



# The Context Group

*For Clients Who Value Results... More Than Advice*

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**"Good management consists in showing average people how to do the work of superior people"**

*John D. Rockefeller*

## The Context Group

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## The Making of a Manager

Over and over again, the story plays itself out. Companies promote their best and brightest to the management ranks and they don't perform as well as expected. While on the surface that sounds like a good practice, there is often one problem...those employees may not be cut out to hold those positions. The results go far beyond a generic bad hiring decision because the ripple effect is much greater. As supervisors and managers, they usually impact a greater number of people with each decision than a front line employee.

It's important to consider the following points when making a promotional or hiring decision. Failure to do so can lead to low morale, complaints, grievances, turnover, and even lawsuits.

- **Does s/he have the necessary skills (e.g., communication, leadership, team building, tolerance of stress, and accountability)?**  
There are certain skills and traits that lend themselves to being good managers. Most of us would prefer to work with someone who is fair, ethical, even-tempered, and open-minded. Organizations need someone who is willing and able to make difficult decisions, follow rules, and act in the company's best interest. This is a lot to ask of people and the hiring/promotion decision needs to be weighed carefully. It's interesting that many companies have elaborate testing programs for hiring front line employees (e.g., customer service reps, sales associates, or electricians) and are then content to promote "Pat" to supervisor because s/he has been with the company for 5 years

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and is doing a really good job without evaluating Pat's ability to take on those new responsibilities.

- **What training do you provide for a newly (or soon-to-be) promoted individual?** This is critical and the most common mistake companies make...not training the employees to take on the new duties associated with management. There seems to be an expectation that by bestowing a new title upon them, employees will suddenly have the ability to set clear expectations, manage performance, and handle interpersonal conflicts according to policy and in a professional manner. That's like giving a present without the batteries included...don't expect too much to happen.
- **Does your company have a technical track that allows top performers to ascend the pay scale without taking on management responsibilities?** Some employees are better suited for an individual contributor role. Being the best salesperson or nuclear engineer in the department does not translate into being a competent supervisor or manager. You can't turn someone into a superhero by buying a Halloween costume any more than you can make someone a good manager by changing their title or office.
- **Does the employee express an interest in being a supervisor/manager?** Without any alternatives to increase pay or status, employees may grudgingly accept a promotion and then continue to operate as they did before. Particularly if there is an air of entitlement, these individuals may decide to enjoy the perks of management without the added responsibility. Unless they are interested and motivated to learn, they tend to operate in one of two ways: laissez-faire (I'm just like you, let's be friends) or Attila the Hun

(wielding their power like a weapon). Neither of these approaches are effective and will eventually have a negative impact on your employees and organization.

When choosing a manager, it's important to consider who will be impacted: employees, peers, bosses, customers, vendors, and stockholders. As the list grows, the message is clear: the decision to make someone a manager should not be taken lightly. Think carefully about your company's hiring and promotion practices and the choices that have been made. If you find yourself with a "what were they thinking?" response, consider altering your techniques or procedure. Ideally, the position should be a good fit for everyone: the individual, his/her employees, other stakeholders, and the company.

If you would like to learn more about hiring or developing your managers, please contact [Kammy Haynes](#).



## Happy Holidays

We'd like to wish each of you a joyous and prosperous New Year. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to your kind and insightful responses to our HR Snapshot newsletter.

Warren, Kammy, and Buddy