humans at work LLC

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Goals

The **Humans At Work℠ program** grounds managers in the core skills necessary to manage people effectively.

Managers leave this program with:
- A clear vision of themselves as a world-class manager of human beings;
- A foundation in the essential skills of great managers;
- A community of practice to support them as they continue to learn.

Great managers become great through practice. No program can make someone a great manager in eight easy lessons. What this program can do is give managers ideas, skills and tools that will make them more effective immediately – and will, with practice, help them become great.

There's an old saying – people don't leave jobs, they leave managers. My goal is to help build a generation of managers that people never want to leave.

Philosophy

Humans At Work℠ takes a constructivist attitude toward learning. The program is built on a series of facilitated discussions. Participants explore concepts, relate them to their individual experiences, and then apply them in the context of their current job and life situations.

The core philosophy of this program is that managing is a set of *skilled behaviors* that anyone can learn. It will be more work for some people than for others. That's life. Anyone who truly cannot, or will not, learn and practice these behaviors should not be allowed to manage human beings. It's that simple.

Managing is a tough job, and this is a tough program. It takes extensive commitment from the company, the participants and the program leader, and it requires the support of company managers, co-workers and family. If you're

looking for an off-the-shelf two-hour "training fix" for your management issues, Humans At Work^{SM} is not the solution for you.

Program Structure

We learn best when we connect new ideas with our own experience. We learn best when we can immediately apply new skills in real situations. We learn best when we are given time, space and support to understand and integrate, not just absorb.   The program structure reflects this.

Humans At Work^{SM} takes managers through 8 full-day learning sessions. Each session is separated by 2 to 3 weeks. This allows participants time to begin practicing learning from the most recent session, and to complete the extensive reading, reflection, and project homework.

The program is designed for 6 to 10 participants from a single company. This gives the participants an immediate shared frame of reference for their discussions, which helps ground their current learning. And participants begin from the first day to build their own community of practice within in their company, which helps their future learning.

The program is held offsite in a conference facility with windows, good food service, decent chairs and proper lighting. People learn better when they are comfortable and undistracted.

Key Attributes of the Program

- Facilitated, discussion-based learning.
- Curriculum based in values and skilled behaviors.
- Tools and models that participants begin using immediately.
- Observation exercises and reflective journaling encourage participants to notice effective and ineffective behavior in their workplace and in themselves.
- Practical exercises and project homework require participants to apply their learning immediately to real work situations. Managers begin building effective teams while attending the program.
- The company is actively involved in the learning: participants work on two projects involving manager-mentors selected by the company's executive leadership.

- Participants form a community of practice to support each other in ongoing learning.
- Participants receive individual follow-up coaching 3 to 6 months after completing the program.
- Course materials include nine books on management – the foundation of the manager's professional library.

Key Concepts

Think of this as a road map of the program, tracing the journey that participants will take. You should consult the Session Descriptions for more information on the learning goals and specific skills addressed in each session.

I've organized the program content to move from the internal to the external — from a core contemplation of values and vision to the nuts and bolts of managing from that core. Each session builds upon skills introduced in previous sessions. The session exercises and homework help participants practice skills — and begin owning them — before moving on to the next layer of learning.

The program begins by establishing the foundations of good management:

- The **core values** of clarity, transparency and authenticity

- The importance of **effective relationships** to a manager's success

- The concepts and techniques of **clear communication** — a manager's most important skill.

The remainder of the curriculum builds on these foundations to teach managers to:

- Set team **accountabilities**

- Identify and manage team and individual **priorities**

- Make and communicate **decisions**

- Run **effective meetings**, including brainstorming and group decision-making techniques

- **Build the team**, including roles and responsibilities, team ground rules, and team culture

- Add the right people to the team through **behavior-based interviewing**

- **Integrate** new members smoothly into the team

- Deal with **performance concerns**

- Deliver performance and salary **reviews**

- Manage workplace **conflict**

- Lead the team through **transitions and change**.

We close with strategies and tools to help managers build a **community of practice** within the organization so that they may continue to support each other's growth, and spread the skills to others in the company.

Key Projects

As part of their homework between sessions, managers will apply the skills they are learning in a series of projects in their own workplace. This helps managers more quickly integrate their learning, as well as identify areas that they want to explore more fully.

These projects include:
- Mapping your personal network of key business relationships and taking steps to establish or strengthen these relationships.

- Interviews that explore individual differences in meaning that people assign to common business words.
  An ongoing project to share at least one skill, behavior or concept from each session with the rest of the manager's team, along with soliciting feedback from the team on the manager's progress in these skills.

- Practice conversations with other program participants to help ground communication skills.

- Develop a management values statement to be shared with the manager's team.

- Implement effective meeting skills by facilitating team meetings or serving as a volunteer facilitator with another team.

- Prepare and conduct an interview (minimum of 90 minutes) with a selected experienced manager within the company, and prepare a report on the interview.

- Shadow the experienced manager for a minimum of 4 hours, and prepare a report on the experience.

- Develop a schedule for creating a series of team agreements, and begin that process.

- Write a draft performance review.

- Work through two change management practice cases.

- Create a detailed personal vision statement of yourself as a great manager, and identify the tools and ideas that are meaningful to this vision.

- Identify and thoroughly plan a personal development project to undertake after the completion of the program. Participants will support each other in these projects as part of their community of practice.

Participants will also facilitate portions of program sessions in order to develop their skills.

Curriculum Overview

Think of this as a road map of the program, tracing the journey that participants will take. The **Session Descriptions** in the next section give more information on the learning goals and specific skills addressed in each session.

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The program begins by establishing the foundations of good management:

- The **core values** of clarity, transparency and authenticity.

- The importance of **effective relationships** to a manager's success.

- The concepts and techniques **of clear communication** — a manager's most important skill.

The remainder of the curriculum builds on these foundations to teach new managers how to:

- Set team **accountabilities**.

- Identify and manage team and individual **priorities**.

- Make and communicate **decisions**.

- Run **effective meetings**, including brainstorming and group decision-making techniques.

- **Build the team**, including roles and responsibilities, team ground rules, and team culture.

- Add the right people to the team **through behavior-based interviewing**.

- **Integrate** new members smoothly into the team.

- Deal with **performance concerns**.

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Session Descriptions

Session 1: What is managing?

A day-long exploration of the behavior and core values of good managers that leads to each new manager developing a personal vision of themselves as great managers.

Topics

- What is the manager's job?
  Defining the manager's role.

- What makes a good manager?
  Analyzing our experiences of good and bad managers to understand the underlying behaviors and values.

- Understanding the web model of organizations.
  Why your standard organizational chart does not reflect the reality of how work gets done.

- The difference between authority and influence.
  It's not enough to "be in charge."

- Establishing, prioritizing and maintaining key business relationships and mapping your relationship network.
  No manager can be successful without building the right relationships.

- Your personal vision of great management.
  Put your stake in the ground.

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Session 2: Effective communication

The first of two days focused exclusively on managers' communication — the most important part of a manager's daily job. This session examines how human communication works, how it can break down, and techniques that all managers can use to communicate clearly and effectively.

Topics

- "Words and meaning" project.
  How semantic differences influence communication.

- Communication behavior of good managers.
  Analyzing our personal experiences of effective and ineffective (or destructive) communication by managers to identify the underlying behaviors and values.

- Mirror neurons.
  How the brain assigns meaning to what it sees and hears.

- The Interpersonal Gap.
  A model of how communication often fails between people.

- The Ladder of Assumption.
  a model of how assumptions complicate communication.

- Satir modes and leveling behavior.
  Common defensive communication behaviors that people revert to in times of stress, and leveling behavior as a key tool for managers.

- Effective listening.
  You cannot be a successful manager without learning to listen.

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Session 3: Deliver clear messages

This session emphasizes the practical application of the communication concepts learned in Session 2. We identify common types of business communication, break down the elements of an effective message, describe a process for planning and delivering effective messages, and practice specific techniques to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing.

Topics

- Using plain language.
  Being clear starts with saying what you mean. Good managers don't hide behind corporate-speak.

- The human/business interaction model.
  A model to remind managers they are communicating with human beings.

- Guidelines for face-to-face, telephone and email communication.
  When, why and how to use these communication media.

- Elements of a clear and effective message.
  Be specific about the topic, goal, audience, headline and key information of your message.

- How to deliver your message clearly and effectively in person or in writing
  Includes techniques for opening and closing conversations, and how to structure your content for maximum clarity.

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Session 4: Priorities, decisions and meetings

We now apply the fundamentals of good management — core values, relationship-centered behavior, and effective communication skills — to the most important daily activities of all managers. We begin in this session with establishing accountabilities and managing shifting priorities. We examine a

model and detailed process for making and communicating decisions. We end with pointers on structuring and running productive meetings.

> **Topics**

- What is your team accountable for?
  These accountabilities are your team's job, and the measure of your team's business success.

- What are your priorities as a manager?
  A model for identifying your priorities and staying focused. Managers must respond to daily crises, competing demands, and everyday bumps without losing sight of longer-term goals.

- Making and communicating effective decisions.
  When and how to make directive, consultative and collaborative decisions. An effective working definition of consensus. Communicating the decision.

- Running effective meetings.
  Planning, preparing, running, and following up on meetings, with facilitation techniques and tips.

- Brainstorming and group decision-making.
  Discussion and practice in facilitating brainstorming and group decision-making using multi-voting and a decision matrix.

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Session 5: Building great teams

In this session, managers learn the fundamental skills of putting team structure into place, and building a productive and supportive team culture. The focus is on clearly-articulated agreements among all team members about the team's overall accountabilities and priorities, each team member's role and responsibilities, and how team members work together.

> **Topics**

- What makes an effective team?
  Analysis of the basic elements — the building blocks of team structure and team culture — that make the team and its members successful.

- Team structure.
  An in-depth look at the key organizational elements that all teams should have in place, including roles and responsibilities, evaluation criteria,

information flow, decision-making, key processes, and regular team meetings.

- Create a great team culture
  A healthy and productive team culture springs from your management style, clear boundaries, and clearly-defined ground rules for all team members and managers. It's also important to have consistent and fair processes for handling mistakes, resolving disagreements, and expressing concerns.

- Create and maintain team agreements
  Clear, specific agreements about basic structure and culture are the foundation of an effective team. We'll review a detailed process for agreements, including the specific agreements you need and how to go about creating them with your team.

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Session 6: Keeping the team strong

This session addresses some of the most important — and most intimidating — moments in management, including hiring, motivation, concerns, reviews, and termination. Our emphasis is on practical techniques and clear process to help managers handle these responsibilities.

Topics

- Do you have the right people on your team?
  The importance of diversity of thinking and diversity of workplace skills and strengths.

- Behavior-based interviewing
  We review and practice a detailed process for preparing, interviewing and evaluating candidates based on their real-life experience in previous jobs.

- Onboarding
  integrating new hires smoothly into the team, including preparation, first day activities, a comprehensive training plan, and 90-day goals.

- Keep team members growing and motivated
  Strategies for employee development, cross-training, and rewards and recognition.

- Dealing with performance concerns
  How to structure and conduct conversations about performance issues

with clarity, focus on solutions, and respect for dignity, including setting 30-day goals for improvement.

- Termination
If it's necessary to separate someone from the team, good managers do it cleanly, respectfully, and with full attention to company process and legal considerations. We'll look at a process for documenting a termination case and conducting a termination meeting.

- Performance and salary reviews
Process and communication strategies for preparing and conducting performance and salary reviews.

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Session 7: Conflict and change

Conflict and change are a fundamental part of business and of human relationships. We'll spend most of the session looking at effective strategies for managing business conflict and personal conflict in the workplace. We also begin a discussion on managing change that concludes in the final session.

Topics

- Difficult conversations
It's a manager's responsibility to step up to difficult conversations. We examine the elements and dynamics of these often-intimidating situations as a basis for the remaining work of the session.

- Office politics
Why office politics are here to stay, and how to participate effectively and with integrity.

- Effective business conflict
Conflict is an essential characteristic of a successful business. We develop a working definition of effective business conflict and look at key concepts for keeping business conflict productive and results-oriented.

- "I language" model
We review and practice this model that is useful for both business and interpersonal conflict.

- Overview of managing change
Change is a constant in business. We discuss change as a process composed of stages, and define a basic approach to managing those stages.

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Session 8: Bringing it all together

We end the program with change as our focus because managing change is one of a manager's most common tasks, and because it is here that all your human-management skills come together. On some level, everything a manager does is "managing change," because even if the business is running steady, the people who do the work of the business may not be. Managers must deal with the changes in people, not just the changes in business.

In this session, we also discuss strategies for managers to build a community of practice in their company, through which they can continue to support each other and develop their skills further.

Finally, we revisit each manager's personal vision of themselves as a great manager of human beings.

Topics

- Managing transitions
  We dig deeper into strategies for managing change by managing the key transitions of the change process.

- Building a community of practice
  The group develops a plan for establishing and maintaining a community of practice in their company.

- Your personal vision of great management
  Each manager shares their specific vision of themselves as a great manager.

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After the Program

Each manager receives a 45-minute personal coaching session one to three months after completing the program.

Deep Dive sessions are available to managers who have completed the program and wish to explore more deeply a particular topic or skill set.