

Managing: One Size Does Not Fit All

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I think that when it comes to managing one size does definitely not fit all. And that's because everybody is different. So you must learn to understand your employees, how they communicate and how they prefer to interact. For example, you will need to interact differently with employees who are introverted versus those who are extroverts. Extroverts might dominate the discussions in lab meetings, and it is important to be the referee in this situation. And make sure you acknowledge and repeat what the extrovert is saying so that they know that they've been heard. At the same time, you also need to create some space to allow others to speak. So the members of your team know that all viewpoints are welcome. You might also privately meet with an introverted employee to make sure that person is heard, especially if you sense or observe that they had something to contribute in group meeting, but did not express themselves. If an introverted employee is tasked with giving a public presentation, you will also very likely need to spend more time with this employee to help them prepare. Doing so demonstrates to the employee that you are committed to them. And while you are using different approaches to communicate and mentor to very different employees, the outcome is the same, because both employees feel valued, seen and heard. So I think it's important to be the leader your people need, and to pay attention to what your people need now in the present moment, which could be very different to what they had needed in the past. Leading is not about you. In other words, you can lead from the back on good days focusing on coaching, mentoring, and enabling your team to develop their own leadership skills. In this regard, I've often used the phrase, I deputize you to investigate this fully and come up with a few potential solutions. This shows that you trust and value your employees opinions and approaches, and also clearly delegates your expectation.