having the degree, may eliminate you as a candidate for the position. This isn't fair, but it is often the case.
- Should you not have the required degree, enrollment in a program can help overcome short-term objections to your current level of education and provide long-term degree attainment.

Grow

Internal company training classes

- ⚙️ Very often companies offer great internal classes and training programs. Take full advantage of these opportunities.
- ⚙️ As an employee, they are most likely free and they are teaching things that they want you and other employees to learn.
- ⚙️ These classes can generally teach you additional skills as well as broaden your personal and professional horizons and perspective.



Grow

Defining your management style (part 1)

- 🔑 What kind of manager do you want to become?
 - ❖ Do you want to dig deeply into the details?
 - ❖ Do you want to be a visionary who only gets involved at a high level?
 - ❖ Do you want to drive your people as hard as possible?
 - ❖ Do you want to make sure your staff has a good work/life balance?
 - ❖ Do you want your staff to like you, be afraid of you, hate you, respect you, and/or want to be you?

- 🔑 Answers to some of these questions are partially based on your personal beliefs, abilities, temperament, and values. Other answers are based on the conscious decisions you make as a manager.

- 🔑 They may also help you decide where to grow.

Grow

Defining your management style (part 2)

- 🔑 Over time, you may see your management style evolve.
 - ❖ You may start out strict and overbearing and become mentoring and supportive.
 - ❖ You may start out mentoring and supportive and become strict and overbearing.
 - ❖ Conversely, you may quickly fall into a management style that is successful for you and maintain it through your entire career.
 - ❖ In either case, you will see that as you grow personally through your life, you will also gain a deeper understanding of what type of manager you want to be.
- 🔑 The goal here is to help you grow into the type of manager you would like to become

Practicing a leadership role

Practice makes perfect



Practicing a leadership role

Practice makes perfect

- 🔑 As with most things in life, with practice comes improvement.

- 🔑 There are a number of small things that you can do to begin practicing for your future management role. These items are listed below and are described on the pages which follow.
 - ❖ Volunteer for cross-department committees
 - ❖ Replay management decisions
 - ❖ Provide leadership on small projects
 - ❖ Learn to delegate
 - ❖ Learn through volunteerism



Practicing a leadership role

Volunteer for cross-department committees

- 🔑 As a manager, you will be a member of two teams.
 - ❖ You will be the leader of your team,
 - ❖ A member of your manager's team.

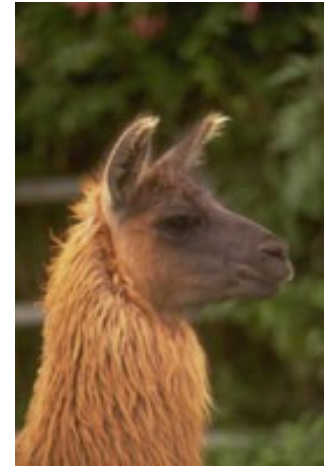
- 🔑 As a member of your manager's team, you will likely be asked to participate in cross-department projects and initiatives.

- 🔑 Where possible, volunteering to assist on cross-department related projects gives you:
 - ❖ Exposure to other parts of the company
 - ❖ Gives you a taste of cross-department politics
 - ❖ Gives you an understanding of how cross-department initiatives are funded, organized, and run.

Practicing a leadership role

Replay management decisions

- 🔑 As an individual contributor you see management decisions made on a daily basis.
- 🔑 Take note of:
 - ❖ The circumstances related to the situation
 - ❖ The decisions that were made
 - ❖ The potential reasons why the decisions were made
 - ❖ Possible other outcomes, and how you would have acted if you were the manager.
- 🔑 Playing these types of *What If* mental gymnastics will help you act properly when you are the one making the decision.



Practicing a leadership role

Provide leadership on small projects

- 🔑 There is a big difference between doing the work and leading the work.
 - ❖ As the doer, your role is to receive instruction and perform the required task.
 - ❖ As the leader, your job is to provide the goal, define the process, structure the tasks, assign the tasks to specific workers, coordinate their efforts, supervise work quality, and deliver the final product.
- 🔑 The sooner you begin gaining experience in these project leadership components, the sooner you will be ready to manage a group on an ongoing basis.
- 🔑 Very often project leaders become project managers, who become department managers.

Practicing a leadership role

Learn to delegate

- 🔑 The delegation of tasks to staff members is easy for some new managers and almost impossible for others.
- 🔑 Common reasons for this difficulty are listed below.
 1. You feel uncomfortable asking people to do things
 2. You think you can do it better yourself (even if you can)
 3. You think you can do it faster (even if you can)
 4. It will take you more time to explain to someone then do it yourself (even if it will)
 5. You are very control oriented and would rather do it yourself
- 🔑 You can not be a successful manager if you can not delegate work to your team members.

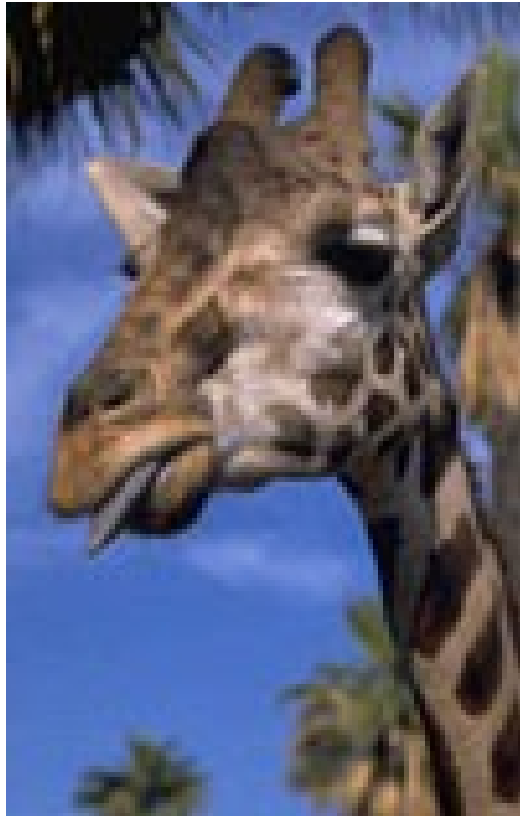
Life as a Technical Manager

Things you can expect



Life as a Technical Manager

Moving from technician to technical manager



- You have spent your career performing other technical tasks
- Because of your technical and leadership ability, you have been asked to move into a management role. Congratulations.
- You have most likely spent the majority of your professional life performing technical, rather than managerial work,
- Many aspects of your new job will be new to you.

Life as a Technical Manager

New required skills and challenges (Part 1)

- 🔑 When you move into the technical management ranks, your breadth of technical knowledge and abilities will have to significantly change.

- 🔑 Rather than having deep expertise in a specific technology, you will have to transform your skills to be generally knowledgeable of multiple technologies.
 - ❖ For example, if you were highly skilled Java programmer, once promoted, you may be required to manage Java and Microsoft .NET related projects.
 - ❖ You must quickly learn how to manage projects using technologies where you have limited or no technical expertise.

Life as a Technical Manager

New required skills and challenges (Part 2)

🔑 You must also, over time, learn the business of technology management. This includes an understanding of all of those things that have happened around you, such as:

- ❖ Disaster recovery
- ❖ Vendor management
- ❖ Software (if you have a hardware background)
- ❖ Hardware (if you have a software background)
- ❖ Business analysis
- ❖ Project management, etc.

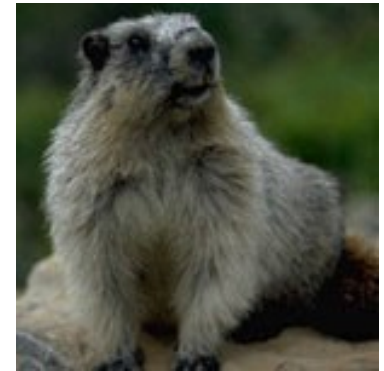


🔑 The good news is that many people prior to you have made this transition, most likely including those who promoted you into your managerial role.

Life as a Technical Manager

Maintaining your technical skills

- 🔑 As a manager, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for you to maintain your level of technical expertise.
- 🔑 As technology moves on, you will most likely not have the time, or inclination, to learn these new technologies. These changes could be:
 - ❖ A new series of routers from a major hardware vendor
 - ❖ Enhancements to a Microsoft operating system
 - ❖ New Java base classes
 - ❖ New database functionality
- 🔑 Over time, as these changes accumulate, you will become less-and-less familiar with the new interfaces and features of the latest product versions.



Life as a Technical Manager

Leading the work versus doing the work

- As a manager, you will still be involved in the work your department is doing, but it will be different.
- Instead of doing the work, you will be managing people and overseeing the work performed by your team.
- It's important that you understand that managing is very different from doing.
- You may be required to assess the skill and accomplishments of team members without having the personal knowledge to perform their tasks.
- Your ability to make these assessments and judgments will be crucial to your future managerial success.

Life as a Technical Manager

Letting your staff do the work (Part 1)

- 🔑 The delegation of tasks to staff members is easy for some new managers and almost impossible for others. The difficulty in delegation is different for different people.

- 🔑 Common reasons for this difficulty are listed below.
 - ❖ You feel uncomfortable asking people to do things
 - ❖ You think you can do it better yourself
 - ❖ You think you can do it faster
 - ❖ It will take you more time to explain to someone than do it yourself
 - ❖ You are very control oriented and would rather do it yourself

Life as a Technical Manager

Letting your staff do the work (Part 2)

- 🔑 If you find delegation difficult learn to get over it.
- 🔑 You can not be a successful manager if you can not delegate work to your team members.
- 🔑 Once in a management role, you will not have the time to do your current job and your new management job.
- 🔑 You will have to learn delegation quickly, so you can assign your old responsibilities to someone else on your staff.
- 🔑 If you are managing people with diverse technical skills, they may be better qualified than you to perform specific technical tasks if they are outside your personal expertise.

Life as a Technical Manager

Handing off your old responsibilities

- 🔑 One of the hardest things to do as new technical manager is to hand off your old responsibilities to a member of your team. Common reasons for this difficulty are listed below.
 - ❖ You love doing technical work. That's why you went into the profession to begin with.
 - ❖ You originally wrote the software being maintained, and you know it better than anyone else
 - ❖ Your ability to find and fix hardware problems is one of the reasons you were promoted to manager
 - ❖ You are more comfortable and confident with technical work than you are with management related tasks.
 - ❖ You want your team to be successful and want to help

Life as a Technical Manager

The importance of process

- 🔑 As a technical manager, you maintain control, minimize the risk of calamity, enforce consistency, and maximize productivity through the proper implementation of processes.
- 🔑 Processes can bring bureaucracy with it, but the total lack of process brings confusion, loss of work, and a lack of control.
- 🔑 Your goal as a technical department manager is to define, implement and enforce streamlined processes
- 🔑 Depending on your specific current role, some of the discussed processes will be of immediate use and some will not. That said, as an IT professional, they are all worth knowing.

Life as a Technical Manager

Relying on your team's ability

- 🔑 You may objectively know that you are doing the right thing by letting your staff do the work instead of you.
- 🔑 As previously discussed, delegation is an important management trait.
- 🔑 At a personal level however, for the first time you are putting your success in the hands of others.
- 🔑 This may not be easy for you to feel comfortable with, but get use to it, it comes with the job.




Practicing a leadership role

Learn through volunteerism

- One safe way to learn new management skills is to volunteer outside the workplace at your favorite religious or civic non-profit organization.
- For example, you can offer to run a fundraising event for the local library, coach a kid's sports team or offer to organize a blood drive for the Red Cross. By providing this service, you will not only be practicing your organization and management skills but you will be doing something worthwhile for your community.

Food for Thought:

What if you become the manager tomorrow?

 Consider the following questions as if you were becoming the department manager tomorrow.

- ❖ How would you tell your staff that you are the their new manager?
- ❖ Would you act the same or differently than your current manager?
- ❖ Would you dress differently?
- ❖ Could you delegate?
- ❖ Who would you assign to take over your existing responsibilities?
- ❖ Are you nervous about budgeting, salary planning or other processes?
- ❖ Do you really want to be the manager?
- ❖ Once you are the manager, what will be your next promotional step?

Now your thoughts

- 🔑 Questions?
- 🔑 Ideas?
- 🔑 Fun comments?



Thank you and best wishes



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