A Managerial Philosophy / Strategy

Unasked questions can lead to dangerous assumptions, however unanswered questions are far less dangerous than unquestioned answers.

The best definition of a manager I know is based on a Harvard Business School text.
"A manager is someone who gets results through other people."
To this I would add, **"by making them successful."**

Results?   Of course, why else would you employ him/her?
Through other people?   Yes, because people are the 'stock-in-trade' for the manager.
By making them successful?   Certainly, for it is this single factor that separates the good manager from the others.

Based on this definition, here's a simple nine-point philosophy that might fit for some.

- *Manage processes not people* – let people manage themselves while you manage the interfaces between them where interests are shared and connections are needed.

- *Develop strategy driven by objectives* – where focus is on outcomes not methods, eliminating 'silos' by linking functions horizontally, and by streamlining the work.

- *Define the value-added opportunities* – create a 'service chain' from the individual contributions of all involved that will deliver client satisfaction through synergy.

- *Manage change continuously* – since all processes must adapt and evolve to meet the demands of a changing market, but start with the perceptions/beliefs of individuals.

- *Encourage self management* – by providing each person with a mandate – a license to act/contribute and a set of agreed critical measurement indices for ongoing reporting.

- *Facilitate communication* – the life blood of the organization and fuel for processes, that should flow horizontally, elegantly and spontaneously to support objectives.

- *Create a 'success environment'* – where recognition and rewards are immediate, and people are encouraged to learn and grow as an integral part of their responsibilities.

- *Monitor and measure progress* – through use of a visible scoreboard, showing both organizational and personal achievements in the form of contributions and learnings.

- *Keep a dynamic balance* – with equal emphasis on planning, performance and pulse-point awareness that allows all to see the 'big picture' and relate to a shared future.

This could serve as a template for any individual in a managerial role.   Feel free to adapt the sequence, words and emphases to suit yourself, which is where the fuller version can assist you.

A sound management philosophy or strategy will become a source of both inspiration and comfort to you, especially when you are up to your 'keester' in alligators and asking yourself, "What am I supposed to be doing about this?"

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. *Shift from managing people to managing a process*
   - *Let individuals own the responsibility for managing themselves*
   - *Allow them to worry about the knowledge/skills/attitudes relating to their function*
   - *Work on the series of 'interfaces' or 'value added points' – manage the white space*
   - *Focus on the delivery of client satisfaction as a collective responsibility*
   - *Manage the connections / the 'hand-off points'*
   - *Enable, facilitate, coach, encourage – breed success.*

2. *Develop and implement strategy, driven by Objectives, to produce satisfaction*
   - *Define outcomes/end results, not methods*
   - *Eliminate non-value adding work, waste and inefficiencies through collaborative effort*
   - *Encourage cooperation/collaboration – eliminate 'boundaries'*
   - *Strive for simplicity/elegance, involvement and commitment in operations*
   - *Broaden activity bases, accountabilities and contributions*
   - *Make information and resources easily available*

3. *Define the process in value-added and 'real contribution' terms*
   - *Start with the client – view your internal boss as your main supplier*
   - *Build a service chain that delivers client satisfaction*
   - *Serve the client, or serve some one who is*
   - *Fix the processes, not the people, and get staff to assist you*
   - *Manage change, response and effectiveness through objectives and goals*

4. *Manage the Changes*
   - *Change is emotionally based and uncomfortable for most – so it is resisted*
   - *Change requires new knowledge, skills, habits and, most of all, a new mindset.*
   - *It is necessary to address significant adjustments to the beliefs and behaviors of others*
   - *Individuals have to adjust 'in the node' in order to accommodate a new process*
   - *The necessary leverages are in measurements and goals as well as in functions*
   - *To achieve change, individuals need consistent support / encouragement from you.*

5. *Measurement is critical*
   - *'What gets measured, gets fixed' so design the new processes with this in mind.*
   - *Measurement has to happen at the interface (internal/external; hard/soft) (CMIs)*

- *Measurement information must flow, and be highly visible to all who could be affected*
- *Good measurements are timely, accurate, focused, consistent and accessible*
- *Organizational strategic intent; Individual measures : locus of control (Vertical)*
- *All processes require built-in monitoring devices that include client inputs (Horizontal)*

6.	*Focus on the Environment*
- *The best investment is to focus on system changes rather than on changing individuals*
- *In a rapidly changing market, all processes are eroded and will break down over time*
- *People can fix themselves given the right environment; processes need attention*
- *Inadequate/ broken systems will impede individual performance – few can surmount them.*
- *What most affects the client is lateral or cross-functional effectiveness/efficiencies*
- *Those individuals who relate to a role in the process will manage themselves successfully.*

7.	*Encourage Self-Management*
- *There's little future in trying to manage people, so manage the white space between them*
- *Assist those performing the 'node' functions to manage their own responsibilities*
- *A Mandate - a 'license to contribute' (Scope; Resources/Restraints; Deliverables; Time lines)*
- *Create / insist upon self-sufficient performance in the node; you focus on connections*
- *Allow room to move, experiment, learn and even to fail safely – they'll thank you for it*
- *Reward both outcomes and constructive effort – both pay-out and investment.*

8.	*Communication is the Life Blood*
- *Information must flow to support the new processes, or essential decisions won't be made*
- *Spontaneous teamwork is necessary to make the right things happen when they should*
- *Reduce communication paths/ relay points to the minimum, thus reducing errors/delays*
- *Continuously review communications at every white space, especially those close to clients*

- *Invest your coaching / training efforts in communication competencies – they're lifeblood.*
- *Communication lubricates change;   it won't guarantee success - it will guarantee failure.*

9. *Processes require Balance*
- *Planning – Performance – Pulse-awareness - the three vital components for your attention*
- *Planning (front-end effort) focuses the 'right' things and makes your strategies coherent*
- *Performance shifts focus to efficiency – doing things in the 'right' way for optimal results*
- *Pulse awareness (back-end effort) ensures that your efforts are valuable to the client*
- *Everyone should be involved in all three aspects (see the big picture) so to contribute*
- *Those who are focused on contributing to common objectives are a joy to manage.*