

Managing Former Peers

Boozhoo & Welcome, Minnesota County Supervisors!

September 14, 2026



Communication

Connection

Relationships

Team Focus

Joy & Recharge

Reflection Time

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Reach Out for Support & Questions





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Managing Former Peers Learning Objectives

	To reflect on our comfort level with power in our roles as supervisors
	To understand practices that improve clarity and build relationships
	To explore productive ways to delegate

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**Check-Ins ARE the Work of Supervisors...
and They're How We Build Relationships!**

"...the weekly check-in is the anchor ritual. You need to design your teams, and their size, to enable it. And, if ever you become a leader of leaders, you'll need to ensure that your leaders know that **this check-in is the most important part of leading.** Checking in with each person on a team—listening, course correcting, adjusting, coaching, pinpointing, advising, paying attention to the intersection of the person and the real-world work—is not what you do *in addition to* the work of leading. **This is the work of leading.**"

A Freethinking Leader's Guide to the Real World: Nine Lies About Work by Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall, Harvard Business Review Press

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The Two-Question Weekly Check-in

- What Are Your Top Two Priorities?
- How Can I Help?



The Focus is **Priorities** – supervisors and employees are **partners** & jointly discuss **challenges & solutions**

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**When You're Promoted,
Managing Former Peers**



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“Managers Must Control Their Direct Reports”

“Most new managers, in part because of insecurity in an unfamiliar role, yearn for compliance from their subordinates. They fear that if they don’t establish this early on, their direct reports will walk all over them. As a means of gaining this control, they often rely too much on their formal authority—a technique whose effectiveness is ... questionable at best.”

Linda A. Hill, “Becoming the Boss,” Harvard Business Review

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Respect and Trust are Earned

“That is, authority emerges only as the manager establishes credibility with subordinates, peers, and superiors.” ... “Many new managers are surprised by how difficult it is to earn people’s respect and trust. They are shocked, and even insulted, that their expertise and track record don’t speak for themselves.”

Linda A. Hill, “Becoming the Boss,” Harvard Business Review

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**Managing Former Peers:
The First Steps**

- Acknowledge to Yourself that the Relationship Has Changed**
Power Dynamics have shifted – Be Clear When You’re Using Your positional Authority
- Announcing the Decision (the agency Executive Director or your supervisor)**
- The first thing to do: Meet individually with each direct report and ask what they need/want from their supervisor**
- Have a “Reset our Relationship” Convo with Former Peers as needed**
- Orientation for new hires – address the potential for this situation**

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Give Yourself Permission to Practice

“Nobody will become a world-class athlete unless they constantly practise. Leadership is the same: you’re constantly practising, constantly learning.”

Simon Sinek



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Communication to the Staff Member Who Didn’t Get the Position

- Be transparent at the outset– don’t nurture unrealistic expectations
- Be clear if you don’t believe an internal applicant is ready to take on the challenges of a new role
- Offer an interview as a “developmental” opportunity & give specific feedback
- Be direct about what skills/capacities the individual doesn’t currently have

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Developmental Interviews: Future Focus

- Discuss a **professional development plan** to prepare them for the next time a similar position opens
- Don’t make promises about future positions! Make sure employees understand that future hiring decisions are made based on all candidates available at the time
- Check in every 4-6 months to see how they’re doing on their professional development plan

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Be Clear on Which Hat You're Wearing

&

What "power" You're Using

Positional Authority

Thought Partner

Advising

Teaching

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“Great followers are the foundation of every high-performing organization. ...One of the most important qualities of a dependable follower is the courage to respectfully challenge. ... Every person in our organization, regardless of title or tenure, is not only allowed to challenge an idea, but they’re also expected to. We want people who will raise their hands and say, “I see this differently,” or “Have we considered this?”...

... Once we’ve had the challenge, once we’ve worked through the debate and landed on a decision, everyone commits. Fully. Even if the final call wasn’t your idea, even if you would have gone in a different direction. You commit, you execute, and you bring your best to it. That’s the difference between a culture of challenge and a culture of chaos.”

Johnny Taylor, Jr., CEO, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

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Productive Ways to Delegate

- Discuss and align project expectations and purpose
- Develop a shared understanding of project parameters
- Set up a communication schedule that works for both of you – short, brief check-ins
- Ensure there is support & “scaffolding” to ensure success
- Ask: “What else would be helpful to discuss?”

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Discussion Points to Help Delegate

- What's our purpose? Why is this project important?
- What should the structure be?
- Who should be consulted?
- Who has decision-making power?
- When is the deadline? What are important milestones?
- What does our ideal outcome look like?



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A Coaching Approach to Check-ins

- How are things going?
- What questions do you have so far?
- What's getting in the way of your progress?
- How can I help?



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How Do We Build Trust with our Staff?



Share Your Values with your team:

"What great leaders are capable of doing is extracting their purpose, their cause, their belief, and finding those who believe what they believe so that those people will treat the [organization] as if it's their own baby."

Simon Sinek

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REMINDER:

The Golden Rule

Treat Others As We Want To Be Treated

The Better Golden Rule

Treat Others As They Want To Be Treated

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**What Staff Hate
the Most**



"Barking at your staff and growling disapproval are fine...but chasing cats during your lunch hour makes you look bad."

- No follow-up on feedback or ideas
- Coworkers who don't carry their weight
- Having group "discipline" or lectures
- Working hard on a project and then not getting feedback
- Lack of acknowledgement for accomplishments (especially if others are acknowledged)
- Late notice of deadlines! Especially if they've asked!

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**The Worst
Management
Technique**

"To create pervasive disengagement, ignore your people. If you pay them no attention whatsoever—no positive feedback; no negative feedback; nothing—your team's engagement will plummet, so much so that for every one engaged team member you will have twenty disengaged team members."

Gallup Organization research as summarized in "Nine Lies About Work" by Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall

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Assess Your Approach

Are you focused on helping your staff grow and develop?

Do you work to help your direct reports shine?

Are mistakes accepted and used as opportunities to help staff learn and to build psychological safety?

Are you treating staff as individuals and asking what they need?

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What's Going Right?

What went well last week?

What was most meaningful for you?

What was the most significant thing you learned?

Did one of your program participants or clients achieve a milestone?

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Develop a Daily & Weekly Planning & Reflection Habit

What will make the most significant difference for our staff, clients, and organizational well-being?

What would all our staff welcome the opportunity to do stop doing or do differently?

Who will I intentionally seek out for support, creative problem solving, or mentoring?

What time will I intentionally dedicate this weekend and in the coming week to do things that feed me, recharge me, & allow me to live and lead with joy?

When will I give myself time to rest?

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Recharge Your Confidence

"Literally everything was valuable. I have found that I can use immediately to help make supervision more structured and purposeful."

"I gained confidence in having conversations and evaluations with staff."

"I learned to be much more deliberate in my interactions with staff."

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"Literally everything was valuable. I have tools that I can use immediately to help make supervision more structured and purposeful."

"You helped remind me of how to bring my work joy back."

"I gained confidence in having conversations and evaluations with staff."

"I learned to be much more deliberate in my interactions with staff."

"I really hope my organization will have all the supervisors get this training."

"I loved the style in which you led the discussion."

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There's something in you that the world needs.

Miigwech! Gracias! Thank You!

Your Work Saves Lives & Makes Life Better!

- ★ Make fun weekend plans with your kids (or borrow some kids)
- ★ Visit a pumpkin patch or an apple orchard
- ★ Support your staff in scheduling their PTO

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