

Career

BY RACHAEL RUSSELL

Help! I'm the boss

Going from 'team player' to 'team leader' is a big transition. Where once you could spend time around the water cooler gossiping, now you need to model productive behaviour and remove yourself from the debate about 'who said what to who' after a few drinks on Friday night. Max Harre, career consultant at www.findmyforte.co.nz, says being promoted to a management position requires a switch in mindset around what your responsibilities are. "You don't just have your job to think about, you've got to make the business successful too," he says. "Your allegiance changes." Harre says focusing on the outcomes to be achieved helps with decision-making and leadership. "The more you stay focused on the task, the less you get caught up in this thing of being liked," he says. "You're managing people in order to get a job done to further a business goal." Here are Harre's top tips for new managers.

Learn to delegate

You're most likely used to doing day-to-day tasks yourself, but now you have an important resource – staff. Your workload has probably just doubled so you must learn

to delegate effectively. "Allow people to do their jobs without micromanaging them – that drives people nuts," Harre says. Part of delegating is being very specific and clear in your communication. "Staff need to know what is required, by when, and to what standard," Harre says. "You also have to follow up on whether staff deliver – and if they don't, you have to hold them to account."



GET HELP

New managers often have to deal with areas of the business they've never had to worry about before – such as budgets. If there is something you don't know how to do, either trust staff who are good at it, or get training. "Managers often feel they have to know everything. That is not true, but it becomes a huge source of stress," Harre says. "It's typical Kiwi culture to keep a stiff upper lip and do everything yourself, but there is nothing wrong with asking for support."

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GOSSIP GIRL

When you were a team member you were free to gossip, but managers should resist joining in. It's especially important not to discuss one employee's performance with another. And it's wise to keep some professional distance with staff even when socialising.

Leave with a plan

Harre says one way to keep from feeling overwhelmed by your new workload is to end the day with a clear idea of what your main tasks are for the following one. "Ask yourself 'what are my priorities for tomorrow and the specific things that are stressing me right now?' and plan your work day accordingly. That way you can go home with a clear head and arrive at work the next day with a sense of direction," Harre advises. "It's also a good idea to think about what might get in the way of you achieving those tasks, and brainstorm three things you can do to get back on track if these impediments do crop up."