

12 Imperatives for Great Management: A 12 Second Tutorial for Becoming a Great Manager

Timothy J. Everett

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12 Imperatives for Great Management will serve as a useful primer for new managers.

Timothy J. Everett's self-help business text *12 Imperatives for Great Management* aims to help new managers cultivate some necessary skills.

The work is focused on the development of technical skills, business skills, and soft skills. These are covered in twelve subtopics, including executive management support, inspiring a sense of urgency, articulating values, and fostering cultures of success. Such familiar topics are addressed with solid overviews of the challenges that face many new managers or team leads, regardless of their industries. Throughout, crucial concepts (including of great managers, master managers, and agility) are capitalized for emphasis; and chapters begin with pithy and profound quotes from eclectic sources, including Daffy Duck, Casey Stengel, *Office Space*, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Structured as a series of conversations that eschew textbook discussions and traditional narratives, the book opens with the account of a thirty-two-year-old rookie manager, Alex, who takes an unwanted “cosmic time out” in a hospital emergency room following an acute attack of stress-related chest pains. A disembodied voice, Srini, appears to him in the form of a client service representative. Recognizing Alex's predicament, she arranges conversations between the overstressed project lead and some master managers. These conversations take place at locations including the Hoover Dam, Grand Central Station, and Ka'anapali Beach. Brief history lessons establish the context for each setting choice and topic, and the book's final chapters are devoted to Alex's triumphant returns at home and work, where others perceive that he is “like a new man.”

But the book's guiding conceit—of an ethereal mentor who visits an overstressed manager in his hospital room—is stretched to its breaking point. While some of the conversations are engaging, the book's quick reviews of its concepts and competencies, which come at the end of each chapter, end up being far more valuable than Alex's story is. The book is strongest in its more traditional moments, when it is addressing challenging issues for new managers in a direct manner. It is convincing when it argues that articulating ideas well results in better orientation, that a client-focused ethic should be established, that team building and communication are important, and that planning and managing changes are essential. A useful appendix gathers definitions of key terms, worksheets, and graphics together at the end.

12 Imperatives for Great Management is a business book whose concepts of successful leadership are familiar; it serves as a useful primer for new managers.

KLAY DYER (February 15, 2021)

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