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Top 10 Manager Nudges of 2021
Financial services

Over the past year, we sent millions of nudges—short, science-backed suggestions—to managers across the world on how to support their teams through another year of the pandemic.

So what small actions had the biggest impact during a year filled with stress, continue isolation, and uncertainty? Our data scientists looked at every single nudge we delivered to financial services companies in 2021. Across themes like staying connected, combating burnout, and making progress, these were the 10 nudges that managers told us helped them the most.

1. Ask for a synopsis

At the end of your next few meetings, get in the habit of asking a team member to summarize the group's overall goals and next steps. Be sure to rotate who you ask!

If it becomes clear that the team isn't on the same page, step in to resolve misunderstandings.

2. Keep the conversation going

The next time a team member disagrees with you in a meeting, ask questions to better understand their point of view, rather than shut the discussion down.

Why? By demonstrating a willingness to take advice and an openness to new ideas, you can foster a learning mindset in your team members—and boost retention along the way.

3. Remove barriers to progress

In an upcoming team meeting, outline a clear mission for your people. Then, in 1:1s, ask each person what obstacles are standing in the way of achieving that bigger goal.

If you can, remove the blockers they identify, or provide feedback and ask questions to help them figure out a path forward themselves.

4. Start with small innovations

Challenge team members to experiment by making one small change each week to improve their performance. It's critical that they record those ideas and be ready to check in with you on:

- What was the experiment?
- What was the result?
- Will they keep it up, modify it, or abandon it for a new idea?

It may take a few rounds, but your team will get the hang of workplace experimentation—and it will start to feel natural to innovate on an even greater scale!

5. Get aligned on a clear path forward

Develop and communicate a concrete vision for your team—that's independent but connected to your company's mission.

In your next 1:1s, ask questions to make sure each member understands and feels personally connected to the team's direction.

6. Share who you want to be

Find opportunities to talk to your peers about the kind of manager you want to be, and ask them to provide feedback to make sure you live up to this ideal.

Why? By showing an openness to feedback and by speaking up about what you value, you can influence how others think about great leadership—and how they treat their teams.

7. Conduct a feedback audit

This week, ask every team member you speak to whether they are getting the feedback they need—and remind them that good feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

Why? Getting feedback on feedback across your team will set everyone up for greater success.

8. Hold a retrospective

In your next team meeting, set aside time to review recent decisions made by leaders. Then invite your team to talk about the implications of those choices.

Why? Regular retrospectives can help leaders better understand the full impact of their actions—and how to avoid causing unintended consequences down the road.

9. Clear away roadblocks

In 1:1s this week, proactively ask your team members if there's anything standing in the way of their work-life balance. If so, ask if they have a proposal of how you might work together to remove the barrier.

Why? By asking for concerns—and considering proposed solutions—you can develop this important muscle, and build trust.

10. Be gone thoughts!

In 1:1s this week, ask each team member: What keeps you up at night? What are the workplace problems you can't stop thinking about off the clock?

If there's a quick-fix, you can play the hero. If not, first validate the concerns. Then, try positive distractions on tough days (social time works) to give folks a mental break before heading home.

Ready to further develop your managers— every single week?

Send us a note at hello@humu.com