

# **How YOU can Manage Your Staff More Effectively**

(And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)

By

Gina Gardiner

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## **ABOUT THIS BOOK**

How You Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion) offers lots of Practical strategies to help you get the very best out of your people as individuals and as a team.

Time, energy and money are all very precious resources and all three seem to be in short supply for most busy managers.

The book has relevance for experienced managers who want to share good practice and for aspiring leaders who want to develop and deepen their leadership skills.

The book covers a wide range of issues including:

- Developing strategic vision
- Creating a dream team
- Creating a 'can do' culture
- Effective delegation
- Holding people to account
- Developing a solutions approach
- The power of anticipation
- Giving positive feedback
- Having those 'hard conversations'
- Managing stress for you and your team

*(And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)*

- Creating a good work-life balance

Everything in the book has been tried and tested in a variety of organizations; it is a distillation of more than 30 years' experience of developing leadership at every level.

Its partner book, *Kick Start Your Career*, is designed for new initiates into the business world, graduates who are ambitious and want to create a successful career for themselves. It is a no-nonsense, jargon free manual full of practical ideas and strategies to support the development of leadership from day one.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



With more than 30 years' experience in developing people and helping them to attain their full potential, Gina Gardiner has a proven track record in developing leadership and management skills at all levels, from training newly appointed graduates to supporting middle and senior managers.

She was recognized by Investors In People as creating an innovative and exemplary training programme for emerging and middle managers and by Ofsted as an "inspirational leader". Her experience includes "change management" and supporting organizational leaders in developing strategic vision and creating a "can do" culture. She is a master practitioner in neurolinguistic programming (NLP) and developing leadership has been at the heart of her life's work.

## **ABOUT GINA GARDINER ASSOCIATES**

Creating tomorrow's leaders today... Gina Gardiner Associates was created to support the ongoing development of newly appointed graduates and their managers. After much research it became clear that graduate potential was often slow to be developed and all too frequently wasted.

Successful organizations put leadership and management training high on their priority list. They start as they mean to go on: from the moment their graduates join the graduate programme, leadership development begins.

Consider yourself and your organization:

- People are your most valuable resource. Are you making the most out of yours?
- Are you and your managers creating the best culture to maximize talent?
- Does your induction and development programme nurture the potential of the graduates you appoint?
- Are your new recruits up to speed quickly and ready to take a full and productive role in your organization? Or do they lack initiative and need to be spoon-fed?
- How well do you delegate and manage your time?

Gina Gardiner Associates offers a broad development programme for managers, helping them to maximize the potential of their graduates in the minimum amount of time.

We specialize in providing a comprehensive service for graduates who want to get ahead and want to do it quickly. Gina Gardiner Associates provides information, one-to-one executive mentoring and coaching and leadership training, developing professional awareness and the leadership and management skills that graduates need to climb the professional ladder and become the lifeblood of their organization.

## FOREWORD

*How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* was written in response to research undertaken with a variety of organizations.

My thanks to everyone who took part and gave so generously of their time.

The research focused on the development of leadership within organizations. Despite the wide range of businesses, it became clear that although the “widgets” were very different, the issues facing organizations were very much the same.

*How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* and its partner book *Kick-Start Your Career* deal with the leadership issues identified through my research and offer practical solutions and an opportunity to share the excellent practice of highly successful organizations.

*Kick-Start Your Career* is designed to:

- Smooth the transition from the world of education, college or university to that of business.
- Help new entrants into the business world understand what “being professional” is all about. Avoiding the “spoon feed me” attitude and encouraging an attitude of responsibility and accountability.
- Give managers a platform to handle expectations and to encourage readers to analyze their own performance and welcome feedback.

How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion) is designed to help you avoid disastrous and costly mistakes with your staff.

- Do you want to communicate effectively, establish high expectations from day one, delegate with ease and in doing so create a successful succession strategy for your organization?
- Is your time, money and energy valuable?
- Do you spend time dealing with problems generated with and by your staff?
- Do you care about the people you work with and want them to reach their full potential in the shortest time possible?

*How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* offers lots of practical strategies for managers to help you get the very best out of your people both as individuals and as a team. Everything in the book has been tried and tested in a variety of organizations; it is a distillation of more than 30 years' experience of developing leadership at every level. Its particular focus is that of maximizing the leadership potential of individuals and of teams.

The book works at a number of levels: as an introduction of principles to emerging leaders and as support for existing managers. It can be used as the template for a departmental or organizational approach to making the most of your human resource.

*How YOU Can Manage The Performance Of Your Staff (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* offers a comprehensive approach to maximizing the potential of your staff. Each chapter will work as an isolated unit for those who choose to dip in for something

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specific. You will find a number of themes run consistently throughout the book.

Graduate Solutions provides one-to-one leadership coaching and mentoring for individuals. We also deliver training for individuals, teams, departments and organizations on themes covered in either book. We are happy to customize our training packages to meet your specific needs.

For more information about Gina Gardiner Associates visit [www.ginagardinerassociates.co.uk](http://www.ginagardinerassociates.co.uk)

For more information on individual coaching and team training, please contact us at: [info@genuinely-you.com](mailto:info@genuinely-you.com)

**Best wishes**

**Gina Gardiner**

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## Introduction

*Welcome to How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion).* This book has been created for anyone who manages people and is keen to get the most out of their team. It is designed to be read in conjunction with its partner book *Kick Start Your Career*.

The book does not attempt to teach grandparents to suck eggs, but offers tried and tested principles, strategies and ideas that have been proven to work.

*How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* offers lots of practical strategies for managers to help you save time, energy, stress, aggravation and money.

Time, energy and money are all very precious resources and all three are in very short supply for most busy managers. All too often managers find themselves constantly reacting to situations. *How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* offers a management strategy that will leave you time to create a strategic direction for your team and develop a proactive approach. The benefits are a much more efficient use of everyone's time and a far better use of your resources.

You can use the book when you are facing specific issues – perhaps if you have trouble delegating or you are facing one of those “difficult conversations”. The principles outlined in the book will underpin ongoing and sustained individual and team development. It will help you develop your team's potential so they learn how to use the power of anticipation, to manage change and help you prepare for succession planning.

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It has relevance for experienced managers who want to share good practice and for aspiring leaders who want to develop and deepen their leadership skills.

*How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* will stand alone, but you will find it useful in conjunction with its companion book, *Kick-Start Your Career*.

*Kick-Start Your Career* is designed for new initiates into the business world, graduates who are ambitious and want to create a successful career for themselves. It is a no-nonsense, jargon-free manual full of practical ideas and strategies to support the development of leadership. Everything in the book has been tried and tested in a variety of organizations. It is a distillation of more than 30 years' experience of developing leadership at every level.

No one starts out as an expert, it takes a positive, open attitude and lots of work to develop the wide range of skills required to be a great leader. As with all things, the more you put into the process the more you will get out of it.

*Kick-Start Your Career* is useful for those preparing to start a new job with your organization or as part of your induction programme. The book is also a helpful "How To" guide for staff tackling a new skill, such as giving presentations or chairing a meeting.

*How YOU Can Manage Your Staff More Effectively (And Pave The Way To Your Next Promotion)* covers similar themes but from the manager's perspective. It also looks at the strategic elements of leadership, including the creation of a strategic vision, developing a "can do" culture and how to be effective in making the most of the potential of your team

If you are keen to develop or enhance your ability to lead and manage others, to create a strategic vision which is shared by others and to ensure the success of your team or department, you will find this book helpful. It considers the tricky art of delegation, having the “hard conversations” and managing workload. The book is based on years of successful leadership and significant experience of training, coaching and mentoring, facilitating and empowering others.

Throughout the book you will find examples of questions you may find useful. Please dip into them and use them as you feel appropriate within the context of your organization. They are not intended as a script but to trigger your own thinking and to save you time.

If you would like to discuss any of the strategies or issues covered in the book, please contact [gina@ginagardinerassociates.co.uk](mailto:gina@ginagardinerassociates.co.uk)

## Strategic vision

### What is a strategic vision?

*“Vision is perhaps our greatest strength. It has kept us alive to the power and continuity of thought through the centuries, it makes us peer into the future and lends shape to the unknown.”*

*Li Ka Shing*

It defines your ultimate goal. What you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it. The vision should illustrate your core values and set the tone for the culture and working environment of your organization and the departments within it. It is not something that can be achieved by one person or a small group in isolation. To be effective, a strategic vision needs everyone to take ownership and subscribe to its core values.

A strategic vision should be shared by everyone within the organization and department and be understood by all the stakeholders. (Stakeholders include anyone who has a vested interest in your business: employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers and affiliates.) The strategic vision should be demonstrated in everything people say and do within the company. Every transaction should exemplify the values of the organization, whether it is a telephone call, letter, report or a face-to-face meeting.

You might believe as a manager that this is something only the CEO and directors can determine. At one level that may be true, but choosing not to take on the responsibility for creating a strategic vision for your department or team will limit the potential growth and long-term efficiency of that department or team. All the

principles of strategic vision are as valid for a small department as they are for a multi-million pound or dollar corporation. One clear message arising out of my research was that where there was a strong sense of vision, actively shared by all within an organization or department there was also an extremely positive culture, better staff retention, fewer absences and a greater sense of personal job satisfaction.

Creating such a vision takes on a very different significance when you consider the impact the strategic vision has on the ongoing success of an organization. In monetary terms it must be worthwhile as the appointment of new staff can cost thousands in advertising alone. Appointing middle and senior managers is time-consuming and expensive when it is successful; the costs are very far-reaching when the wrong people are appointed. Having a stable, talented, motivated staff is very good for business. The knock-on effect on people's sense of value, job satisfaction and wellbeing is harder to quantify in financial terms. Nevertheless, stress and staff absence can often be traced back to the lack of a strategic vision resulting in poor people management.

### **How does having a strategic vision make a department or organization more effective?**

A strategic vision acts as the central support and focus, around which a detailed Action Plan can be created. The plan should encompass the "how, when, who and what" needs to be done to make the vision a reality.

Having a strategic vision that is translated into a dynamic strategy can save organizations huge amounts of time and money.

- It enables long-term planning to be much more effective. The alternative is being in firefighting mode where people are

constantly reacting to circumstances they feel are beyond their control.

- It facilitates proactive behaviour and the ability to accommodate change including: on-going development, externally imposed change, staff changes and technological developments.
- Forward planning can help you to reduce your material costs, as well as enabling you to accommodate the slow periods within the year and make the most of the resources at your disposal. It gives space and time to evaluate more effectively and this minimizes expensive mistakes.
- Creating an effective strategic vision can have enormous benefits in helping you to attract the right staff, develop people throughout the organization and retain the skills and knowledge of staff, thus saving your organization or department huge amounts of money.
- Appointing a senior manager can cost anything between £4000 and £10,000. Yet, my research showed that despite this huge investment there is often a high level of dissatisfaction from both the employer and the employee because there is a mismatch between the initial expectation and the reality.
- When you have a clear vision, you can be much more explicit about what to look for in a new employee. You will be well placed to take into account their skills, knowledge, understanding and experience. You can also consider whether their personality will fit within your department or organization. You will be able to determine if they have the capacity to deliver your vision.
- It is imperative that new employees share your core values and principles if your new staff are to be successful additions to your work force. (See “Building your dream team” and “Appointing the right person”)

- An organization or department that has a strategic plan to develop people 'in-house' can reduce the need for expensive recruitment campaigns. It has the added advantage of motivating and retaining staff, who feel high performance is valued and rewarded. They are far more likely to be loyal to the organization or department and this underpins succession planning.

Effective delegation becomes easier when individual responsibilities are made explicit. It is easier to hold people accountable if there are clear, shared expectations. Creating such clarity is much easier within the framework of a strategic plan.

Your strategic vision should include how you will develop the potential of your team.

- Does your department or organization have a defined plan to do this?
- Does it serve your needs as it is?
- Could it be improved on?

**How well does your current strategic vision serve your organization or your department?**

Ask yourself and the rest of your team individually the following questions. (It is useful if they write down their answers for future reference.)

- What is the strategic vision for our organization/our department?
- Does it serve our purpose?
- Does it capture what our organization/department stands for?
- Does our strategic vision underpin our company culture?

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- How do you know?

If your company aims to care about people you can also ask the following questions:

- Does our department/company actually care for all staff, customers and suppliers consistently?
- Where does it work best?
- How could we improve on current performance?
- Are we simply paying lip service to the words?
- What activities have we undertaken as an organization in the last 6 months/1 year/2 years/5 years to revisit our strategic vision?
- Who was involved?
- What impact did these activities have on our organization and on individuals within it?
- Do you think the impact is the same for all stakeholders?

**Compare the responses – Is there a match?**

**Together think about:**

- How would a new member of staff or a customer know what the strategic vision was for your organization or department?
- What would the behaviours of your staff demonstrate? Is there a match between the way staff treat your customers and your vision for the service you provide?
- Does your reward system reflect your company's core values?

## **Is your vision shared by all your stakeholders?**

Go on a walk around your building or make some calls.

At departmental level, ask at least three people from different sections of your company, three customers, and three people associated with your company either a supplier or an affiliate.

At organizational level, identify three to five people from each department, a range of customers, suppliers, contractors, members of the public in your local community.

### **Ask them:**

- What do you think is the strategic vision for our company?  
What do we stand for?

If they are able to tell you ask them:

- What does it mean in real terms to you?

Their reaction will tell you much about the health of your strategic vision.

The benefits of having a shared strategic vision are indisputable. Creating a shared vision, which is understood and owned by all those involved in any department or organization takes effort but is well worth the trouble.

## **How can you improve things**

How can you support the creation of a more effective strategic vision in your organization?

Each department or organization will need something rather different at different stages of its development. Take the time to ponder:

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- What does your organization really need at this moment in time? How do you know?
- What do you want your department/organization to look like in two or five or ten years' time?
- What are your goals? For the next six months, one year, two years, five years.
- Does your current strategic vision serve your long-term needs?

Anticipate what your department or organization needs to be doing to be commercially successful in our ever-changing world. Indulge in some blue sky thinking and think big. Organizations who anticipate what will be wanted in the future and who adapt and change with the times are the ones who continue to succeed over time.

What are the core values you want your department/organization to live by? It is these which are most likely to remain constant. They are the bedrock when everything else is changing.

- Which elements are negotiable and which are set in stone?
- Identify the people you need to involve to make your vision a reality.
- Compare your current situation with your ultimate goal.
- Start with: What are we doing that is going well?
- How do we know?
- Identify your strengths – celebrate, and protect them, share the best practice within your organization.
- Identify your areas for development. Ask yourself: What needs to be done to achieve our goals. How will we know when we have succeeded?

Your strategic vision is like a lighthouse keeping ships on course and safe from harm whatever the weather and state of the sea. Your vision should sustain your department or organization in good times and when things get rocky or through changes of personnel. All those involved with your organization internally and externally should know what your vision is and where you are ultimately aiming for and why.

## **Creating a culture of development rather than blame**

Much is spoken about the need to create the right culture. It is vital if you wish to create an organization which is able to succeed and maintain that success over time and one which values its people.

So what do we mean by culture?

It is defined as “the set of beliefs, values and norms, together with symbols like dramatized events and personalities that represents the unique character of an organization, and provides the context for action in it and by it”.

I believe the culture of any organization is based on the beliefs and values of those who lead within it. These are embodied by the way people talk to and treat each other, what they value and the lengths they will go to ensure those values are maintained.

There is substantial evidence to support the view that a positive culture can help you deliver your strategic vision.

It is vital to create a culture that matches your core values. Does everyone within your department or organization understand what you are trying to achieve, your constraints and the opportunities open to them?

If customer care is a central principle within your firm, then every communication and transaction needs to embody this.

At the simplest level employees answering the phone or dealing with customers need to be really clear that the future success of the department or organization (and their future employment) depends

on their contribution to achieving high standards of customer care. That it is just as important a contribution to the future success of the organization as those who create strategy at head office.

It is imperative that the day-to-day language used by all staff reflects the core values of your department or organization. Listen to the language used by your team; does it embody your core values? Does it really value every client you serve? Do your employees value one another? How do you value and speak to the people in your team?

I'm amazed at how often organizations have different standards of care for different stakeholders. For example, they serve their clients well but not each other. Working with clients highlights how often things are left to chance. This is fine when things are going well but falls apart as soon as there are problems. In such situations, bullying of staff by other staff is not uncommon.

Organizations that create a culture of development rather than blame are best placed to develop their people, adapt to change, grow and achieve ongoing success.

A successful development culture is based on:

- Rigorous self and organizational review.
- High expectations from all – for all.
- The involvement of all staff. (This can pay huge dividends as the shared talents, expertise and creativity of all staff have the potential to add enormous value to the process. This is most effective when all staff understand and are committed to your organizational vision.)

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- All staff being held accountable for their contribution to the organization.
- Effective delegation – greater sharing of workload and ongoing development of staff (see “Effective delegation”)
- Constructive feedback rather than destructive criticism (see “Giving constructive feedback”). All staff should be trained to give and receive constructive feedback.
- Professional honesty.
- Professional growth and positive collaboration.
- Hard conversations take place as and when necessary (see “Having the hard conversations”)

Creating a developmental culture is an ongoing process, a map for the journey rather than simply identifying the destination. It needs constant attention to ensure its survival, particularly as there are many internal and external influences that affect the health of the culture of an organization or department.

You will need to be mindful of the influences within your own department and organization. Consider how they currently influence your culture. Does your culture serve your needs now, does it have the capacity to serve you well in the future?

The paradox is the better the understanding of the vision and the culture within any organization and the clearer the parameters, the greater the freedom you will have and the more resources at your disposal.

Remember that however long or challenging they may be, all journeys start with a single first step.