

# Part One

## Your Rewarding Job

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# YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

## 1.1 Ignore your job description

This book is designed to make you a better manager. In order for you to realize and acknowledge your progress we need to establish a measurement guideline. So, I'm going to start with a question, and you may wish to seek the views of others before deciding on your answer.

I'd like you to think of the combined performance of you and your team over the past six months and imagine that everything has gone perfectly – you have all the right people, their work is perfect, you've improved productivity and set new standards for interfacing with other teams and departments. Recognition, awards and money have flowed freely in your direction. That may be a bit of a stretch of course, but bear with me. I'd like you to give that imaginary performance a mark of 100%.

Now think about your actual situation and performance over the past six months and give you and your team a combined estimated score by comparison. Enter it here ..... %.

I have asked this question many times of thousands of real managers over the past 13 years in my day job and the actual marks have varied between 10% and 95%, averaging about 65%. This means that every manager I have met has indicated the potential for improvement. Fantastic.

Why have I asked you this question? Because now, and maybe for the first time, I'm going to tell you your real job:

*Your job is to increase that mark by 1%, and as soon as you have achieved it, by the next 1%.*

Don't be too disappointed if the mark drops from time to time because of extraneous factors or indeed, your own mismanagement – just work on the extra 1%.

Forget about your job description<sup>1</sup> (even if you are one of the lucky(?) ones to have one), unless, of course, it says exactly that.

But how, I hear you ask, am I to generate that extra 1%?

Start by asking this simple question: What will you do tomorrow to inspire individuals to greater job and personal satisfaction and the entire team to work together more efficiently? Because that is what this book is all about. Moments of power which either have the potential to contribute to the extra 1%, or the power to reduce it. Even if you disagree with half of the examples, the other half may help you to enjoy your job a little more.

There are two other jobs you have: the first is to get the same jobs done to the same or better standards with fewer resources and smaller budgets and the second is to make yourself redundant. Making yourself redundant means that the team or your organization don't need your skills or even an actual person in that role any longer. But not to worry, there are greater challenges for you if you want them.

To summarize your real job:

- Increase team output in increments of 1%.
- Get the same jobs done to the same or better standards with fewer resources and smaller budgets.
- Make yourself redundant.

## 1.2 Embrace your role as a soccer coach and an orchestra conductor

You might not realize it, but you are a unique combination of your day job, a soccer coach and an orchestra conductor! As a manager, you have one of the most challenging but most rewarding jobs in the whole world! Congratulations!

You want me to explain? OK.

Let's start with the soccer manager. A soccer coach knows the talents, skills and mindsets of each and every one of his entire squad at any one time. For the next game, the coach assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the team's opponents and selects the 11 players best suited to overcome and exploit them respectively. At the pre-match briefing, the coach outlines the roles and responsibilities of each of the players so that everyone knows their position on the pitch and what they have to do; because they also know the positions of their colleagues and their roles and responsibilities, they know where and how they fit into the overall game plan.

The game kicks off but, after a little while, the coach notices that his game plan is not working as intended and he makes some changes to the organization of the team, making a substitution. He starts off with a plan, fully aware that it may not survive the first 15 minutes.

Now think of the parallels with your job as a manager. What is your game plan for the next day or week? Knowing the talents, skills and mindsets of each of your people, ask yourself whether they are all aware of the tasks ahead and the part they will individually play in the collective team effort? A day or two later, equivalent to the 15 minutes on the soccer pitch, one of your team becomes sick. If you have a substitute great, but if not, then how will you adjust the roles and responsibilities of the remaining

members to get the jobs done on time? So, the next time you watch a soccer match on the television, concentrate on the manager more than the players and ask yourself whether you watch the performances of your team with the same focus and concentration. Enjoy the game!

Now let's examine your role as an orchestra conductor. Like the soccer coach, you are acutely aware of the talents, skills and mindsets of the entire orchestra. The strength of the string, brass, woodwind and percussion sections and the balance between them reflects the venue, the occasion and the concert music selected. The team is ready to go. The audience settles into their seats and you raise your baton. Why? To keep the different sections in time with each other. Without the conductor, the cellos may not know precisely when to come in because the sound from the violins takes time to travel across the stage. If the cellos waited until they heard their cue then they would be too late. The discordant result would encourage people to leave the auditorium fairly quickly.<sup>2</sup>

In your job as a manager, you have to make sure that the work of one of your people isn't holding up another member of your team, nor accelerating away from them. It is your job to coordinate the work between the individual members of your team, so that the optimum combined performance is achieved consistently. So, the next time you watch a concert, concentrate on the conductor more than the musicians and ask yourself whether you coordinate the work of your people with the same precision and encouragement.<sup>3</sup>

A footnote on the question of mindsets. You may have the equivalent of a uniquely gifted player or musician in your group, but they are unlikely to contribute much if their mindset is not right. They may be distracted or preoccupied by something either at work or at home. Either way, you will need to decide if their

lack of focus warrants a relegation to the substitutes' bench for the time being, and explain why, confidentially of course.

### ***Your Moment of Power***

When you respond quickly to changes in circumstances and adjust working hours and individual work allocations to achieve the maximum possible team output for the period.

## 1.3 Focus on customer satisfaction

All of your objectives and those of your people need to contribute to one or more of only three top-level goals:

For commercial organizations:

- Customer satisfaction.
- Margin.
- Market share.

For not-for-profit and government organizations:

- Customer satisfaction.
- Delivery.
- Stakeholder engagement.

Make sure that your team understand where their individual little projects will have a positive effect; let them see and understand the contribution they are making to the big picture. Improving customer satisfaction should be the number one goal for any organization, and it's the most challenging. Satisfied clients become an organization's advocates, spreading words about you to a wider audience and, with social media, the speed of spread can be lightning fast. Pleased with your service or product, increased sales feed market share and improved market share contains the promise of higher margins.

You might not have an external customer on whom to focus, in which case you should aim to understand the "products" or "services" that you offer to other teams both inside and outside of your own organization.

Take these two contrasting examples from personal experience:

I bought a coat from Land's End for about £80. After about 18 months, the front zip fastener broke. I telephoned the company to order a replacement, expecting to spend another £80. "Oh no



sir," said the sales assistant, "our products have a lifetime guarantee, so I'll send you another one together with a freepost label for the return of the faulty one." The new one duly arrived and the old one was easily returned. Excellent service – very pleased. Then I received a telephone call. "Sir, the price of the replacement item is lower, £50, and we have tried to refund the difference to you, but we have what must be an expired card number on file. Could you give me your current card number please and we'll credit £30 to you?" How brilliant! I'm now their advocate – SHOP AT LAND'S END!

But with my mobile phone service provider, O<sub>2</sub>, the story is different. Having identified the new handset that I wanted, I contacted O<sub>2</sub> directly and asked for their best deal. I then compared it to the offers from O<sub>2</sub>'s retail partners and was surprised to find that I could get the same or even better deals from their partners instead. You will understand my disappointment that after 13 years with the same company, they treat me as if I were a new subscriber. Loyalty, it seems, only appears to work one way.

### ***Your Moment of Power***

When your explanations to staff about their role in achieving the "bigger picture" create enthusiasm and gain their commitment.

