

PART II

The Standards

STANDARDS-BASED MANAGEMENT



See also “The Standards Triangle” at www.theindex.net

ATOMS & ORCHESTRAS



*The Case for
Standards-Based
Management*

*How to Be a
Better Boss*



Derrick Van Mell

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The Center's simple tools and careful facilitation got us moving. We'd been trying to do too much. Our first Projects Summary showed we'd overcommitted ourselves. Our new 1-page Goal Tree clarified priorities and unlocked energy to focus on the big picture.

– Bob Wahlin,
President,
Stoughton Trailers

The Management Self-Audit provided extraordinary results. After an hour's training, our team spotted gaps and strengths and agreed quickly on what to prioritize. The Index gave me and the board confidence nothing was overlooked. The conversation helped everyone see how everyone connects and contributes.

– Ruth Schmidt,
Executive Director,
WECA

I'd used The Center of Management Terms & Practices' Index to conduct our planning, so I was happy to participate in one of their local seminars on its Toolkit. I've rarely seen 30 executives as engaged! It's now a tool we use to help us quickly understand our real priorities: our sales closing rate took a big step up.

– Ed Purcell,
President,
Vertical Greenwalls

As a lawyer, I've used The Center's Toolkit for years and it's not only helped me as head of the office, but also improved my understanding of how my CEO clients think and of the language they use.

– Tim Stewart,
Managing Partner,
Dewitt Law Firm

The General Management Index helped me and other family business members have confidence we were covering all the issues and speaking the same language. The Goal Tree gave all of us powerful focus quickly.

– Jeff Lerdahl,
President,
Lerdahl Business Interiors

My Workgroup at The Center helped me craft the three 'Hard to Ask' questions that our management team used to make a really tough decision. The Workgroup peers listened carefully and gave me both the ideas and the confidence to lead this career-critical conversation."

– Susan Dineen,
Marketing Director,
ACS

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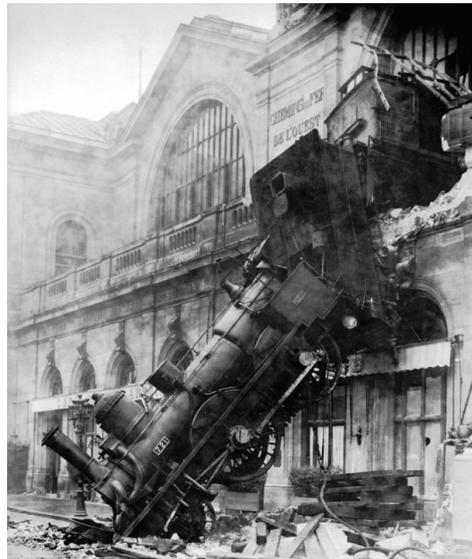
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parts of this book.



3 - The Value of Management Standards: Morale and Margins

The World Bank reported in 2020 there were 2.7 billion people working in organizations of some kind. In other words, 2.7 billion people have a boss or are a boss. How many of them would you say are enduring faulty communications, numbing meetings, and disengaged co-workers every day?

The lack of ethical, technical, and developmental standards for management has been the root cause of these common and costly problems. As we'll see, standard management terms, tools, and practices now equip bosses for communicating clearly and delegating with confidence. But the benefits aren't just qualitative: using standards is profitable. A 1% improvement in management ability can boost margins by 10%.



Not well managed

The Case for Standards-Based Management

It's necessary to spell out the case for Standards-Based Management because some people don't believe that the terms, tools, and practices of management can be tamed and standardized. The four underlying ideas are:

1. Management is a legitimate profession with enormous financial and social value.
2. Management does not have to be chaotic; it can be sensible and straightforward.
3. Like law, engineering, and medicine, management can be learned systematically.
4. Management is a calling, a chance to help others reach their full potential.

To be clear, these standards aren't like the technical standards a plumber would use, but are standards of behavior. You're dealing with people, after all.

Management chaos is not inevitable. Without foundational standards as in chemistry and music, management is undisciplined and chaotic, and bosses get parodied in "The Office" TV shows and "Dilbert" cartoons. Lacking standards, too many people with a manager's title think the skills they need can be learned by sitting through a few workshops, videos, and a bunch of meetings. They're kidding themselves.

Delegation and Trust are the Tests of Management Strength

Margins, employee retention, customer satisfaction, and growth are the ultimate indicators of good management, but they're lagging indicators. Someone who wants to look ahead, like an experienced board member, will wonder, "Does everyone have a clear and compelling sense of direction? How do people treat each other? Is there a culture of ethical behavior, trust, and respect?" A sign of low trust and, therefore, weak delegation is a super-abundance of reporting and supervisory layers.

Board members are keenly sensitive to whether employees are genuinely engaged in the work, if they're inspired, empowered, and happy. They also watch for how well meetings are run: they look to see if the managers provide focus, facilitate honest discussion, take criticism, and are ready with reasoned and realistic alternatives. The board members can then lean back, confident the organization honors everyone's time and contributions.

But above all, board members want to see if tasks, projects, functions, and goals are crisply delegated. Managers who can't delegate aren't managers. They're bottlenecks.

Delegation occurs at two levels. The first is the hand-offs from delegators to delegates. Good managers provide clear direction and expectations, sufficient time and money,

and just the right degree of practical and moral support. The General Management Toolkit (page 36) makes it easy to delegate a project or process.



I got it!

The tools show on one page why the project or process supports the strategic plan, how it connects to everything else, what time and money are needed, and how success is evaluated. The tools are the batons in the handoff.

The General Management Index—management’s technical standard (page 25)—also supports delegation at the organizational level. It provides everyone with a common language of terms and practices. That improves communication, and that leads to confident, creative, and inspired collaboration. Employees crave that kind of work and trust.

Standards + Tools = Standards-Based Management

This book will show you how to apply the three management standards using the General Management Toolkit described in Chapter 7. Standards-Based Management supports confident and effective delegation, letting you get the most from everyone’s contributions.

- Ethical standard: The Pledge of Managerial Power (pages 19–20)
- Technical standard: The Index (page 24)
- Developmental standard: The Milwaukee Model (page 29)

These standards aren’t rigid or static. The review board at the Center for Management Terms & Practices is responsible for evolving the input from the world community of conscientious managers.

Defining Key Terms, Including “Manager”

Everyone knows at least generally what a teacher does, what a nurse does, what a lawyer does. But if you ask ten people, “What is a manager and what do they do?” you’ll get ten mumbled answers.

In Chapter 6, we’ll learn the standard description of the manager’s role. But in the meantime, here’s clarity we can start building on:

- Management: The science and profession of running an organization
- Manager: Someone who helps people work together
- Leader: Someone who inspires others to take a risk

- Generalist: A manager who works cross-functionally, often with profit and loss responsibility
- Supervisor: A synonym for manager. Supervision is part of the manager's job.

Managers and leaders are not different people. Except for Steve Jobs of Apple, virtually no organization has a manager who isn't a leader, at least to some degree. It's flattering to be called a leader, but you can't be a leader unless you can manage. This book proves that being a good manager should be deeply respected, which starts by finally making clear just what a manager does and knows and contributes. See Chapter 6 about the Milwaukee Model. In that chapter, we elaborate on leadership ability and how it fits with the manager's job.

Why Haven't There Been Standards for Management Before?

The International Standards Organization (ISO) hosts hundreds of standards for quality and sustainability, and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) oversees thousands of standards for safety, software, and assembly. There are standards development organizations (SDOs) protecting every sector and industry—except for general management.

If standards are so valuable, and if every industry has them, why haven't there been standards for management itself?

First, there's money in jargon. Gurus rake in billions relabeling old ideas, promising breakthroughs to make management a snap. One wonders why Harvard Business School didn't set the standards for management when it opened in 1908—but there's academic reputation in jargon, too. Though there are still breakthroughs in general management, they're rare: there's little in these standards you wouldn't find in the businesses of ancient China, Venice, or Rome.

Second, competitive managers dislike sharing ideas that give them an edge. Sharing was difficult anyway when there was no standards body to vet and recognize their contributions.

But the tallest barrier to adopting standards is fear of accountability. When managers commit to a public standard, they fear failing publicly. But it's a false fear. Like chemists, musicians, and coders, managers are much more likely to succeed when they follow sensible and accepted standards—like the musicians in Beethoven's orchestra.

Why now? The need for general management standards is pressing because markets, supply chains, and technological complexity are washing over the globe. The recent pandemic confronted even younger managers with their mortality, so now they demand meaningful work in a culture of respect. Only top-notch management ability meets today's demands of complexity and culture, both critical to recruitment and retention.

The cost of complacency. Complacency about management ability leaves cash on the table. It makes managers deaf to risks and to opportunities that develop their people. Management is challenging, but valuable and noble and, therefore, deserving of continuous and steady study.

What if There Were Simple Standards for Management?

Like chemists and musicians, standards of general management now let people pool and deploy their talents. Sharing a common “language” reduces miscommunication, the most common complaint in employee engagement surveys.

When they start with the standard best practices, managers avoid project false starts. And starting with proven practices is a natural confidence builder, which leads to innovation. An executive can see this improved idea flow in meetings that are focused, inclusive, decisive—and short. Beginning with agreement on terms slashes meeting time.

Working with standards is a gigantic step toward making each delegation of a task, project, or goal crisp and energetic. In the next chapters, we'll show how the triangle of standards is applied in a kit of simple tools for meetings, planning, process management, and project oversight.

People love achieving great things together. Great managers create every opportunity they can for people to succeed individually. They have faith that focusing on the individual guarantees the organization's success.

WWW: Standardize to Globalize

The internet grew out of government projects, but it reshaped the world when global standards were established, chief among them TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol), FTP (File Transfer Protocol), and ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers). Complex, but worth it.

RECAP, ACTIVITIES, & REFLECTION

The lack of standards in general management—including definitions of management and manager—has led to costly confusion that some people now think is inevitable. Conversely, using standards makes communication and collaboration much easier.

Individual activity: Casually ask managers how they define manager and leader and how they distinguish between a manager and a supervisor. Don't press if you hear inconsistencies—let the questions sink in.

Group activity: Discuss with your fellow managers how to make delegation work well every time. See term 5.1.2.1 in The Index (www.theindex.net) for best practices.

3 Good Questions

1. What standards are essential in your industry? Why?
2. One a scale of 1 to 4, how well does delegation work in your organization?
3. How well do the manager job descriptions align with your organization chart?

Next, we start with the ethical standard because nothing matters until there's trust.



4 • The Ethical Standard: The Pledge of Managerial Power

“Power in and of itself is not bad; it only becomes so when we try to force the less powerful around us to submit to our personal will.” – Thich Naht Hanh



The ethical standard of management is built on the dynamics of power: the abuse of power is the root of ethical lapses, but the wise use of power makes managers trusted and respected.

After taking time for personal reflection and thoughtful discussion, managers are encouraged to formally accept the Pledge of Managerial Power on pages 19–20. This chapter should help people understand what’s at stake for the organization’s performance and reputation.

People who care about others know that discussing ethics is an opportunity for personal growth.

Morals vs. Ethics

Morals are general rules for how we treat people and the planet. Some morals are proscriptive, they tell us what not to do, like the Ten Commandments: “Thou shall not...” Others are prescriptive, telling us what we should do. One of Buddhism’s Precepts is, “Do good for others.” The Golden Rule is the root moral. In Chapter 8, “The Promise and Rewards of Service,” we’ll reflect on management as a spiritual practice.

Morals are not optional. I had the misfortune to work for a man who thought it acceptable—even good—to have a high set of morals at home and none at work. Hopefully, the old-school thinking of “It’s a dog-eat-dog world” will fade. The Dutch philosopher Thomas á Kempis said, “Wherever you go, there you are.” You can’t take a break from your moral obligations to the human race.

Ethics are applications of morals to specific situations. Most organizations, industries, and professions have codes of ethics. (See inset and The Index term 1.1.1.1 Code of ethics.) “Value Statements” are codes of prescriptive ethics that encourage people to do the right thing.

“All deceased persons shall be treated with proper care and dignity during transfer from the place of death and subsequent transportation of the remains.”
— Article II-1 of the National Funeral Directors Association’s Code of Professional Conduct.

The Costs of Overt and Subtle Abuses of Power

“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” – Lord Acton

Most managers aren’t aware of how much power they have over employees. Too many people are unhappy at work—even hate it—because their boss unknowingly misuses their power. A word, a glance, or a day of neglect can make an employee feel excluded, unsafe, and fearful for her or his job. The higher the level in the organization, the greater the power and the greater the effect: the chief executive can start a spiral of fear and disengagement with one public criticism or by yelling, “Just do what I tell you!” But few bosses are genuine bullies.

Most bosses unknowingly misuse their power because no one ever talked to them about it. That’s why the first of the four principles of the Pledge of Managerial Power (pages 19–20) is Awareness.

My first job out of college was as a file clerk for a large real estate project in Boston. A year in, the HR manager showed up in the file room, introduced me to my new assistant, then walked away. I like to think I’m a nice guy, but I wonder if I made my helper’s life a misery.

This problem is pervasive. In 2022, Gallup reported that in the United States, 50% of workers reported feeling stressed at their jobs on a daily basis, 41% as being worried, 22% as sad, and 18% as angry. The numbers are somewhat better for people working in non-profits and those with advanced education. Also in 2022, Forbes reported that, other than for reasons of pay, the top two reasons people quit their jobs are toxic

company culture (62%) and poor management (56%). In other words, they don't like their bosses. Turnover is costly, particularly management turnover.

This problem spirals downward. One employee's unhappiness infects a team, frustrating the boss, who then shouts for results. That fear further inhibits people, cascading into a drop in quality, then a reduction in customer satisfaction, then fewer repeat sales, then lower margins. The organization gets a repellant reputation for a culture of mistrust and dysfunction.

How can an executive use their power to construct instead a culture of trust, appreciation, and pride? See the inset below about Paul O'Neill.

Primary Benefit of the Pledge: High Engagement

First, Do No Harm. The chief executive should make the other executives and managers aware of the risks of managerial power, and that they're expected to discuss the Pledge.

None of us are perfect. We all mistreat each other from time to time. We might have gossiped, or accidentally left someone out of a communication loop, or forgotten a promise to help. Does that mean we've behaved unethically? Yes—but only a little. It matters how we atone and if we apologize and reflect. So, we shouldn't condemn ourselves or others for being imperfect. But neither should we avoid discussing ethics because it's uncomfortable. These are the kinds of mature conversations our society needs.

Paul O'Neill, former US Secretary of the Treasury, became CEO of Alcoa Aluminum in 1987. In his first week on the job, he used his enormous managerial power to make safety, not profits, his top priority. Wall Street predicted bankruptcy.

When he retired 13 years later, Alcoa had reduced workdays lost to injury from 1.86 to 0.2 per 100 workers. Profits had quintupled.

Lead by example. The idea of power contains the power of example. No poster with a snappy quotation or a picture of people in a rowboat can counteract three seconds of an executive's misuse of power. No "soft skills" training can return 1% of the value of the chief's example. All executives should exemplify fairness and kindness every day.

Acceptance creates engagement. Some managers say, "I leave my employees alone. I just ask them to do their jobs, and I stay out of their personal lives." But this is a dereliction. Managers can't deny their employee's humanity. As we'll see in the devel-

opmental standard—The Milwaukee Model—that being a good manager absolutely depends on understanding each employee’s ability, personality, potential, and aspirations. That kind of understanding is how good managers strike that fine balance between supporting and micro-managing.

The benefits can spiral upward. If managerial ethics—the use of power—is how we treat people, it follows that the use of power largely determines what we call “people skills.” The moral use of managerial power fuels productivity, loyalty, and creativity. It generates an updraft of customer satisfaction, sales, and margins. It creates a culture and reputation that are magnets for talent.

I was a young property manager of a Chicago office building. A tenant had complained about the lobby’s cleanliness, so the boss paid me a visit. Howard just asked me to look around the lobby. “Did you see that piece of duct tape over the entry door?” I hadn’t. He smiled and left. Howard used patience, not power, to teach.

Community Ethics: Social Responsibility and Sustainability



We’re connected

The LEGO Group (a family business) has a hands-on program for teaching children about social responsibility. Among the activities is building a safe haven for seahorses. It’s a wonderful way to build awareness among kids that the environment is in our hands.

The collective power of a senior management team radiates far outside the organization’s walls. The policies and projects of the Fortune 50 can hurt or help the economy or the environment—and set an example for the hundreds of thousands of small businesses in their supply chain (Walmart has over 100,000 vendors).

The same power dynamic applies to small organizations. The partners in a Wisconsin six-person web development business work regularly with a few soloists for design, copywriting, and social media management. While LinkedIn won’t notice that one of those soloists gets dropped, it matters just as much to that gig worker as it would to Goodyear getting dropped by General Motors. Ethics don’t get less important when the scale is small.

THE PLEDGE OF MANAGERIAL POWER

The Organization's Pledge

Our organization can sustain its success only when all our fellow employees are happy at work, which means they feel safe, included, and proud. We commit to the Pledge of Managerial Power because we are convinced its four principles are essential to making and keeping employees happy.

Nobody's perfect. We will occasionally make mistakes in how we use our power. However, we expect every manager to strive to treat every employee as they themselves want to be treated. Managers who misuse their power can achieve a temporary, selfish success, but we make no place in our organization for bullies or bigotry. The first principle is "do no harm."

As executives, we will set good examples and will incorporate the four principles of the Pledge in how we hire, train, support, evaluate, and reward every single employee. We all want to be respected for being fair. Our goal: strengthen our culture of trust and engaged collaboration.

The Manager's Pledge

AWARENESS Simply being aware of how their power can help or hurt will reduce mistakes and lead managers to treat their employees with fairness and kindness.

Pledge: I will reflect often on the good and harm I can do with my managerial power.

Test: When was I recently reminded of the effects of my managerial power?

– continued –

INTROSPECTION Learning to use managerial power requires introspection, which means asking questions about one's own attitudes, beliefs, and past words and actions.

Pledge: I will be proud of learning the moral lessons of being a good manager.

Test: How is being a manager making me a better person?

APPROPRIATENESS Policies provide guidelines, but every person and situation is different. Managers must listen carefully and treat each employee individually and appropriately.

Pledge: I will think about each employee so I can manage them well in each situation.

Test: How have I treated people differently in similar situations?

INTENTION It's hard to always be kind and patient, so it is important to set daily an intention to help others succeed. Learning to use one's power wisely takes maturity and strength: managers must also be kind to and patient with themselves.

Pledge: I will use my managerial power every day to help others.

Test: When did I last use my power to help an individual or group succeed?

Signed, Date

RECAP, ACTIVITIES, & REFLECTION

The misuse of power usually stems from managers never being made aware of how much power they have over employees. The Pledge of Managerial Power sets this important standard of behavior in a positive, constructive way.

Individual activity: Write in a confidential journal your answers to the four test questions in the Pledge. Discuss them with a mentor outside of work.

Group activity: Discussing ethics and power is sensitive. Discuss the Pledge informally with a few managers you feel already treat others with respect. Build from there.

3 Good Questions

1. When did you see a manager make a difficult, but ethical decision?
2. How does your industry or organization code of ethics make a difference?
3. When did you have to make a difficult, but ethical decision?

Ethics only matter if they're infused into every conversation and decision.

*Next, we'll see how the technical standard—
The Index—removes the jargon that
keeps conversations from being honest,
meaningful, and effective.*



5 • The Technical Standard: The General Management Index

“The quality of a leader is reflected in the standards they set for themselves.” – Ray Kroc



What if software developers didn't have technical standards? They'd have to reinvent their code for every app. What if plumbers didn't have standards? Pipe joints would leak, valves will blow off, and waste would back up. Like scientists using the table of elements, Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, discovered he could change the world by standardizing.

The Index (next page) is the technical standard for management's terms and practices. It took five years to develop and five more to make it so easy to use. It's free at "The Index" at www.theindex.net. On your monitor or smartphone, click on any term in the hierarchy to display the context of the term (Level 1, 2, 3, or 4) and that term's definition, similar terms, three discussion questions, and vetted resources.



One plug to rule them all

Every single meeting should start with the manager asking, “Do we agree on the basic terms here?”

The Index will feel familiar. Almost all organizations have departments named after the Level 1 disciplines: Marketing and Sales, Operations, Information, Human Resources, and Finance. The “four-level, six-element” design of The Index makes it easy to remember.

The Index is about general management, not about the operational best practices unique to each industry, like how to build a building, prepare a tax return, or manufacture an appliance. The Index isn’t about how to install a faucet, but how to run a plumbing company.

The Index is flexible. Like the table of elements and musical notation, The Index scales and flexes for both sole proprietors and multi-nationals. The principles of management are universal, but the opportunities for innovative application are infinite. Solid standards also give new practitioners the clarity, consistency, and confidence to succeed. We’ll later explore how these standards both structure and streamline management development programs.

The screenshot displays the 'The Center for Management Terms & Practices' website. The main heading is 'The GMs Index of Terms'. The current term is '2.4.3.5 Public relations'. The page is organized into four levels of terms:

- Level 1:** 1. Structure, 2. Marketing and sales, 3. Operations, 4. Information, 5. Human resources, 6. Finance.
- Level 2:** 1. Market research, 2. Channels of distribution, 3. Pricing, 4. Marketing communications, 5. Sales management, 6. Customer service.
- Level 3:** 1. Target marketing, 2. Marketing message, 3. Marketing media, 4. Marketing campaign, 5. Networking, 6. Advocacy.
- Level 4:** 1. Advertising, 2. Social media, 3. Event marketing, 4. Podcasts, 5. Public relations.

The detailed view for 'Public relations' includes:

- Definition:** Telling stories about our organization to increase awareness and goodwill.
- Similar Terms:** Community relations, PR.
- 3 Good Questions:**
 1. Why should we talk about how great we are?
 2. Who would think our news is interesting?
 3. What specialized media covers our markets?
- Approved Resources:** Web page: Public relations; Article: Community Outreach Helps Any Organization...; Article: The 5 Biggest PR Disasters of the Past Decade.
- Comments:** (Empty field)

The General Management Index

See “The Index” at www.theindex.net. Click around it and watch the short “How to Use” video. Any browser will translate The Index into any language.

90% of American businesses are family owned. It's 85% in Asia and 60% in Europe. Yet, family businesses are famous for dysfunction. Agreeing on a standard language might make holiday dinners much, much easier.

Primary Benefit of The Index: Speaking the Same Language

If you gathered six experts in, say, marketing, how many would agree on what “marketing” is? Would they all know that it’s “stimulating awareness, interest, trial, and commitment to your organization and its products or services” (term 2.0 in The Index). Meetings often go in circles because people aren’t talking about the same thing—and don’t even know it.

Like all standards, the first benefit of The Index is that it allows practitioners to understand each other, solving a common, costly, and frustrating communication problem. Managers now can start each meeting by clarifying terms.

Language and inclusion. The Index is the common language of management. It lets any manager in any department talk to the CEO in terms the CEO will understand. Speaking a standard language removes jargon as a barrier created by the elite insiders. But a common language isn’t just for internal communications. I had the privilege of speaking with four Black women entrepreneurs. I asked them if the language of management was a barrier to them when speaking with bankers, accountants, investors, and other professionals. When they stopped laughing...

The Index is now free to every manager in the world. They can use it to replace miscommunication with understanding.

Primary Application: Checklist for Omissions

Besides being a standard of communications, The Index can also be used as a checklist. One way to think of The Index is as a master outline of management practices. Clicking through The Index assures both executives and managers that the work is thorough. More than once, I’d killed myself to develop a budget or plan only to have a CEO or board member lean into the table and say, “Pretty good, but did you think about X?” If necessity is the mother of invention, embarrassment is its angry aunt.

Other Applications of The Index

Aligning the organization chart to job descriptions. Few things generate more frustration, inefficiency, and ill-will than an organization chart that doesn't match the job descriptions—and that's assuming the chart and job descriptions are up to date.

One CEO pinned a poster-sized version of their organization chart in the center of the conference room wall and then pinned all the job descriptions in a constellation around it. He then put The Index up on the screen to help the executives get the chart and descriptions into alignment. It's amazing what can happen when everyone knows what they're supposed to do!

Integration in mergers and acquisitions. Harvard Business Review reported that between 70% and 90% of mergers and acquisitions fail. The costs sometimes bankrupt one of the entities. Managers of four merging NGOs spent four two-hour meetings clicking through The Index asking three questions about each management practice: Which entity has the system that the merged organization should use? Is a new system needed? and How many hours—really—will it take to create or expand that system? The board learned that it would take another year to gain the anticipated economies of scale, but they now had a realistic path. Which they then fully funded.

Assessing one's overall risk profile with the AS-IS model. Managers and planners should ask at least annually, "What could go wrong?" There are market risks, financial risks, operational risks, labor risks, cyber-security risks—in short, there are risks throughout the management spectrum. The Index is that spectrum, so it can be used to create a 360-degree risk assessment. Managers often limit their ideas of risks to what's insurable, but there are four ways to mitigate risk: Accept it, Share it, Insure it, and Shed it. It takes courage to look at all one's risks at once, but CEOs and boards hate surprises.

Preparing for a sales meeting. One good question can make all the difference in a sales meeting. Preparing good questions keeps new salespeople from making the classic mistake of launching a one-way presentation of features. The Index helps in two ways. First, its four-level structure opens lines of questioning and, second, each term already has three good open-ended questions to spark two-way discussion. In Chapter 7, you'll learn how to use the 1/4-Page Meeting Planner.

Structuring board agendas. In Chapter 7, we'll learn how to use The Index with the Goal Tree to create a one-page strategic plan. Planning is of course the time to look over the entire horizon of issues for protecting and improving your organization. Board-run organizations, including family businesses, need an objective way to evaluate and inform board members and to



Where's our horizon?

make meetings focused and effective. Boards have three basic duties of oversight, vision, and goodwill. It's essential to all three that board members and advisors have a thorough if high-level understanding of the organization and how it's run.

Standards as the springboard to innovation. In 2021, blogger Erica Gage wrote, "Creativity is just combining two things that previously had nothing to do with each other and mashing them together." The periodic table of elements, as the standard language of chemistry, has prompted more valuable innovation than any other idea on earth. The Index lets managers see adjacent ideas and just begs them to find ways to work more efficiently.

The Index Integrates with The Toolkit

The General Management Index is used with all four tools in The General Management Toolkit, described in Chapter 7. The combination of standards and tools makes up Standards-Based Management.

How can a manager run meetings, processes, and projects if people aren't using the same terms and following the same practices?

RECAP, ACTIVITIES, & REFLECTION

The General Management Index (The Index) houses the technical standards of management, its structure, definitions, and best practices. As the common language of management, it helps solve the costly and common problems of miscommunication.

Individual activity: Use The Index to check a budget or project plan for completeness. What new ideas did you generate?

Group activity: Put The Index up at the start of the next management meeting. What do you learn just by focusing on the relevant definitions?

3 Good Questions

1. How much meeting time is lost because of misunderstanding basic terms?
2. How could The Index help in working with other organizations?
3. How might the language of management differ overseas?

The Index is also a framework for one's development as a manager. It can identify the things you need to learn—and things you need to teach.

But just what is the manager's job? See the next chapter.



6 • The Developmental Standard: The Milwaukee Model

“Do one thing every day that scares you. Those small things that make us uncomfortable help us build courage to do the work we do.” – Eleanor Roosevelt



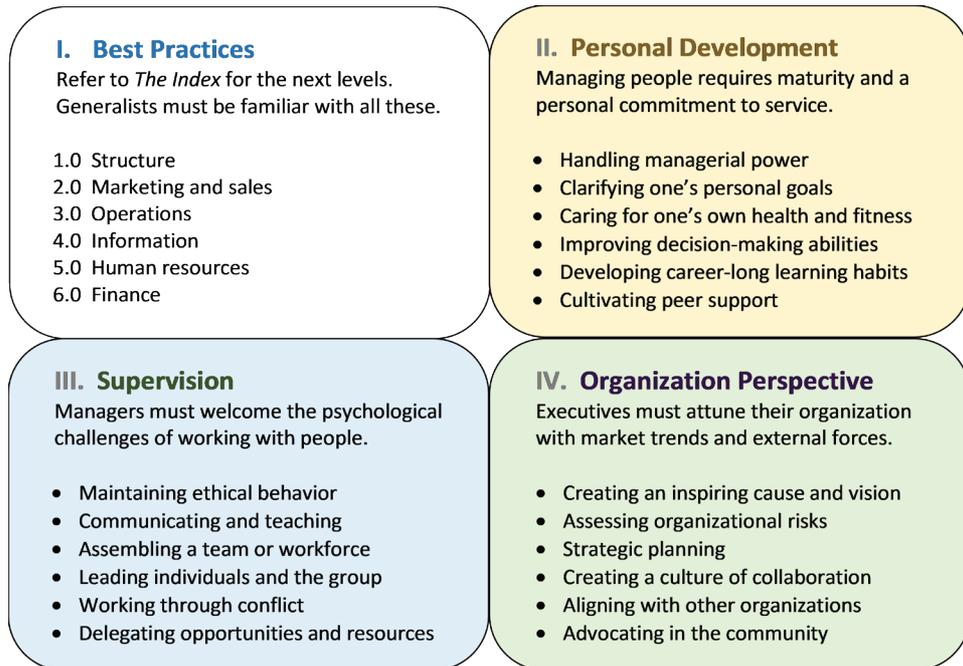
[Trainingindustry.com](https://www.trainingindustry.com) found that in 2020 businesses around the world spent \$358 billion on manager development. Poets & Quants reports there are 200,000 MBAs awarded annually in the United States (and MBA students collectively take on \$5 billion of debt). Many employers are frustrated by people with management degrees who didn't learn how to manage people.

The #1 reason people quit is still because they don't like their boss. Something basic is missing from management education.

The Milwaukee Model of Manager Development

Innovation can occur in the way Hemingway described bankruptcy in *The Sun Also Rises*: “It happened gradually, then suddenly.” The Milwaukee Model was developed after struggling for months with the question, “Where is the standard model of what a manager needs to know?” This in spite of there being 882 accredited business schools in the world, according to AACSB International in 2021.

The Milwaukee Model is the first codification of the manager’s role. It answers on one page the foundational question, “What does a manager need to know?” It’s foundational because until that answer is settled, it’s impossible to create sensible and consistent job descriptions, design meaningful manager development programs, or build a balanced organization chart.



The Milwaukee Model was informed by searching for commonalities among the curricula of the Ivy League business schools and by knowing it had to be communicated on a page. (Why “Milwaukee”? That’s where the coffee shop was when the Model first got sketched on a napkin.)

The Model’s four quadrants summarize and structure what managers must know. Appendix A is the Self-Assessment based on the Model. It includes definitions of each bulleted point.

Leader vs. Manager Clarified

On page 11, we defined “manager” as someone who helps people work together; we defined “leader” as someone who inspires people to take a risk; and we stated emphatically that these are not separate people or roles.

It’s popular today to think that a leader is somehow different from and superior to a manager, that being a leader is somehow heroic and more valuable. So, in its confusion the world wastes billions and months on “leadership development” yet never gets

battalions of bosses that employees admire, respect, and follow. The turning idea here: leadership ability is only part—albeit an important part—of being a good manager.

Leadership ability has three elements: audacity, eloquence, and grit. A manager, to inspire people to take a risk such as tackling a project, fulfilling a plan, or withstanding a crisis, must have the **audacity** to set a big goal. “Make no little plans!” was urban planner Daniel Burnham’s instruction. Audacious goals live just inside the border of madness, barely possible yet still imaginable. They must also be important and relevant. A big goal that’s untrue to the mission can ruin that organization. In practical terms, the manager must know their market and people and have confidence that the audacity of the goal will attract the ideas and investments needed to make the big leap.

Leadership ability takes more than basic communication skills. **Eloquence** is sometimes rough, sometimes smooth, sometimes erudite, often plain. Abraham Lincoln, a religious man, carried only one book with him: the collected works of William Shakespeare. If you need to energize yourself to be eloquent, copy by hand Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address or Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I had a dream” speech. Or go to YouTube and listen to Greta Thunberg’s speech to the United Nations, “This is all wrong.” But above all, work on your writing. When asked to promote a lieutenant, Napoleon shouted, “Show me something he’s written!”



Greta got it done

Reality is a mess. Good managers know that between them and a sparkling goal are potholes, landmines, and wrong turns. There’s no map to the new lands you want people to explore and conquer. Technologies will fail, people will give up, partners might betray you. The third element of leadership ability is **grit**, having the fortitude to overcome not only one’s own disappointments but to buck up colleagues who stumble or beg to quit. Winston Churchill said that the first characteristic of a leader is courage because “without courage, nothing else is possible.” You can develop grit by being clear that your goal is worth the suffering and that your calling as a manager is good and right.

Innovation + Management = Entrepreneurship. Innovations can be inspiring, so we often confuse innovators with leaders and managers. A great way to lose all your money is to think, “I’ve got recipes people love; therefore, I should run a restaurant.” Inventors often start businesses with an inspiring idea but with little appreciation for the value of management—so they fail. Society needs innovators, people who sense or see a new need, but the innovators should ask themselves before they start borrowing money: Do I want to be a manager, or should I hire someone to be the manager? Studying the Milwaukee Model helps frame that relationship.

The Model's Primary Benefit: Promoting the Right People

Do no harm. Unwinding a bad management hire is incredibly costly. It's a common mistake to make someone a manager because of their superior technical ability. It can take years and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to unwind this mistake. It will damage the organization's reputation, and worse, alienate employees. But how can you hire a good manager if no one ever standardized what a manager is supposed to know and do?

The Model is an objective basis for hiring or promoting a great manager. Hire the right manager, and the organization can jump up another level. Not only will the big metrics improve, but these managers will also build a reputation for enlightened collaboration—and that attracts other talented managers.

"Renee" struggled as a Human Resources Assistant. But her boss recognized her success in working with the other managers to implement a new HR software system. So, she was made IT Manager, where she and her team blossomed.

Create sensible job descriptions.

Have you ever read a typical management job description? That's a trick question: there's been no such thing. But using the Milwaukee Model can help find and filter for the right candidate. Just as The Index is a master checklist for plans and budgets, the Model can ensure you're not missing something in your job descriptions.

Make sure they want it. The most overlooked question in a succession or development plan is, Are you *interested* in being a boss? Studying the Milwaukee Model will remind them what the job entails. They should also read the Pledge of Managerial Power so they understand that side of the job. Chapter 8 is about management as a calling: it helps candidates understand the deep rewards and personal challenges of being a boss.

If you're interviewing for a job, ask your prospective boss the bald question, "Why do you like being a man-

Standards in a Job Description

"We use the Milwaukee Model to describe and evaluate our managers. A Branch Manager needs a well-rounded set of technical Skills & Knowledge and to be above average in Personal Development and Team Dynamics. A Branch Manager position is also a great way to begin to develop one's Organization Perspective. Candidates will be asked to complete the Model's Self-Assessment."

ager?” It’s a bad sign if they say, “Hmm,” and look up, hoping there’s an answer on the ceiling.

Some of The Model’s Other Applications

The Index as the developmental framework. In any field, students first learn its basic structure, like the table of elements, musical notation, or coding conventions. It isn’t always fun, but it puts a filing cabinet in their heads so they can organize and store everything that follows. For managers, that filing cabinet is The Index.



Start with standards

The Model’s Self-Assessment (see Appendix A or www.theindex.net) includes fields to enter development activities.

Management can’t be learned “asynchronously,” which some educators say instead of “watching videos online.” This might work for absorbing data, but not for learning to work with people. Development techniques for management are:

- Cross-functional projects in small groups
- Having or being a mentor
- Peer group participation
- Job rotation
- A management degree

Executives are responsible for developing their managers. They don’t use people to get projects done, they use projects to develop people. They have faith that by doing so individuals and the organization will enjoy spectacular results.

Create a succession plan and management culture. Following a standard creates a convincing feeling of fairness because of its consistency and transparency. Adopting the Milwaukee Model and the Pledge of Managerial Power does just that. Executives can be effective examples only if everyone knows what standards of knowledge and behavior they’re following.

A platform for innovation. Adopting standards also creates a basis for sharing ideas, which builds a strong culture. Why not have a regular internal management forum to discuss technical and interpersonal lessons? When Steve, the CEO of a paper products manufacturer, was the first to use the Model’s Self-Assessment, all of the senior managers became eager to share their own ideas.

Ask for more money. Let’s say you’re competing for a management job. Use the Model and its assessment to make a catalog of your knowledge, skills, and attributes

and (more important) how you've used them to make a provable difference to the organization.

Personality Profiles and The Model

We're all crazy. Not you, of course, but everyone else. That's the safe assumption when working with a team of people. We differ not just in skills and knowledge—what's in The Milwaukee Model—but by our personalities and how we react to people, ideas, and things.

The Milwaukee Model can be used in conjunction with personality profiles to identify and develop great managers and employees. Quadrant III of the Model is Supervision, which includes assembling a team, motivating people, and dealing with conflict.

Most systems for evaluating personalities are simplified versions of Carl Jung's theory of personality. They all have some version of Jung's scales of Extraversion-Introversion, Sensation-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving. Even if no one remembers the prescriptions for dealing with different personalities, the exercise might prevent a boss from yelling, "Why can't everyone be like me?!"

Simple Ways to Learn Standards-Based Management

The easiest way to dive into Standards-Based Management is to use the 1/4-Page Meeting Planner and draft the Goal Tree, Management Self-Audit, and Projects Summary described in the next section. Just getting them started can help a lot. Don't expect perfection when learning new things. In Chapter 7 we lay out a simple way to learn, test, and implement Standards-Based Management.



Dive into the Tree

RECAP, ACTIVITIES, & REFLECTION

The Milwaukee Model of Manager Development provides a shared and simple understanding of the manager's job. It structures a consistent, complete, and sensible path to excellence and promotion, and it integrates the ethical and technical standards.

Individual activity: Work through the Self-Assessment in Appendix A or at www.theindex.net. Are you still excited about a management career?

Group activity: Discuss your Self-Assessment with your peers or boss. How can you help each other become the managers everyone wants to have?

3 Good Questions

1. Who do you know who's a manager, but not a leader—and vice versa?
2. How does your organization officially define "manager"?
3. Which of the quadrants in the Milwaukee Model interest you most?

*The Pledge of Managerial Power
provides a standard of ethical behavior.
The Index provides a common language and body
of best practices. The Milwaukee Model defines
the manager's job in detail.*

*Next: We'll show how to apply these standards
using simple tools for meetings, planning,
processes, and projects.*



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Milwaukee Model Self-Assessment

See Chapter 6 about The Milwaukee Model of Manager Development as the Developmental standard. You can also download the Model and Self-Assessment from www.theindex.net.

I. Best Practices

Refer to *The Index* for the next levels. Generalists must be familiar with all these.

- 1.0 Structure
- 2.0 Marketing and sales
- 3.0 Operations
- 4.0 Information
- 5.0 Human resources
- 6.0 Finance

II. Personal Development

Managing people requires maturity and a personal commitment to service.

- Handling managerial power
- Clarifying one's personal goals
- Caring for one's own health and fitness
- Improving decision-making abilities
- Developing career-long learning habits
- Cultivating peer support

III. Supervision

Managers must welcome the psychological challenges of working with people.

- Maintaining ethical behavior
- Communicating and teaching
- Assembling a team or workforce
- Leading individuals and the group
- Working through conflict
- Delegating opportunities and resources

IV. Organization Perspective

Executives must attune their organization with market trends and external forces.

- Creating an inspiring cause and vision
- Assessing organizational risks
- Strategic planning
- Creating a culture of collaboration
- Aligning with other organizations
- Advocating in the community

Manager	
Supervisor	
Date	

Instructions

1. Manager and their boss discuss the Model
2. Manager assesses himself
3. Manager and boss discuss the assessment and agree on what to learn that year
4. They choose development activities and active projects
5. They evaluate progress and adjust as needed
6. Toward the end of the year, they re-evaluate the manager's performance

I. Best Practices

The standard body of knowledge for general management practices. For practical decision-making, applying general principles and industry knowledge.

Open The GM Index at www.theindex.net. Click through levels 1, 2, and 3 for definitions and context. Use the Management Self-Audit tool in The GM Toolkit if helpful.

Self-rating scale: 1 to 4.

1=Area of focus.

4=Mastery in current role.

X=Not yet relevant.

Note: Rate yourself in the context of your position and organization. Don't rate yourself lower because you're not the CEO of General Motors.

	Self-rating
1.0 Structure	_____
2.0 Marketing and sales	_____
3.0 Operations	_____
4.0 Information	_____
5.0 Human resources	_____
6.0 Finance	_____

Top 3 things to work on this year (development activity)	% complete
1.	
2.	
3.	

II. Personal Development

Managing people requires maturity and a personal commitment to service.

Self-rating scale: 1 to 4: 1=Area of focus. 4=Mastery for current role.

X=Not relevant. See samples of tools at The GM Toolkit.

Self-rating

Handling managerial power _____

Knowing how to monitor and improve how you use managerial power in different situations. Read the Pledge of Managerial Power to learn how much your power staff can help and hurt them.

Clarifying one's personal goals _____

Knowing what you want to be and achieve and who you want to be as a person. Thinking objectively about the sources of your beliefs and attitudes. Being confident you can put other people first.

Caring for one's own health and fitness _____

Understanding the level of physical and mental fitness needed to be an attentive and engaged manager. Setting a positive example of sound habits and sensible self-discipline. Avoiding burnout.

Improving decision-making abilities _____

Using different kinds of quantitative and qualitative information to help your staff create good solutions. Being aware of your own conscious and subconscious processes for making different kinds of decisions.

Developing career-long learning habits _____

Accepting that even successful chief executives always have things to learn. Having learning goals, healthy personal interests, and channels for finding facts. Seeking challenging perspectives.

Cultivating peer support _____

Actively and regularly seeking peers for information, ideas, challenges, and moral support. Purposely seeking new acquaintances who will challenge your ideas as well as your attitudes and beliefs.

Top 3 things to work on this year (development activity)	% complete
1.	
2.	
3.	

III. Supervision

Managers must welcome the moral, ethical, and psychological challenges of working with people.

Self-rating scale: 1 to 4: 1=Area of focus. 4=Mastery for current role. X=Not relevant. For background, refer to relevant terms and Approved Resources in The GM Index.

Self-rating

Maintaining ethical behavior _____

Defining morals and ethics. Understanding the letter and spirit of your Code of Ethics. Anticipating ethical dilemmas and leading those discussions. Responding to unethical or possibly unethical behavior.

Communicating and teaching _____

Listening with comprehension, sympathy, and objectivity. Sharing ideas in writing, speaking, and through images. Inspiring people by making the big goals vivid and exciting.

Assembling a team or workforce (tool: Management Self-Audit) _____

Knowing the mix of skills, experiences, time, and support for a project or process. Creating the right balance of perspectives and personalities. Knowing when to remove someone or disband the group.

Leading individuals and groups _____

Knowing each of your staff well enough to stimulate their particular talents and energy. Having the audacity, eloquence, and grit to lead, inspire people to take a risk, and overcome obstacles.

Working with conflict _____

Having the maturity, patience, and skill to direct each staff member. Having the firmness and skills to resolve conflicts promptly and constructively. Eliminating barriers among departments.

Delegating opportunities and resources (tool: Projects Summary) _____

Understanding the staff's workload and personal and collective capacity. Creating assignments that are challenging, but not overwhelming. Managing with minimum intervention.

Top 3 things to work on this year (development activity)	% complete
1.	
2.	
3.	

IV. Organization Perspective

Executives must attune their organization to market trends and external forces.

Self-rating scale: 1 to 4: 1=Area of focus. 4=Mastery for current role. X=Not relevant. For background, refer to relevant terms and Approved Resources in The GM Index.

Self-rating

Creating an inspiring cause and vision _____

Understanding if a challenge will matter deeply to every employee. Expressing the facts and feelings of that challenge so everyone will eagerly take on the risks and discomforts of change.

Assessing organizational risks _____

Having the information to know what could go wrong in each management discipline (The Index). Knowing if the organization can add risks or isn't risking enough.

Strategic planning (tool: Goal Tree) _____

Creating a challenging, yet realistic and balanced mix of short- and long-term goals to advance the organization's cause and vision. Keeping the organization focused on the goals.

Creating a culture of collaboration (tool: 1/4-Page Meeting Planner) _____

Understanding how all the formal and informal rules of behavior help everyone contribute the most, individually and collectively. Knowing when and how to reshape those rules.

Aligning with other organizations _____

Working to the mutual benefit of new and existing customers, vendors, and affiliates. Anticipating and then adjusting to changes to any part of that overall network.

Advocating in the community _____

Working with industry, community, and governmental bodies to protect your organization's reputation, ensure fairness, open opportunities, and protect against threats outside your own control.

Top 3 things to work on this year (development activity)	% complete
1.	
2.	
3.	

Appendix D: Image Attributions

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ATOMS & ORCHESTRAS

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THE TECHNICAL STANDARD

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