

My First Time in Charge: Stop Worrying, Start Performing: Practical Guide for New Managers

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My First Time in Charge contains an abundance of practical tips and tools for professionals taking over their first teams.

Daniele Matteucci's *My First Time in Charge* is an action-driven guide geared toward professionals who are moving into management positions.

The book is divided into two sections—rational and emotional—with each offering tips and tools that can be applied across a variety of industries. The first part of the text covers practical management topics, including setting and communicating goals, breaking goals down into concrete actions, picking people, and managing people based on their motivation, skills, potential, and level of discipline. The book's second segment elaborates on the emotional aspects of management, including how to manage people with negative attitudes, and how supervisors should balance rewards and reprimands to get the results they want from their teams.

The advice is illustrated with charts, bullet-pointed lists, and other graphics that make the information unambiguous and easily applicable. For example, a template for identifying the next immediate action toward accomplishing a bigger goal is broken down into steps that answer its questions: what needs to be done, who needs to do it, when it should be done, how it should be done, and where it should be done in order to move a project forward. Each chapter also ends with a short section titled "It's Time For Action" that summarizes the tips from the chapter and suggests questions new managers can ask themselves in order to apply the advice.

Some of the book's visual features, including a goal clarification map, are less universally useful because the examples within them contain information specific to sales and marketing organizations. Others, including a graphic that illustrates several different employee prototypes and another that talks about team types, are overly explained, their descriptions becoming repetitive.

The book's second section, devoted to the emotional side of management, starts with a handful of unfocused analogies, illustrations, and metaphors that distract from the book's purpose as a practical guide. However, it ends by following the format of the first section, offering tangible tips punctuated by pragmatic charts and checklists. Chapter 10, which focuses on what it takes to build a successful team, ends with a particularly useful "It's Time For Action" summary that encourages new managers to ask essential questions about the type of teams and systems they want, and then identify the gaps they need to fill to get to their goals. The book's final chapter includes a chart with quotes from famous leaders alongside the author's key takeaways from their advice and axioms. It ends by encouraging new managers to develop their own vision and mission statement for the future—an effective way to address the open-ended emotional challenges of management.

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CHARLENE OLDHAM (April 22, 2020)

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