

Essential Management and Leadership Skills for Eye-Care Professionals

(Optical Seminars Course # HS-06)

By

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Course Objectives

Upon completing this two-hour home-study course, the participant should:

- Have a clear understanding of the principal duties of a supervisor and possess the tools to achieve them.
- Embrace the importance of obtaining separate, specific training in advanced management skills.
- Feel confident giving feedback to employees – applying three specific techniques in doing so.
- Develop the habit of documentation for both legal and management reasons.
- Be prepared to implement 5 specific things to more effectively gain control of his or her environment.
- Avoid 10 of the most common mistakes that managers (especially new ones) and supervisors make.
- Have acquired the information and techniques necessary to motivate employees and create a sense of team.
- Interview more effectively and learn to avoid hiring “fallen stars” and hire only shining-star performers.
- Be more aware of the importance of managing conflict and agreement.
- Make the transition from a co-worker and/or friend to a supervisor/manager more effectively.
- Have acquired the mindset and image of a true, professional manager and optical leader.
- Have achieved a score of 70% or higher on the 40-question assessment at the end of the module.

(The author has no affiliation with any resource, book, website, audio, software, etc. that is mentioned in this course; they are only suggested to help participants to further develop the habits and skills presented herein.)

I Introduction

Let's just keep this introductory section short and sweet. After all, we have a lot of work to do here. Suffice it to say, that after forty years in the optical profession, most of that time in supervisory, management, and ownership roles...after teaching hundreds of continuing-education classes for thousands of eye care professionals for nearly fifteen years...after leading hundreds of management and leadership seminars in forty-seven of our fifty states and in doing so meeting over ten thousand managers, supervisors, and business owners in all walks of life...after putting in all that time and work and studying things like a mad scientist, I feel very confident writing the following statement: **Many people in supervisory or management positions fail miserably.** At best, they do not thrive, they simply survive. There are exceptions to be sure. A select few managers not only thrive – they wildly succeed. They are respected, effective, professional, and well-paid professionals. They are as capable of interviewing and hiring people as they are at measuring the fitting height for the latest progressive lens. They have spent as much or more time learning how to motivate their employees as they did learning how to use a lensometer. They know how to manage *their* boss as well as they manage their frame inventory.

The reason why I say many people in management positions ultimately fail is because by the time most of them realize they needed to *learn* how to become a good manager in the same way they had to *learn* to be a good optician, optometrist, or ophthalmologist it is usually too late. The damage has been done, relationships have failed, all the potentially good employees have long since jumped ship, and the frustrated manager sits slumped behind his desk, head in his hands, wondering how it all came to this. What went wrong? Where do I go from here? Ironically, my experience has taught me that the chance of that kind of failure as a manager happening to you is greater the more experienced and educated (as an optical professional) you are. The more optical knowledge and experience you have, the more it provides a dangerously false sense of ability when we are promoted to a supervisory position.

We will delve deeper and in a more meaningful way into that whole phenomenon in Section III, but for now I just want to say that I put this two-hour, home-study course together so that the failure I just described never happens to you. In addition to all the official, specific course objectives listed above, it is my sincere hope that after completing this course, you will be equipped with enough basic knowledge and information to begin your optical management career on the right foot. If you are currently in management, and things aren't going as well as you'd hoped they would, perhaps some things you learn in this module will help get you back on course. Additionally, it is my hope that you will be motivated to continually learn and grow as a manager. If you do, I can assure you that opportunities you never thought possible will present themselves to you – opportunities for promotion, growth, raises, more responsible jobs. You will reduce the personal stress you feel, and increase your level of job satisfaction. The people you supervise will have greater respect for you and your position. **Life will be good!** I know that sounds like a lofty, maybe even unattainable goal. It is not. It is

possible. But it doesn't happen just by wishing it so. It takes work. And that's what you're about to do – some work! Just accept it...this two-hour course will probably take you two hours to complete. The horror!

In preparation for this class, please take a few minutes to complete Exercises 1 and 2 below. Put some real thought into your answers, as we will refer to them later on.



EXERCISE # 1

Think about your current, supervisory position. What are the greatest challenges you are facing...things that are frustrating you...things you feel you should work on? List out at least three, but no more than five, below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

EXERCISE # 2

Think back on all the bosses you have ever had in your life. Write down the first name of the best boss you have ever had in your life. Then write down the first name of the worst boss you ever had in your life

Best Boss _____

Worst Boss _____

Now think about what made you identify these individuals as the best or worst boss you ever had. Write down three characteristics each of these people possessed that probably made you choose them.

II The Three Main Responsibilities of a Manager

You are probably saying to yourself, “Three responsibilities? I have 103 responsibilities in our practice!” You probably do, but I also believe that 90% of what you do in your capacity of managing and supervising people can be sub-filed under one of these three items. Here they are:

1. Clarify expectations
2. Train your staff
3. Hold them accountable

That’s it. It sounds simple, doesn’t it? To a great degree, managing people is simple. Of course, it’s not easy. Once you raise your understanding people ability (which will be addressed in the next section) to the same level of your optical ability, good things will start to happen. But to ignore the fact that these three things are of primary and paramount importance is to set yourself up for profound failure. Let’s consider them one at a time.

Clarify Expectations. In his well-received audio presentation, *How to Communicate with Power, Diplomacy, and Tact*, author Robert Tracz shares the results of a comprehensive study in which he discovered the “Top 10 Things Employees Complain About Managers.” Of course, to give equal consideration to all, he

also shares the “Top 10 Things Managers Complain about Employees.” The top three of ten complaints, in order, that employees have about managers are:

1. She doesn't tell me what she wants me to do.
2. She doesn't provide adequate feedback.
3. She doesn't listen very well.

The top complaints, in order, that managers have about employees are:

1. He doesn't listen very well.
2. He's not very motivated.
3. He waits too long to tell me that something is wrong or that something is about to go wrong.

Interestingly, all six of the top things that they complain about one another have to do with a breakdown in the communication process. More interestingly, the number one complaint that employees have about supervisors is that “he doesn't tell me what he wants me to do.” In other words, a complete and utter breakdown when it comes to clarifying expectations. The fact that it makes the top of the list tells me that generally, employees yearn for it. They *want* to know exactly what is expected of them.

If you challenge practice managers on this issue, most will claim that they *think* they have clarified expectations to their staff. Some say something like, “How could they not know what is expected of them? Most of them have been working at the practice long before I got here!” Sometimes they'll say, “Their job expectations are outlined clearly in the job description.” All that is well and good, but if you ever find yourself thinking that way, you may be dangerously close to engaging in a practice that I like to call “Managing by Telepathy.” People want to know in no uncertain terms *exactly* what is expected of them, i.e., what they need to do to do a good job, ensure longevity, get a raise, achieve a good performance review, etc. As the leader of the work group, it is the first step to becoming a respected leader. Do not rely on their experience, nor hope that they read the employee manual. Soon after becoming the practice or department manager, hold brief, individual, almost casual meetings with each of your team members. Be up front. Tell them that while taking a CE class you learned that a lack of clarification of expectations is the number one complaint about managers, and you want to make sure that doesn't happen with you. You'll both probably have a laugh about it, but make sure that you don't leave that meeting without making sure that expectations are clear. By the way, it might be a good time to learn what expectations your staff member has of you!

Seeing that people are trained, who can fulfill the expectations that have been clarified, is a manager's second ability. Finally, holding staff members accountable – rewarding for jobs well done, and remediating when they are not – is the third responsibility. Everything that follows has been designed to help a manager successfully fulfill these three responsibilities.

III The Importance of Training Yourself

Our thirty-fourth president, Dwight David Eisenhower once said, “Having a plan will not ensure your success, but without a plan you are sure to fail.” Considering he was one of the thirteen retired generals who became president, he was probably talking about military matters, but I think that aphorism could accurately be applied to the optical supervisory position you find yourself in right now. Most eye care professionals who find themselves promoted to a supervisory or management position have had very little, if any training in how to be a good manager. The promotion is announced, and fellow staff members offer their congratulations. You revel in the praise, contemplate the raise, and proudly begin to introduce yourself by whatever title was bestowed on you by the person who promoted you to your new position. If you happen to realize you’ve had no actual management or leadership training (and most people never think about it at all), you probably think you’ll be able to learn as you go. Really?

Think about the following scenario: Imagine for just a moment that you find yourself unemployed. While I certainly don’t wish that on anyone, given the economic news of the past few years, it is not an unlikely scenario for many. What would you do? What’s the very *first* thing you would do? I’ll tell you what I would do: Having paid taxes for more than thirty years, if I had been an employee, I would go to the local unemployment office and apply for whatever benefits I am entitled. Then what? Next, I would call my colleagues in the industry. “Put the word out...Anthony Record is in need of a job.” I might hire an employment service, post my resume on monster.com, and I might even start to purchase my local newspaper every day just to check the want ads. Now imagine that weeks and months go by. It’s over a year, and nothing seems to be panning out. Your savings have started to dwindle. Benefits will eventually run out. You start to get nervous.

Then one day, upon opening the newspaper, you see a big display ad. A very reputable firm is looking to hire. It seems that the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus is looking for...get this...a new trapeze acrobat. The ad doesn’t say why they need a new trapeze acrobat – hopefully the old one simply retired! The question I have for you is this: Would you go down and apply for the job? Most people, including myself, would not. Why not? Maybe you’re scared of heights. Don’t worry, they’ll provide a net. I don’t have any experience. Perhaps they will train. Maybe you’re afraid you might hurt someone. Most likely you would decline the job offer due to the fact you have had no training or experience as a trapeze artist. See the point? Most people who get promoted have the same amount of training as a manager as they do as an acrobat. They get promoted, get a raise, they get a title. Many even get a business card that reads something like “Practice Manager.” Does that make it so? I could make you some business cards that read, “Trapeze Acrobat.” Does that make it so? See what I mean? Sadly, if you are like most people who find themselves in that position, you will amble along, answering to the title of “manager.” You’ll introduce yourself as an optical “manager.” I bet you’ll even cash your checks. Then one day, an event will occur that will change your outlook forever. Maybe it is not being sure how to handle an employee who you suspect is stealing from the practice. Perhaps someone is accusing you of some discriminatory practice, or worse, sexual harassment. What do you do?

My advice is to not wait until something bad happens. The moment you get promoted, or the moment you think you might want to get into management, begin to train yourself. Do not count on your employer to do it. Do not expect the doctor to foot the bill. It is *your* responsibility to train yourself.

There are many ways to learn to be a real, professional, respected, effective manager of other people. Here are a few suggestions: **1. Attend Management Seminars.** There are several professional seminar organizations in the United States, such as SkillPath and Fred Pryor. They offer classes in all aspects of management across the country. The classes are usually offered in a one or two-day format on-site at your location. Many are also held virtually. Prices of classes can vary from \$99-\$500, depending on the nature and length of the class. **2. Listen to Audio CDs.** Turn your car into a classroom. What if you have a 30-minute commute to work in the morning? If you work five days a week, that means you spend 250 hours a year driving to and from work. With the average audio presentation being 6 hours in length, you could listen to more than 40 in one year. Imagine the wealth of knowledge and skills you could attain by simply turning off the crazy morning radio show occasionally, and using that time to gain new, solid information about management. Even if you only listened to one presentation per month, you'd be ahead of 90% of your peers. **3. Go Back to School.** Take a class at your community college when you can. **4. Attend Extra CE Classes.** Organizations such as POF and Optical Seminars offer some management elective classes every year. Just because the State of Florida says you need twenty hours of continuing education to renew your license, it doesn't mean you couldn't have twenty-two or twenty-four hours! **5. Find a Mentor.** Ask a more experienced manager to help. Maybe you can find such a person where you work. If not, consider speaking to someone at your local Kiwanis or Rotary club. If you own your own business or practice, consider developing a relationship with someone from SCORE – the Service Corps of Retired Executives. Check them out at score.org. SCORE provides free online and face-to-face business counseling, mentoring, training, and advice for small businesses and managers just starting out or hoping to grow. Take advantage of some or all the wonderful opportunities that exist all around you.

IV Feedback

EXERCISE # 3 - Feedback

Imagine that you are the practice manager of mid-size, successful optometric practice, and optical dispensary. You were promoted from within about a year ago. One of the people you supervise is Fran, the front-desk manager. A good employee, Fran seems to have a hard time getting to work on time. She is routinely five, ten, or fifteen minutes late. Because she is so good at her job, the previous practice manager looked the other way. But recently other employees are complaining, and even patients have remarked about it. Now the owner of the practice is pressuring you to “get her butt to work on time...or else!”

Think about what your overall approach will be. When will you talk to Fran? What will you say? What preparatory work will you do? Be specific.

Feedback – even the very word itself sounds daunting. A serious-minded manager should adequately prepare for conversations with his or her employees. Except in the most serious of cases though, from an employee’s point of view these conversations should come across as casual conversation. I believe there are three characteristics regarding feedback that someone in a supervisory position should always consider before going into a conversation with a staff member.

First – Early and Often. Regardless of whether the feedback is positive (a thank you, reward, or congratulations), negative (a reprimand, slap on the wrist, or constructive criticism), or neutral (not positive or negative; just sharing information and hopefully taking steps to make sure that mutual understanding has occurred), it should always be early and often. What does that mean? Do not put things off. As we learned earlier, in most surveys of what employees complain about management and ownership, “My boss doesn’t give me adequate feedback,” usually lands high up on the list. Interestingly, in surveys that ask management about things they don’t like about employees, “They wait to tell me that something is wrong, or that something is about to go wrong,” usually is a top complaint. What is interesting is that both complaints have to do with some breakdown in the communication process – more specifically, a lack of feedback.

While one could certainly make the case that it is a mutual responsibility, the manager or practice owner is in the leadership role, and therefore, should take the lead when it comes to making sure that feedback is early and often. For example, if you come into the office a few hours early to catch up on the end-of-the-month paperwork, and you discover some of the reports have already been completed by a staff member (we’ll call her Maria) who took the initiative to do them the day before...that calls for a little feedback! And we just learned that feedback to be effective needs to be...right...early and often. But wait...Maria is off today. So, you think, “Well, I’ll catch her tomorrow...no...she works at our other office tomorrow. I’ll catch her the next day...oh no...that’s the weekend...well Monday...no her day off is Monday” ...and you see what happens? A manager like this - who ascribes to the opposite of early and often (that would be the “when-I-get-around-to-it-and-it’s-convenient-for-me” method) is a manager who is not motivating her staff as well as she could, and who does not have the full respect of her staff. Waiting five or six days to show appreciation for Maria’s efforts is a managerial waste of time.

The second characteristic of feedback: It needs to be commensurate; that is, the reward, thank you, or congratulations need to be equal to the accomplishment and/or effort. The “slap on the wrist” – the negative reprimand – needs to be hard or soft – depending on the transgression.

Third, and finally, consider that the feedback you give your associates needs to sometimes be characterized by another trait: Singularity. What I mean by singularity is that from time to time – whenever you as the practice leader think it is appropriate – talk to the person about *one, single issue*. Far too often a manager muddles his real, intended message by sandwiching it between other, non-related messages. For example, let’s consider the scenario described in Exercise #3 (above). Imagine that you have mentioned to Fran that her lack of punctuality is unacceptable a couple of times. For a few days she shows up on time but then returns to her “tardy ways.” You decide that if it happens again, you will begin the write-up process; that indeed could lead to termination. Your message to Fran might sound something like this: “Fran, can I speak

with you? How was your ride to work this morning? Did you get much rain at your house last night? Boy, the weather was crazy, wasn't it? Listen...I hope you don't get upset, but we've talked about getting to work on time, and this morning you were late again. You've got to get to work on time. If it happens again, I'm going to have to take further disciplinary action." At that point, Fran would probably offer another lame excuse or simply apologize and give some assurance that she will start to be on time. Perhaps you continue, "Okay...now we have Mrs. Anderson coming in again this afternoon. Who's going to do the I&R with her? Did you finish the slides for our team meeting tomorrow morning? Who's getting the coffee and doughnuts?" You see? Because all that other ancillary information was shared, the real, supposedly most important part of your message was lost in the shuffle.

Now imagine that Fran goes to lunch with her co-worker, Carol. On the way, Carol asks, "What did John call you into his office for this morning?" To which Fran replied, "Oh nothing. He's just worried that we're not going to be ready for the meeting tomorrow morning. He wants me or you to stop and get the coffee and doughnuts." The real gist of your message has been lost on Fran. Perhaps your purpose would have been more effectively achieved if you had approached Fran with the concept of singularity in mind. Consider the difference: "Fran, may I speak to you a moment? Listen, I was checking the timecards this morning and noticed that yours was marked '9:17' – seventeen minutes late. I also checked my notes. This is the third time since I became the practice manager that you've been significantly late. When the front-desk supervisor is late, it means that patients must wait, the other team members must pick up the slack until she arrives, and doc gets behind first thing! You need to be here no later than 9:00 am – ready to go. The next time that's not the case, I intend to start the official write-up process, which could ultimately lead to termination. I hope it doesn't come to that, Fran. I'll see you at tomorrow's meeting." Given this approach, I believe your message will stick with Fran for a long time. Now when they go to lunch and Carol asks why you called her into your office, she'll probably reply, "Nothing, really." But trust me, she's thinking about it!

This same philosophy regarding singularity applies if your message is a positive message. Don't bury your praise or thanks with half a dozen other messages – let it stand alone. Make a point of it. "Mary, thank you for working overtime yesterday. You really got us out of a jam. I appreciate that you're such a team player." Period! That message of thanks will stick with her for a good, long time. By the way, in a spirit of feedback being commensurate, I hope that something in addition to that message will be used to reward Mary for working overtime. What should that be? Who knows? Perhaps Mary can be allowed to leave a little early on a day when the practice is a bit slow. Maybe you can get the doctor who owns the practice to write Mary a personal, heartfelt thank you note. Feedback, to be effective needs to be early and often, commensurate, and possess a degree of singularity.



EXERCISE # 3.5 – Feedback Revisited

What was your approach? What thoughts and concerns did you have? One thing I would have been concerned with was why has the behavior been tolerated for so long? I would discuss with the practice owner the fact that Fran has been “trained and conditioned” over the years that tardiness is tolerated. I would want enough time to re-train and re-condition her.

I would also want to know that I had my superior’s support in the matter, and that if push came to shove, I would be able to administer REAL accountability (up to and including termination) in the case of Fran and her behavior. Without that authority, results may or may not be possible.

Additionally, I think it is usually a mistake for management to turn a blind eye to poor performance simply because the offending employee is “so good at her job.” If you could somehow quantify the effect that not dealing with Fran’s tardiness has on the rest of the staff’s punctuality, performance, attitude, and motivation, it would far outweigh what you think she brings to the table.

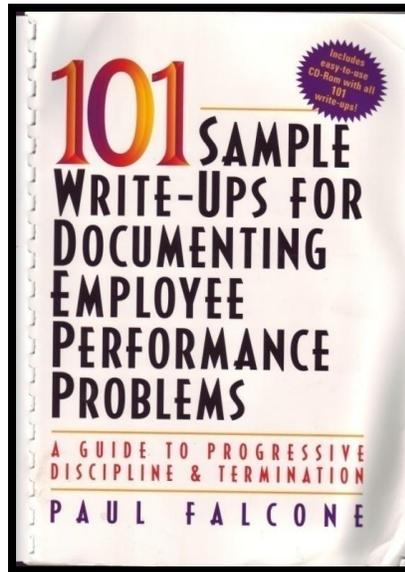
V Documentation

For far too many practice managers, documentation is a foreign word. When they first get promoted, documentation is the last thing on their mind. It is only when something bad happens and the owner, HR (Human Resources) professional, or an attorney requests it, does the importance of documentation become apparent. Unfortunately, it is usually then too late.

There are two basic types of documentation an ECP in a management position should create. First, is what I like to refer to as a “Manager’s Diary.” It could be kept on your PDA, your computer, or even a spiral notebook. While you should never write anything in it that you would be embarrassed should someone else see it, no other person on the face of the earth should ever see it. It’s just a place for you to keep notes about work. Whenever an employee does something extraordinarily bad or good (that’s right...good! You don’t just document the bad stuff. Hopefully, a manager would document that Mary volunteered to work overtime on short notice), a manager should document it. Some managers take it a bit further. Even on days when nothing extraordinarily good or bad happened with an individual, at the end of the day they still make some sort of entry – something about the day – just to keep in the habit of documentation. Some managers find the most efficient method of this type of documentation is to use email – setting up a folder for each employee and emailing the events to themselves at the end of the day.

The second type of documentation – and this one is much rarer than the first – is what I like to call “Official Documentation.” This is documentation that is created on forms provided by practice ownership, HR, or by the manager herself. This documentation becomes part of the employee’s permanent file, a copy is given to the employee, and can be used in case the employee ever brings suit against the practice or manager on the grounds of wrongful termination, harassment, discrimination, etc. if this type of documentation does become necessary, the practice manager need only consult her “Manager’s Diary” for the dates and details, so that comprehensive, clear, official documentation can be created.

Suggested Resource:



Written by HR expert, Paul Falcone, 101 Sample Write-Ups for Documenting Employee Performance Problems is a comprehensive guide to progressive discipline and legal termination. The author gives over 100 templates for every type of problem you might encounter as a manager. For example: Unscheduled Absences; Failure to Perform Properly Assigned Work; Excessive Personal Phone Calls; Insubordination, E-Mail or Internet Misuse; Tardiness. It comes with a CD-ROM so that you can load the templates on your computer. It saves time and helps you create professional, fair, legal documentation.

VI Building Trust and Respect

There are dozens, maybe hundreds, of things it takes to be an effective manager or supervisor. How do you feel about the following proposition? The more your employees trust and respect you, the easier your job will be. Most management experts agree that the proposition is undeniably true. In fact, I would add four words to the end of the proposition. So, then it becomes: The more your employees trust and respect you, the easier your job will be, by leaps and bounds. It's not the end all or be all, but if this *fundamental building block* is not laid firmly and early, everything else you try to accomplish will be infinitely more difficult. It is such an accepted proposition in fact, that entire books are written about how team leaders can quickly build trust for themselves in the eyes of the people they supervise. I would encourage a leader to *consciously* take steps – every day – to build such a relationship.

Realize this: Even if you do not take steps to build the trust, the natural evolution of things is something like this: Character + Competence → Time = Trust. What that means is that if the manager is a person with a fair degree of character (you don't have to be an angel or a saint, just a decent, honest person), and has a fair degree of competence both as a technician *and* as a manager of other people, *over time*, that will build trust and respect for the manager in the eyes of his or her staff. However, depending on the dynamic of the work group, the time involved might be months...even years! So that begs the question: Assuming that character and competence are present, is there something a team leader can do to speed up the process of building trust? I believe there is, and I am not alone.

Internationally respected author and lecturer, Dr. Stephen R. Covey originally began writing *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* as the basis of his PhD thesis. Nearly 40 years later it has been read by tens of millions of people in dozens of countries around the world. Of all the books and other resources that are cited in this module, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is the one work that I give you my UNCONDITIONAL recommendation. The things you learn in that book, if you let them, have the power to transform you into one of the best managers in your industry. (Interestingly, many of the concepts you learn in *The 7 Habits*...can also make you a better parent, spouse, and friend.) The 7 habits are:

- Be proactive
- Begin with the end in mind
- First things first
- Think win-win
- Seek first to understand, then be understood
- Synergize
- Sharpen the Saw

In addition to these habits, Covey talks about something that, if you have never read his book, sounds a little odd: The Emotional Bank Account. What Dr. Covey contends, and what I have come to believe is true, is that we all have what he calls an Emotional Bank Account (EBA). Everyone in your life has their own EBA. And just



like a regular bank account where you keep your money, as one of the “stewards” of their account, as you interact with people on a day-to-day basis you can only perform one of two actions on their EBA. What are those two actions? As you probably figured out, the only two things you can do to an Emotional Bank Account is make a deposit or make a withdrawal. In the later editions of the book, and in the audio versions, Dr. Covey explains nine or ten different deposits for people’s Emotional Bank Accounts. I will share with you here the original six. Realize that whenever you do these things in your relationship with staff members (or anyone for that matter), they act as *deposits* in their EBAs. Do the opposite...or think it’s a bit of nonsense...those things would act as *withdrawals*. The goal is to consciously make as many deposits as you can – these will serve to

build trust and respect and strive to make as few withdrawals as you can – these serve to break down trust and respect.

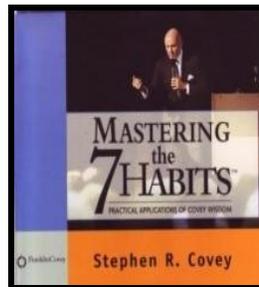
Here then, with a brief explanation of each, are the original six deposits for an Emotional Bank Account, as described in *the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*:

- **Deposit # 1: Treating People as Individuals.** It is generally accepted in the body of human knowledge that we all fit rather nicely (or not so nicely. As it turns out some of us are a mix of more than one) into one of four distinct personality types. Each of these personality types love and respond well to certain things; the same things could be confusing and insulting to a person who has a different type of personality. “Things” like how you speak to them, your tone of voice, how you reward them, how you reprimand them, how to make job assignments, and many more. There are hundreds of different “tests” to help you determine people’s personality types (e.g., The DISC Profile, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the SELF Profile, etc.). I would encourage you to research this on your own. The more you learn about people and what makes them tick as individuals, the more you can communicate and interact with them on their own terms. Not only will this aid you in achieving whatever is you are trying to accomplish through the work of the employee, at the same time you are making a deposit in their EBA. Why? Because you are treating them as individuals. If you never learn about this, it means you will communicate and interact with everyone the exact same way – your way. Unfortunately, this will act as a withdrawal from some people’s Emotional Bank Account, as you are treating them in a way that is truly foreign and off-putting in their eyes.
- **Deposit # 2: Keeping Personal Commitments.** To put that in plain English: Tell the truth. Keep your promises. Whether it is a big promise or a little one - whether explicit or simply implied, any time they feel like you kept your word, it acts as a deposit – it builds trust. If they ever feel that they have been lied to, or if they feel you’ve offered a half truth or spun the truth in any way, it is a withdrawal. It works to break down trust. In my opinion, this is one of the few *absolutes* when it comes to being a good manager. You should *never* tell a lie to a team member; you should *always* tell the truth. Whether you are talking about work, business, practice, or even something personal, always tell the truth. That doesn’t mean you have to discuss everything with your employees. If you are asked about something proprietary, or something that your boss specifically said you couldn’t discuss, or maybe something too personal, there is nothing wrong with excusing yourself from the conversation. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know you wanted to discuss that. I’m not comfortable discussing my personal life at the office.” The employee might feel a little weird about that, but at least you did not lie! We’re talking about building trust here. Get caught in a lie or two, and what do you think happens to trust? Exactly.
- **Deposit # 3: Showing Personal Integrity.** Every time your team member sees you interact with other team members, a vendor, or client - and it causes him or her to step back and think, “That was pretty cool...” That builds trust. It’s a nice little deposit. If they see you act in a way that calls into question your integrity or honesty, it is a withdrawal, which deteriorates trust and respect for you. Assume you are always being watched. Assume that all your decisions will eventually be known by all.
- **Deposit # 4: Clarifying Expectations.** When a team member knows exactly what is expected of them, it builds trust and respect for the member of management (hopefully you) who took the time to clarify the expectations; it becomes a nice deposit. The opposite of that – vague expectations...assuming they know what’s expected...managing by telepathy...these all act as withdrawals and tend to undermine the levels of trust and respect for the leader. Don’t fall into that trap. Remember, one of the most common complaints that associates have about their

managers (as we learned earlier in this module) is that they “don’t tell me what they want me to do.” Eliminate a common complaint and make a nice deposit in their Emotional Bank Account both at the same time.

- Deposit # 5: **Attending to the Small Things.** What’s a small thing? Courtesy, kindness, caring, showing an interest in your employees and their families...GENUINE interest, that is. Every time you say good morning or inquire about how their son is doing away at college, or smile, or communicate appreciation...all those things act as little deposits into their Emotional Bank Account. The opposite, the withdrawal in this regard would be to ignore employees, don’t say good morning, etc.
- Deposit # 6: **Sincerely Apologize When You Make a Withdrawal.** This to me is an interesting one. When someone in a so-called superior role can look a so-called subordinate in the eye and say, “I was wrong, I apologize, it will never happen again,” it is a huge way to build trust for that manager among his or her team members. It’s the manager who does *not* apologize...who pretends it didn’t happen...who adopts the attitude, “That’s too bad, if she doesn’t like it, there’s the door...” that is the kind of manager who only has the pretend respect of the staff.

These are the original six deposits for an Emotional Bank Account – ways to consciously seek to quickly build a real spirit of trust and respect for a team leader. This is just one of dozens of valuable lessons you can learn if you read *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. Why not decide to read or listen to *The 7 Habits* right now.



VII Five Ways to Gain Control of Your Environment

1. Gather Information.
2. Develop a “contact” between you and your boss to clarify the reasons you were placed in your current position.
3. Hold meetings to explain your values and philosophy.
4. Start moving from “I” thinking to “we” thinking.
5. Identify “high-influencer” activities – both formal and informal.

Take a minute to read through the above list again, only this time read it slowly, asking yourself a few questions as you do:

- Do I understand exactly what is meant by this?
- Have I “taken care” of this in my current position?
- Which of these five things do I think is the most important?

- Should I add some of these things to my “Plan” to become a better manager?

First, gather information. That goes without saying. I am sure you are familiar with the old cliché: Information is power. True enough, but as a manager you need to supplement that cliché so that it reads the following: Information is power, but the sharing of information is power times ten. If you have ever had a manager who is stingy with information, you know how frustrating it can be. The reason why managers tend to hoard information is because they mistakenly believe that it is a source of their power, influence, and security. Quite the opposite is true. Share as much good, solid information with your team members and it will pay huge dividends for you and all you seek to achieve.

Second, develop a “contract” between you and your boss to clarify the reasons you were hired or placed in your current position. For what it’s worth, I believe this is the most important thing for you to think about to really gain control of your environment. In other words, I have found that most ECPs accept the position of practice manager, for example, excited for the promotion and the opportunity to excel. Unfortunately, when it comes time for that manager’s first performance evaluation, many times it doesn’t go very well. The doctor who owns the practice reads down a litany of shortcomings, complaints, and things that the manager hasn’t been doing that he should. Most managers just sit there dumbfounded, wondering what went wrong. Either that or something bad happens, and again, the owner’s complaint seems to hit the manager from out of the blue. How or why does that happen? Well consider what I said was one of a supervisor’s main responsibilities is – namely, to clarify expectations. Remember, business owners and top-level managers are people too, and they make many of the same mistakes as rookies. That’s why, if you want to ensure your success in your supervisory, optical position, you need to “drag it out” of *your boss*. As early as during your interview, you need to get a crystal-clear picture of exactly what the person who signs your check is looking for. Perhaps during your interview, when you are asked, “So, do you have any questions for me?” would be a good time to begin the conversation. Maybe you reply with something like this, “Absolutely! When I come on board, I want to do everything I can to make you happy you hired me. So, let me ask you, what *exactly* are you looking for in your new practice manager? What is your practice’s number one challenge – the one you’d like to see solved. Six months from now, what will I have had to accomplish so that you say, ‘Great job. I’m so glad I hired you. Here’s a raise!’?” Far too many managers amble along...thinking they are concentrating on the “right” things; only to find out the opposite is true.

Third, hold meetings to clarify your values and philosophies. Be careful here. Meetings are important – a revered staple of American business life. You must have meetings from time to time, but whatever you do, don’t “meeting” your people to death! Whether you pay them for the meeting or not (and you should), be respectful of their time. Don’t hold two-hour meeting if it can be handled in one hour. Publish an agenda so that team members know exactly what is going to be discussed. Maybe then they may think about things prior to the meeting. That way they may be more ready and willing to participate in the meeting. Start on time, stick to the agenda, and end a few minutes early.

Fourth, start moving from “I” thinking to “we” thinking. This is the essence of *ownership*. Don’t be the kind of manager who finds herself saying something like this to her staff at a meeting, “Well everybody, you’ve got a big problem on your hands. Sales are lower than they have ever been before, and doc will not tolerate this anymore. So, as the manager, I took these reports home over the weekend, and I figured out why you’re screwing up so much. It’s because of this and this and this and this. Don’t worry though - this is how I want you to fix it. Starting Monday, John, I want you to start doing this; Christine, you and Donna need to start concentrating on this; and Victoria, I want you to change this to that.” If you approach the sales problem in this or a similar way, the staff will have no sense of ownership. The essence of ownership is providing an

opportunity for the team to share their ideas and give some input. You are seeking to provide an emotional connection, an attachment, a sense that the solution(s) to this problem is “their baby.” How do you do that? Perhaps the manager would approach it this way and say this to her team: “Hey everyone, thanks for getting to the meeting on time. Listen, we have a real problem on our hands.” (Notice she said “we” have a problem, not “you.”) She continues, “Doc was going over last quarter’s sales figures, and they’re the lowest they’ve been in years. Why do you think our sales have been slumping so badly?” At this point a five- or ten-minute discussion as to why sales are so low ensues. “Great! We figured out why we’ve been doing so poorly. Here’s the bigger question folks: How are we going to fix it?” A discussion now takes place to find the best way to attack the sales problem. Now, at the end of the meeting, when a decision is made as to what they’re going to do, they DO have a sense of involvement and ownership. They DO feel like it’s their baby. They will be more committed and more motivated to see that *their* ideas succeed. Start moving from “I” thinking to “we” thinking.

Fifth, and finally, identify high influencer activities, both formal and informal. What is a high-influencer activity? A high-influencer activity is anything you do that gets you closer to achieving that which you are trying to achieve. With that in mind, hopefully you realize you can’t really do this unless and until you have resolved the second issue discussed here. In other words, unless you know exactly what is expected of you, how can you figure out things to get you closer to achieving a goal? Answer: you can’t.

TEN THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

1. *Crap flows downhill.*
2. *Leaders aren’t liked; they’re respected.*
3. *You can’t lead unless you like yourself.*
4. *You can’t change other people.*
5. *You can, and must, share information.*
6. *Most people won’t change until they feel uncomfortable.*
7. *Whatever you focus on will get better.*
8. *Whatever behavior you accept, is your fault.*
9. *You are judged by your least effective employee.*
10. *Leadership is the ability to communicate a person’s worth and potential so clearly, that he/she is able to see it in himself/herself. (*)*

(*) Number 10 is attributed to Dr. Stephen R. Covey, in his follow-up work to *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, entitled *The 8th Habit*.

VIII Ten Common Mistakes Made by Optical Managers and How to Avoid Them

1. **Making all the Decisions.** Avoid this common mistake by always thinking “ownership” when trying to achieve something with your team. Realize that there will be times (due to an emergency or the nature of the issue) that involvement and ownership is impossible or impractical. That’s just another reason to provide ownership when you can. That way, those times when you must make a unilateral decision, it becomes a lot more palatable for the team.
2. **Resisting Delegation.** A focused, professional practice manager consciously learns to, and as often as feasible, delegates effectively. This is one of those managerial skills that must be learned. Never confuse delegation for simple job assignments. There is a huge difference. Delegation is when a manager discusses with a subordinate employee the possibility of that employee starting to do some work that is technically the manager’s responsibility. It is voluntary on the part of the employee. The task/work being delegated must have some value for the employee (what’s the benefit for her?) and if delegated effectively, it frees up some time so that the manager may focus on more important and/or urgent issues. One of the finest resources to learn the art of delegation is printed by National Press Publications entitled *Delegate for Results*.
3. **Trying to Fix All of the Problems at One Time.** The key here is prioritization. Sometimes a practice manager’s challenges seem overwhelming. Remember this riddle: How do you eat an elephant? Answer: One bite at a time! List out your challenges, problems, and things you want to achieve. Then (perhaps in concert with your supervisor) decide in what order you will attack the issues. You can do it! Simply prioritize.
4. **Not Giving Your Employees Authority to Do the Job**
5. **Not Supporting Your Employees**
6. **Being Afraid to Take a Risk and Change Things.** This can be a damned-if-you-do-damned-if-you-don’t dilemma. Too much change – not good. But if a practice has some real problems the only way for them to be solved is through change. After all, if you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got. Doing things differently is the only possibility you have of making improvements. When it comes to change, consider the following:
 - Think “ownership” in implementing change.
 - Change is uncomfortable, unsafe, and unpredictable.
 - Chunk your change. In other words, don’t dump a bunch of changes on the group at once; take it one step at a time.
 - Create an environment in which people are more open to change.
 - Motivate people to change and mirror the changes in yourself.
 - Reward incrementally. In other words, don’t wait until *every* employee has embraced *every* change *every* day. Change is so difficult for some people that a manager needs to at least recognize even the *effort* to embrace the changes.
 - Develop in yourself a sense of optimism, a sense of adventure, flexibility, confidence, and resourcefulness.

- Ask yourself if there is a member of your team who has a little more influence with the team than anyone else. These people are sometimes referred to as “unofficial power brokers.” Spend a little more time with these people because once you have them on board, they will use their influence on others to get them embracing the change as well.

According to Susan Enyeart, a former educator at Rockhurst University, “The effective manager or supervisor in today’s work environment is wise to constantly keep change as part of his or her responsibility. Change is not going away, so we must prepare our team members [and I would say ourselves] to live confidently with it.”

7. Working Without Clear Expectations. This was discussed earlier – remember, sometimes when it comes to discovering expectations you must “drag it out” of your employer.

8. Failing to Supervise. It sounds ironic, but one of the most common mistakes that supervisors make is that they quite simply fail to supervise. This is somewhat of a balancing act. On the one hand, in the 21st century, you cannot be a micromanaging, breathing down their necks type of supervisor. On the other hand, employees who think they are being watched tend to do a better job than employees who think they are not being watched. So, what’s a manager to do? Be available. A manager should make it his or her habit to be available. Regarding this issue, think about the acronym MBWA – Manage By Walking Around.

9. Failing to Hire or Surround Yourself with People Smarter or More Talented Than You Are.

10. Promoting Someone to a Supervisory Position Who is Not a Life-Long Learner.

Words and Phrases to Avoid – Or at the Very Least, Challenge

- Do you understand?
- Do you have any questions?
 - Always
 - Never
 - You
 - Should have
 - But
 - However
 - Attitude
- Little and Just
- For and Under
- Unfortunately

“Do you understand?” and “Do you have any questions?” give people the opportunity to respond yes and no respectively. Instead, get them to paraphrase what they think you have just taught. “Always” and “Never” are exaggerating words that are usually a lie and only serve to exacerbate the conversation. Overuse of the words “You” and “Should Have” tend to make people feel personally attacked or lectured to. “But” usually has the effect of negating (or at least calling in to question) everything that comes before it; replace this conjunction with the word “and.” “However” is simply a big, three-syllable “but.” The word “Attitude” should always be replaced with specific behaviors. “Little” and “Just” (in a particular context) tend to be belittling or misleading. Avoid saying things like, “Would you mind doing this little report? It should just take you 20 minutes or so.” Finally, avoid the words “For” and “Under,” again, in a specific context. “I have ten people who work for me...you only have six people under you.” May I humbly suggest that your team members do not work for you – they work for themselves and for their families. And I don’t even want to go down the road as to what images get conjured up when a manager claims to have someone working under him or her. I know you don’t mean anything by it, but those words sound pejorative and though unintentional, demeaning. When someone hears “unfortunately” they know what’s coming next is not what he/she wanted to hear. Try “as it turns out...”

IX Conflict and Agreement

Even the most professional, experienced, well-meaning practice manager will sometimes experience friction and conflict between and among team members, and sometimes between themselves and their subordinates, peers, and even sometimes their superiors. The better she can resolve conflicts and take steps to make sure the team *really* agrees on issues when they *seem* to agree, the staff will be more effective overall.

We learned earlier that for feedback to be effective it should be “early and often.” When it comes to giving negative or constructive feedback or dealing with conflict, some managers simply put it off, hoping that things will get better. In our hearts, we know things are probably not going to magically get better on their own. Still, we put it off. I believe there are two main reasons why managers put things off. 1) We want to be liked. 2) We have never been taught specific techniques to address inappropriate behavior or to resolve conflict.

If you want to feel competent in dealing with this aspect of leadership you need some tools to make you feel comfortable, confident, and in control. In terms of communicating negative or constructive criticism, consider some of these tried-and-true methods to keep you focused:

- **The BCA Method.** This is an acronym for a three-step process to address unacceptable behavior. It stands for Behavior, Consequence, and Adjustment. Using this tool to communicate your displeasure with a team member’s tardiness might sound like this: “Allison, may I speak to you for a moment? I was reviewing the timecards this morning, and I notice yours had a start time of 9:13 – thirteen minutes late. When a front-desk employee is late it means her co-workers must work harder to pick up the slack (which isn’t fair) and it means our patients must wait a little longer than necessary. Sometimes it even means the doctor falls behind too. So, listen, from now on I want to see that timecard read no later than 9 o’clock. Can I count on that to happen?” Notice that the behavior was described, the consequence of the behavior explained, and a specific adjustment to the behavior clearly communicated to the tardy employee. Notice too, though not part of the acronym, it was ended with a closed-end, yes or no question. If you get a positive response (yes), thank, and warn. For example, “Thanks Allison, once we talked about this, I figured you’d be on board. I know you’re a person of your word so we’re not going to have to worry about this anymore. You need to know something though: If it did happen again...” That is where you would insert the *consequence* Allison would experience if she was that late again. At that point, you might consider it the **BCAC** method. If Allison responded negatively (no) I would simply retreat, reschedule, and readdress the situation at a more appropriate time. (Did you notice in relaying the message to Allison, the word “you” was artfully avoided throughout?)
- **I See...I Think...I Feel...I Want...I Intend.** Using this method, your message to Allison might have sounded like this: “Allison, *I see* that your timecard was punched at 9:13 this morning, and *I think* we’ve talked about this, and it’s happened several times. When we have discussed it, you say it won’t happen again, then when it does, *I feel* taken advantage of. From now on, I want ALL the front-desk employees here by nine on the dot, ready to take calls and help our patients. The next time that’s not the case, *I intend* to begin the official disciplinary process, which could ultimately lead to termination. It’s not going to come to that, is it Allison?”

- **The EASY Script.** EASY is an acronym that stands for **Express** how you feel; **Address** the situation; **State** what you want to happen; end it with a **Yes** or no question. Using the EASY script, a manager might say the following: "Allison, may I speak to you a minute? I was disappointed with something I saw this morning. I noticed your timecard was stamped at 9:13. In checking my notes, I realize this is the fourth time I've had to speak with you about this in the last few weeks. It's important that you get here on time. If there is something going on that makes that impossible, we need to discuss it. If not, 9 o'clock is the start time and you must be here no later than that. Can I count on you to be here by nine?"

If you have a couple of employees in conflict with each other, consider using my **10-Minute PEACE Plan**. Like the three scripts listed above, PEACE is an acronym. It stands for Problem, Effect, Action, Consequence, and Employee Buy-In. When you bring two people into your office to try to resolve a conflict, keep that acronym in mind, and facilitate the meeting and guide the conversation in order of the acronym. Begin by asking each party to describe the problem as he or she sees it. Next, discuss the effect that the problem has on the other employees, other team members, patients, the practice, etc. Then try to discover what actions the parties involved would like to see take place. Finally, discuss openly and honestly the consequences that all parties involved would enjoy IF the actions took place. Likewise discuss what consequences that might be suffered if the actions are NOT taken. The final letter of the acronym is a reminder to the manager that his or her goal of the meeting is to make sure the quarreling people have buy-in (aka "ownership") when it comes to the agreed upon course of action.



***"All we are saying is give peace a chance."* – John Lennon**

The kinds of behaviors described above, while sometimes hard to resolve, are easy to spot. What's much harder to spot (and yet can absolutely stifle a team's performance) is false agreement. This phenomenon is characterized by team members who outwardly insist they are on board with and agree with decisions made by the group or team leader, but inwardly nothing could be further from the truth. This is a potentially dangerous phenomenon known in some management circles as The Abilene Paradox. First identified by Jerry Harvey, professor of Management Science at George Washington University, he writes about the dangers of and solutions to this situation in *The Abilene Paradox and Other Mediations on Management*. Consider the following anecdote Harvey uses to describe the problem:

On a hot afternoon visiting in Coleman, Texas, the family is comfortably playing dominoes on a porch, until the father-in-law suggests that they take a trip to Abilene (53 miles north) for dinner. The wife says, "Sounds like a great idea." The husband, despite having reservations because the drive is long and hot, thinks that his preferences must be out-of-step with the group and says, "Sounds good to me. I just hope your mother wants to go." The mother-in-law then says, "Of course I want to go. I haven't been to Abilene in a long time."

The drive *is* hot, dusty, and long. When they arrive at the cafeteria, the food is as bad as the drive. They arrive back home four hours later, exhausted.

One of them dishonestly says, "It was a great trip, wasn't it?" The mother-in-law says that she would rather have stayed home, but went along since the other three were so enthusiastic. The husband says, "I

wasn't delighted to be doing what we were doing. I only went to satisfy the rest of you." The wife says, "I just went along to keep you happy. I would have had to be crazy to want to go out in the heat like that." The father-in-law then says that he only suggested the trip in the first place because he thought the others might be bored.

The group sat back, perplexed that together they had decided to take a trip which none of them really wanted. They each would have preferred to sit comfortably but did not admit to it when they still had time to enjoy the afternoon. This is a classic example of The Abilene Paradox.

To avoid the potential dangers of false agreement, a manager must take steps to encourage and even insist on disagreements and alternate suggestions. For more information on how to recognize the danger signs of The Abilene Paradox, and how to work through it, check out the book, *The Abilene Paradox* by Jerry Harvey, available in most libraries, bookstores, and at amazon.com.

X Motivation and Team Building

One of the fundamental responsibilities of a leader is to motivate themselves and the rest of the team. The essence of motivation can be seen in the word itself: MOTIVATION. Whatever a manager does to motivate the team (e.g., bonuses, commissions, time off, flex time, special parking places, flowers, gift cards, lunch, movie tickets, thank you cards, employee of the week, employee of the month, employee of the year) you are trying to give them a MOTIVE for a particular ACTION. That is the goal of motivation: a motive for action, or to simplify it further, you are trying to give the employees a Reason to Act.

I have no problem with a manager using the kinds of specific things listed above to motivate her team. In fact, I believe if she stumbles on some specific something that does motivate the team (gives them a reason to act), and it's not cost prohibitive, illegal, or immoral...she ought to do it. But for real, long-term success in motivating the team, I think she should think of the following three things:

1. Try to create an environment in which a reasonable person would be motivated. How? Take steps to show them that they and their work matter. How? By consistently appreciating all the good that they do, and by consistently dealing with the bad – in commensurate, equal fashion? How? Through feedback. And feedback to be effective needs to be early and often. People need to know that everything they do – for better or worse – matters.
2. Try to eliminate as many de-motivating characteristics that may exist in your work group. Here is a list of what I believe are 8 Classic De-Motivators:
 - a. Individual Internal Competition
 - b. Unclear expectations
 - c. Unnecessary rules
 - d. Unproductive meetings
 - e. Treating employees unfairly
 - f. Too much criticism
 - g. Underutilizing an employee's abilities
 - h. Tolerating poor performance
3. Get the team involved in team-building activities.

“When people work for someone who genuinely cares about them, they generally care more about the work they do.”

- Anthony Record -

XI Interviewing and Hiring Skills

While there are a nearly infinite number of things it takes to be a good, effective manager, if you are serious about creating a highly motivated, high-performance team around you, I believe the single most important thing you will ever do in that endeavor is to be sure to bring the right people on board to begin with. And while I absolutely believe this is the single most important thing you will do in building that well-oiled machine of a team, I have discovered that it is the skill that most managers prepare for the least. Many managers view the interview process as almost an intrusion on their day. On the contrary, this is THE most important day in your life as a manager. (Ironically, this is truer the more infrequently you interview people.)

One of the most common complaints managers have is that they hire someone because during the interview the applicant/interviewee convinced them that he would be a hard-working, dependable, star performer. However, after a few days they realize the person they hired is not at all the person they thought they had hired. Why does this happen? Generally, it happens because the interviewee prepared for the interview way better than the interviewer. Level that playing field by comprehensively preparing for the interview. LEARN to be a good interviewer. LEARN to weed out the undesirables. Unfortunately, the only way to do that will take some real time, effort, and money. Read a few books. Attend a couple of seminars. Experiment. For what it's worth, I have found the most effective method of interviewing for ECPs to be Scenario-Based Interviewing. The best resource I have found for honing your interviewing skills in terms of scenario-based interviewing is *Hiring the Best* by Martin Yate. In a nutshell, when trying to fill a position on your staff:

1. Identify a star performer who used to do the job.
2. Identify the characteristics that made that person a star performer.
3. Develop questions for applicants that are designed to seek out those characteristics.

In the meantime, here are 19 tips for a professional, effective interview:

1. Prepare the interview area.
2. Put the candidate at ease.
3. Outline the interview area.
4. Keep an open mind.
5. Let the candidate do most of the talking.
6. Use open-ended questions.
7. Be attentive.
8. Observe body language.

9. Take notes (but not too many, and not on the application or resume).
10. Test for character.
11. Probe incomplete answers.
12. Present your practice in a positive, yet honest light.
13. Allow the candidate plenty of time to ask you questions.
14. Let the candidate know when to expect a decision.
15. Beware of a candidate who uses the word “we” too much (“We did that...”)
16. Beware of candidates who stress only the positive.
17. Beware of candidates who are unwilling to let you contact former employers.
18. Beware of candidates who talk negatively about a previous employer or manager.
19. End the interview on a positive note.

The 7 Federally Protected Classes Individuals

Age

Race

Religion

Ethnicity

National Origin

Gender or Sexual Orientation

Disability

Familial Status

XII Co-Worker/Friend to Manager/Supervisor – The Transition

Given the choice between being hired from the outside, or being promoted from within, I’d take the former every time. However, in our society, being promoted from within is the norm, not the exception. Are there special considerations when being promoted from within? Absolutely. Despite their pats on your back and their verbal congratulations, many of your former co-workers resent the fact that *you* were promoted instead of them. While there are many different approaches to handle the transition more effectively, the best advice is not to wait for problems to manifest themselves, rather, with a proactive mindset, set some ground rules for moving forward as soon as possible. If you are especially close to one employee, consider the

following template for a conversation designed to maintain your friendship, but still be an effective practice manager:

1. Set up a meeting as soon as possible to discuss expectations and set boundaries.
2. Act like it's a better situation – be enthusiastic.
3. Recognize that there will probably be some sensitivities. (Be ready for that.)
4. "I'm going to make mistakes – I could use your help."
5. Focus on potential benefits of the relationship. For example:
 - a. "I'm your biggest ally..."
 - b. "Maybe we can fix some of the problems we used to gripe about."
6. We can maintain our friendship, AND...
7. Set limitations and expectations. For example:
 - a. "We're not going to be able to discuss other people in the office."
 - b. "I will have to correct you and hold you accountable just like everyone else."

Get more ideas and suggestions at www.businessballs.com. This is a great website that serves as an overall good reference guide for supervisors. Search their archives for a couple of articles that delve a little deeper into the whole phenomenon of making the transition from co-worker to boss a little more effectively.

XIII Closing Comments

As I contemplate my final comments and glance down to the lower left-hand side of my computer screen, I see that I have written over 13,000 words so far. Having said that, all the things that I have not touched on (due to the limits of time and space) are racing through my mind. I would encourage you to go back and look at what you wrote down in response to Exercises 1 and 2. In terms of Exercise 1, be sure that whatever Plan you have developed to be the best manager you can be, that it includes addressing these challenges.

Finally, look at what you wrote in response to Exercise 2. If you are like most people under "Best Boss" you wrote things like, "honest, fun, trustworthy, caring, organized," etc. Probably very little if anything you wrote has anything to do with the technical aspect of being an Eye Care Professional. This is critical. Remember that managing people is a separate skill set. Just because you can neutralize a pair of eyeglasses with your hands tied behind your back, or you are the highest-producing sales associate...none of that has a hill of beans to do with your ultimate success or failure as an optical manager. Remember that it is not spectacle lenses or eyeglass frames, rather it is people that are your ultimate concern – the commodity, if you will, that you should become expert in. If you take steps to raise your managerial abilities to the same level as your optical abilities, you will have become a member of a rare and elite group. Opportunities you never knew existed will present themselves to you, and more importantly, you will be ready to embrace them. Never forget though, these immortal words: When the time for opportunity comes, the time for preparation is past. Good luck on becoming the best manager you can be...and good luck of the Final Assessment.

XIV Final Assessment

1. The Abilene Paradox is a lesson that warns a team leader against:
 - a. False motivators
 - b. False priorities
 - c. False agreements
 - d. False friends

2. The commodity that should most concern an ECP who is a manager/leader is:
 - a. Profit
 - b. People
 - c. Pantoscopic tilt
 - d. Motivators

3. What are the three main responsibilities of an optical manager?
 - a. Clarifying expectations, training staff members, and holding them accountable
 - b. Motivating staff members, successfully delegating, and time management
 - c. Clarifying expectations, developing a good relationship with your boss, and delegation
 - d. *The Abilene Paradox, The 7 Habits, and The 8th Habit* as described by Stephen R. Covey

4. Keeping commitments, showing personal integrity, and treating people as individuals are ways to:
 - a. Build trust for a leader
 - b. Build respect for a practice manager
 - c. Make deposits in a staff member's Emotional Bank Account
 - d. Suck up to the boss

5. According to research conducted by Robert Tracz, what is the number one complaint employees have about their boss?
 - a. They don't keep their promises
 - b. They don't tell me what they want me to do
 - c. They don't listen very well
 - d. They don't have an optical background

6. Early and Often, Commensurate, and Singularity are all characteristics of successful:
 - a. Motivation
 - b. Feedback
 - c. Prioritization
 - d. Goals

7. What is/are some of the things that tend to de-motivate a workgroup?
 - a. Too much work
 - b. Too much feedback
 - c. Too much criticism
 - d. Too much horseplay

8. One of the most effective tools in guarding against false agreement in a workgroup is trying to avoid:
 - a. The Abilene Paradox
 - b. The 8th Habit
 - c. The BCA Technique
 - d. The BCAC Technique

9. The BCA technique:
 - a. Will help you save face when holding people accountable
 - b. Is used for the same basic purpose as the Abilene Paradox
 - c. Stands for Behavior, Consequence, Adjustment
 - d. Is a tool to help you become a more focused optical professional

10. According to Stephen Covey we all possess:
 - a. Seeds of greatness
 - b. The willingness and desire to lead
 - c. An Emotional Bank Account
 - d. 7 Habits of Effectiveness inherent within us at birth

11. Promoting a subordinate employee who is not a life-long learner to a management or supervisory position is an example of:
 - a. A common mistake that new managers sometimes make
 - b. A forward-thinking move to make
 - c. Something that everyone will eventually do
 - d. Something that could be a positive thing for a work group

12. One of the reasons a manager sometimes does not gain support for disciplinary actions is:
 - a. Lack of experience
 - b. Lack of documentation
 - c. Lack of a proper time frame
 - d. Lack of confidence

13. Of the top complaints that managers have about employees and employees have about managers, they can all be traced to some sort of breakdown in:
 - a. Communication
 - b. Relationships
 - c. Experience
 - d. Motivation

14. Why do some “bad apples” slip through the cracks during an interview?
 - a. The interview area is not adequately prepared
 - b. The interviewee lies to the interviewer
 - c. The interviewee prepares for the interview better than the interviewer
 - d. Unclear expectations

15. Which of the following is a factor in the Emotional Bank Account, the responsibilities of a manager, and the complaints that employees have about managers?
 - a. Motivation
 - b. Expectations
 - c. How a manager effects change
 - d. Punctuality

16. Imagine you supervise a staff of six licensed dispensers in a large, successful, private practice. You and your staff recently attended a seminar that described the latest Free-Form progressive lens, and you want to promote it. You explain to the staff that whoever sells the most Free-Form progressive lenses in the next three months will earn a \$500 bonus. This is an example of:
 - a. Effective motivation
 - b. Something that would ultimately demotivate the work group
 - c. Team building
 - d. A deposit in the employees’ Emotional Bank Account

17. In trying to implement a significant change in your workgroup, when is the best time to thank the employees for their compliance?
 - a. When the change is first announced
 - b. When you first see them making steps toward implementation
 - c. Once YOUR boss has assured you that implementation is complete
 - d. Once 100% of the change has been implemented

18. Treating people as individuals and showing personal integrity are sure-fire ways to:
 - a. Impress your boss
 - b. Make deposits in someone’s Emotional Bank Account
 - c. Motivate the team
 - d. Earn the respect of your boss

19. *Hiring the Best* is a book that delves into:
 - a. Scenario-Based Interviewing
 - b. Behavior-Based Interviewing
 - c. Performance-Based Interviewing
 - d. None of the above

20. Ownership means:
 - a. Moving from “we” thinking to “I” thinking
 - b. Involving team members in the decision-making process
 - c. Clarification of expectations
 - d. Giving employees profit sharing

21. Most people are promoted to optimal management positions:
 - a. After completing comprehensive training
 - b. Because they are good opticians
 - c. By brown-nosing
 - d. In the month of August

22. In making the transition from a co-worker and/or friend to a manager, what would be a good way to help preserve the previous relationship:
 - a. Focus on some potential benefits of the new relationship to the person who was not promoted
 - b. Show favoritism toward the friend who was not promoted
 - c. Warn the other team members that your friend will be shown preference
 - d. Do nothing and hope for the best

23. Who is the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit*?
 - a. Dr. Stephen Covey
 - b. Jim Collins
 - c. Mac Anderson
 - d. Stephen Hawking

24. Which of the following is a good idea during an interview?
 - a. Ask a lot of closed-end questions to save time
 - b. Make sure the interview lasts no longer than 30 minutes
 - c. Ask a lot of open-ended question to make sure the candidate does most of the talking
 - d. Review the application and resume as you interact with the candidate

25. Which of the following is NOT an example of a word or phrase that a manager should avoid?
 - a. Do you understand?
 - b. You’ve done an excellent job
 - c. Always or Never
 - d. Attitude

26. Underutilizing an employee's abilities is a classic example of:
- Not delegating properly
 - A de-motivator
 - Something an experienced manager sometimes does
 - Something that is to be expected and is unavoidable
27. Attending management seminars and listening to instructional CDs in your car are both ways to:
- Get more done in a day
 - Train yourself to be a better manager
 - Overcome your fears
 - Get a raise
28. In the original edition of *the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Dr. Covey shares how many different deposits for an Emotional Bank Account?
- 2
 - 4
 - 6
 - 8
29. Other than making deposits in their Emotional Bank Accounts, what are the two factors that, over time, will tend to earn the trust and respect of your subordinates?
- Character and competence
 - Experience and information
 - Motivation and delegation
 - Delegation and prioritization
30. From a manager's point of view, what management tool/technique will help free his or her time for more important and urgent things?
- Prioritization
 - Motivation
 - Delegation
 - Experience
31. Allowing transgressions to go unaddressed, or assuming an employee knows what the problem and/or solution is are good examples of:
- Managing by Telepathy
 - Taking responsibility
 - Delegation
 - Professional management

32. What is used to keep track of employee accomplishments and transgressions?
 - a. Motivation
 - b. A Performance evaluation
 - c. Documentation
 - d. Feedback

33. When giving important feedback to employees:
 - a. Focus on no more than 5 topics
 - b. Focus on no more than 3 topics
 - c. Focus on no more than 2 topics
 - d. Focus on no more than 1 topic

34. Synergy and Being Proactive are examples of:
 - a. Gaining control of your environment
 - b. The 7 habits of highly effective people
 - c. The three main responsibilities of management
 - d. Deposits for an Emotional Bank Account

35. The four basic personality types are best illustrated by:
 - a. The Bausch and Lomb Type Indicator
 - b. The Abilene Paradox
 - c. The DISC or SELF profile
 - d. The Mohs Scale

36. Meetings should be held:
 - a. Monthly
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Daily
 - d. As necessary

37. Whenever you are trying to accomplish something through others, in order to make sure they are fully committed, a manager should always consider:
 - a. Ownership
 - b. Motivation
 - c. Delegation
 - d. The 7 Habits

38. The single most important factor in building a highly motivated team is:
 - a. Understanding the four different personalities
 - b. Training yourself to be a good leader
 - c. Having a “contract” with your boss in terms of expectations
 - d. Bringing the right people on board to begin with

39. Which one of the following is one of the seven federally protected classes of individuals?
- a. Gender
 - b. Sexual orientation
 - c. Obesity
 - d. Smokers
40. According to the author of this module what is a maxim that all managers should remember?
- a. All good things to those who wait
 - b. If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got
 - c. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you
 - d. People are inherently bad