

What kind of a manager are you?

There are good managers, bad managers and a lot of in-between managers. What sets them apart are the ways they react to situations involving their employees who come in all shades of emotions, temperaments, degrees of feistiness and senses of fairness.

Here are scenarios which most if not all managers will encounter in the course of their careers.

Choose the answer which best describes how you've responded, or would respond, to each.

1. Jen asked for a day off to attend a school outing in which you had to say No, its an all-hands day. On that day, she calls in sick, in accordance with company policy.

- You tell her to get some rest and wish her a speedy recovery. Oh well, people *do* get sick, you think to yourself.
- You give her a short Thanks for calling, but you don't believe her. You'll think of a way to deal with her when she gets back. After all, she pulled a quick one on you.
- You say, Please bring in a doctor's note. You immediately begin to think of ways to check to see if she was really sick or went on the school outing. Your goal now is to catch her in a lie and punish her.
- You would have never told her no in the first place. A happy Jen is a productive Jen, you think. Accommodation is your motto.

2. Jason tells you that his co-worker Jack doesn't have enough to do; that Jack spends lots of time cruising around the internet and just acting like he's busy.

- You tell Jason that you appreciate his tip and that the company will take that information to heart.
- You prod Jason for more information on Jack's behavior and start to conjure up ways to catch Jack loafing.
- You tell Jason that he should mind his own business, but you quickly contact IT to monitor Jack's computer for non-work usage. You're going to straighten things out here.
- Jack gets his work done and he's probably just chillin' a bit, you say to Jason. No worries; we all need some downtime.

3. Kathy, whom you feel is a good worker, started arriving 10-15 minutes late each day (no big deal) and has now pushed that tardiness to 45 minutes (some co-workers are beginning to grumble).

- You realize the need for work/life balance and believe Kathy probably has a good reason for being late. You let it ride. After all, she is a valuable, productive employee, and she gets her work done.
- You address Kathy's problem with an all-staff email that reminds employees that work begins at 9 a.m. and they are expected to be on time. You're hoping that this corrects Kathy without confronting her.
- You pull Kathy into a closed-door meeting and lay down the law. You show her the passage in the employee handbook that spells out the workday window. You tell her that co-workers are complaining mercilessly and tardiness will not be tolerated anymore. Consider this an oral warning, you say.
- Kathy's tardiness is a signal to you that employees want unfettered flex time. You ignore her late arrivals,

and now other employees late arrivals, who are following suit. Early departures are ignored as well. You tell yourself that morale is more important than face time. Somehow that will translate into more productivity.

4. Dave drops into your office and tries to make a case for a pay raise that you believe he doesn't deserve. He does just what he's supposed to do and not a tad more. It's in the budget for you to award raises at your discretion, so you have leeway as to who gets what and why.

- a. You hear Dave out and agree on his exaggerations of his productivity. You tell him you'll give him a little pay bump, and privately think that maybe the extra cash will motivate him.
- b. You listen to Dave's exaggerations but give him a look like you're not falling for it. You tell him what's required to earn a raise, and tell him you'll look into his situation, but upper management will probably turn it down.
- c. You tell Dave raises are awarded to people who go above and beyond their duties, and quite frankly, you haven't seen that in him. You're lucky you still have a job here, you say.
- d. You thank Dave for bringing his concern to your attention. Yes, I see you've been working hard, you say. Dave and everyone else will get an equitable slice of the pay-raise dough. That's the key to keeping morale high.

5. There's a tacit agreement in your office that employees fundraising sales are relegated to just a sign-up sheet in the breakroom. That ostensibly stops the high-pressure, cubicle-to-cubicle solicitations of over-priced items. Alice, a friendly and diligent worker, knocks on your door frame asking you if you'd like to buy holiday wrapping paper to help her son go to band camp.

- a. You tell Alice that employees selling fundraising items should put the catalog and the sign-up sheet in the breakroom. It's easier that way for all involved, you tell her. You later stop by and buy a roll of gift wrap to offset your earlier directive.
- b. You remind Alice that fundraising belongs in the breakroom, not door-to-door. You then craft a policy about such sales tactics. But you'll wait for enough time to pass to release it so Alice doesn't think she caused it.
- c. You tell Alice that she's breaking a company rule. We have a clear policy, you say, even though your company really doesn't. People don't want the pressure, and besides, they have work to do, you tell her.
- d. You thumb through the catalog and buy three rolls of candy cane-themed gift wrap for \$23.50 a piece, for a total of \$70.50. That ought to make Alice a happy camper here.

6. You arrive at work and there's a car parked in your usual spot.

- a. You assume someone didn't know any better and you just find a different spot, even though you have to walk a bit farther.
- b. You park in a different spot, but your day is consumed by trying to find out which employee took your spot and why.
- c. You take down the license plate number, make and model and color, and dash off an all-staff email before even taking your coat off. Somewhere in that email you use the phrase will be towed.
- d. You feel employees should have the same perks as you enjoy. How else would they feel valued?

Howd you score?

Mostly As: You're a fairly reasonable manager, who is generally walking the center of a fine line. Employees certainly aren't easy to manage and the best way is to show compassion, empathy with a touch of authority.

Mostly Bs: You are a passive-aggressive manager who wants to run a tighter ship without rocking the boat. There's a tinge of vindictiveness to you in a quest to convince yourself that you're a boss. You need to throttle

back that desire to play games with your employees.

Mostly Cs: Youve got boorish tendencies, bordering on a being a full-blown bully. Not only will you eventually be unanimously disliked, but you will be unequivocally disrespected. Not to mention, a prime candidate to eventually spark a discrimination lawsuit.

Mostly Ds: Youre a doormat. Toughen up a bit or consider dropping out of management. Being a boss does require having some sort of spine and the crust to solve people problems.