

Make it happen

3rd Quarter 2019 Manager Newsletter



Keeping your staff motivated through tedious tasks

Let's face facts: Even the most exciting work may include tiresome aspects. If your team members feel bored even as they're rushing to keep their metrics as high as possible, morale may be low while turnover runs high. **Try these ideas to encourage your staff through less-than exciting tasks by clicking here...**



Create a culture of innovation

Innovation can help you find new and better ways to serve your clients. And it can make a good company into a great one. **Learn more about how to create a culture of innovation...**



What's your leadership style?

How much do you understand about how you like to lead? Each quarter we're describing one or two of the leadership styles in the Blake Mouton Managerial Grid.¹ Maybe you'll see some of yourself in one or more of these styles. **Learn about what your style is...**

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Keeping your staff motivated through tedious tasks



[Return to index page](#)

Let's face facts: Even the most exciting work may include tiresome aspects. If your team members feel bored even as they're rushing to keep their metrics as high as possible, morale may be low while turnover runs high. Try these ideas to encourage your staff through less-than exciting tasks:

- **Align your team's work with the organization's mission.** How does each task make a difference for your team? For the organization as a whole? Talk about it in a positive way and incorporate reminders into every day.
- **Try to match up each team member's work with his or her personal goals.** Talk about how the work makes your team members better. More skilled. More experienced. Ready for the next level. Then help them get to the next level if they're looking to advance.
- **Imagine the effect you're having on the customer.** Many team members work behind the scenes. So they don't get to see the end result of their work. But if they fulfill a customer's needs extra fast or in a comprehensive way, they can feel proud. When you receive positive feedback for your team, be sure to pass it along to those whose work made it happen.

- **Offer incentives.** Cash bonuses are a great example, though not always included in your team's budget. See if you can give your staff frequent tokens of recognition for excellent work. If you don't know what sorts of incentives would be motivating for your team, ask them. And be sure to reward quantity only if it includes high quality.
- **Add a little fun.** If the work lends itself to good-natured fun, why not add it into the mix? Headphones or, if everyone agrees, shared music in the workplace can boost productivity. Or hold a mini-contest with a token prize such as lunch with you or a party on the day the winner chooses.

You may not be able to control the work your team needs to get done. But you can create a culture of recognition and appreciation that helps keep motivation high.

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Create a culture of innovation



[Return to index page](#)

Innovation can help you find new and better ways to serve your clients. And it can make a good company into a great one.

You might think of certain people as naturally creative because they offer lots of new ideas. But everyone can learn to think in a way that promotes innovation. Here are some tips that can help:

- **Read up.** Business innovation is a hot topic that covers an immense amount of ground. There are lots of books, articles and blogs that can show you different ways of looking at business problems and opportunities.
- **Find an innovation mentor.** Maybe you know a manager from another area who's a whiz at innovating. See if he or she has some time to share stories. You can also network with professionals outside your own company or industry to see how they manage innovation.
- **Talk about it.** What can your team and company do to be more innovative? Keep a written history of ideas that have been implemented. Try to include information about how those ideas worked out.
- **Reward sensible risk-taking.** Of course it's a good idea to spell out which risks require the approval of others. But a culture in which team members feel empowered to suggest and try new ideas breeds innovation.

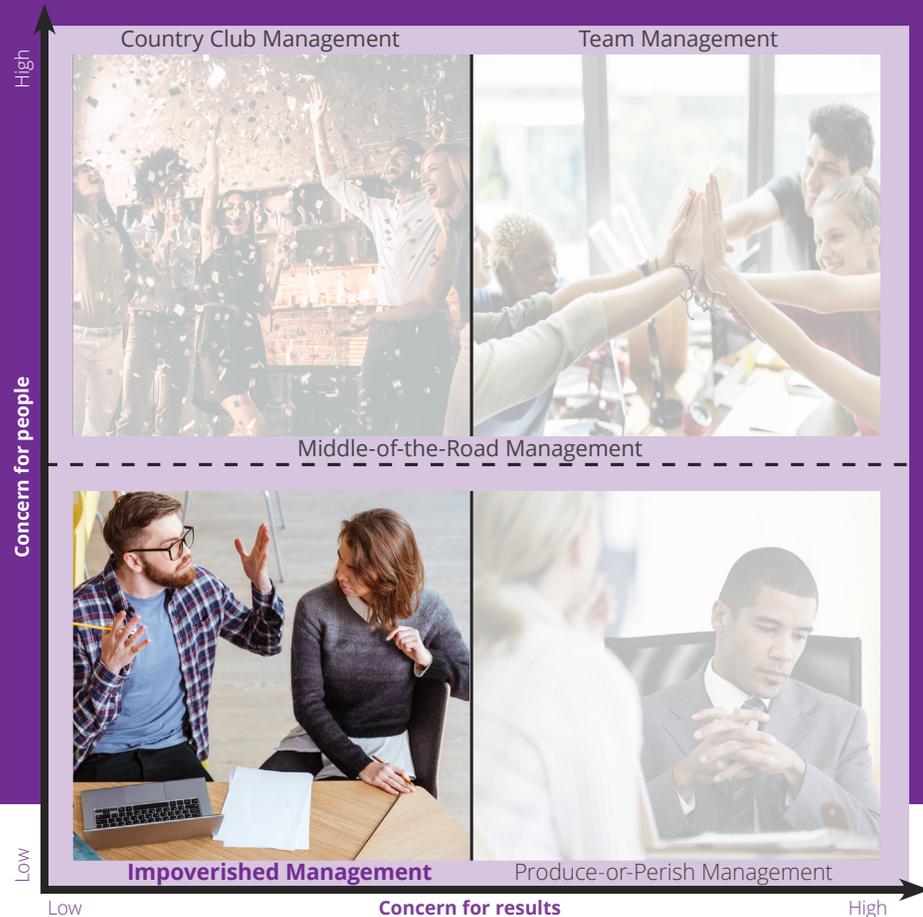
- **Find unfulfilled needs.** What unmet needs do your customers have? Is there an opportunity for your team or company to meet them? Are customers willing to pay for a new service or feature you're proposing? Or will it help with customer satisfaction or retention?
- **Pose challenges.** Name a business problem and gather your team to brainstorm solutions. Put ideas to the test to see if they might stand up or even fly. Offer prizes if you can.
- **Make innovation a habit.** Give your staff time to experiment. If it's built into their routine, they'll be less likely to leave it on the "back burner." Ideas are a renewable resource. The real work lies in choosing which ones to pursue and turning them into added value.

Once your team gets in the habit of looking for new ideas and solutions, there's no telling where your collective imagination might take you. As a manager, you can set the stage for your staff to give their best.

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The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid¹

Robert Blake and Jane Mouton's grid helps leaders understand their natural tendencies using two spectrums:

- **Concern for people.** How much do you focus on your employees' feelings, happiness and interests?
- **Concern for results.** How much do you focus on your organization's needs and production outcomes?

Blake and Mouton defined five leadership styles based on where you fall in these two areas on the grid. So far we've reviewed the "country club manager" and the "produce-or-perish manager." This article explores the "impoverished" and "middle-of-the-road" management styles.



Impoverished managers

"Impoverished" managers are sometimes called "indifferent" managers. But they could also be called "ineffective" because they're low on both concern for people and results. They spend little energy or time trying to get work done

or creating a positive work environment and are mostly focused on their own needs. Impoverished managers often have teams that are disorganized and unhappy.

Middle-of-the-road managers

These managers try to strike a balance between the needs of their staff and the needs of the company. While this may sound good, these managers often struggle to accomplish either. Their efforts to compromise often lead to maintaining the status quo.

Middle-of-the-road managers' efforts to compromise both results and people tend to lead to average or even mediocre performance. They're afraid to inspire high performance or fully meet the needs of their employees.

Haven't seen your management style yet? Check back next quarter as we explore one last style.

¹Blake, R. and McCause, A. Leadership dilemmas — Grid solutions. Gulf Professional Publishing. March 8, 1991.

[Return to index page](#)



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