

MANAGER PLAYBOOK / 2026 FIELD GUIDE

The Manager's Skill-Building Playbook

An Omie 30-day system for turning one team priority into practice, feedback, evidence, and better work.

Manager development is not a course calendar. It is the repeated work of choosing a behavior, creating practice, giving useful feedback, and checking what changed.

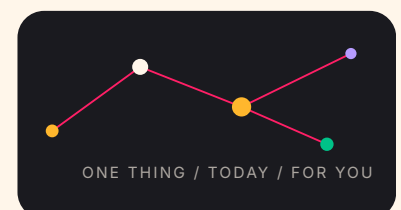
FOR PEOPLE MANAGERS AND MANAGER ENABLEMENT TEAMS

Playbook

10 pages

14-min read

5 source documents



MANAGER REALITY

The role is overloaded and development is too sparse

Managers are expected to deliver, coach, translate change, and build capability while many lack time, preparation, trust, or a reliable development cadence.

22%

of managers globally engaged in 2025

Compared with 19% of individual contributors.

MGR1: Gallup, 2026

71%

reported significantly higher stress in-role

DDI global leader sample.

MGR2: DDI, 2025

30%

said they had enough time to lead with depth

Time scarcity is a development constraint.

MGR2: DDI, 2025

1 in 5

employees had no development or feedback session

Employee-reported prior 12 months.

MGR3: McKinsey & Company, 2026

CAPABILITY	BEHAVIOR TO LOOK FOR	EVIDENCE THIS MONTH
Clarity	Names the outcome, priorities, tradeoffs, and owner	Team can restate the decision
Coaching	Asks for diagnosis and options before advising	Employee chooses and owns an action
Feedback	Names observed behavior, impact, and next experiment	A specific change is tested
Practice	Creates safe repetitions inside real work	Work samples improve across attempts
Workload support	Removes friction and protects learning time	Practice happens without hidden overtime

Omie quick manager self-audit

Which capability is strongest, and what evidence proves it?

Which capability is weakest, and where does it hurt the work?

What must stop so development can fit inside the role?

Which one behavior will you practise for the next 30 days?

DECISION Start with one manager behavior and one workload change. More content cannot compensate for no capacity to practise.

SKILL SPRINT

Choose one behavior tied to a live outcome

A useful development goal names what someone will do differently, where they will do it, what evidence will show progress, and which result it should influence.

Skill-sprint charter

Business outcome and current performance signal

Person or team in scope

Current behavior described without judgment

Target behavior that can be observed

Real-work practice opportunity

Observer and feedback cadence

Evidence to collect and decision date

Likely blocker and manager action to remove it

Omie working template. The 30-day horizon is a focus device, not a universal learning duration.

VAGUE GOAL

"Be more strategic"

"Delegate more"

"Give better feedback"

"Improve collaboration"

BEHAVIOR-READY GOAL

Before recommending, state the objective, assumptions, options, tradeoffs, and evidence

Assign outcome, decision rights, constraints, checkpoint, and success evidence

Name a recent behavior, its impact, the desired next behavior, and a check-back

Surface the disputed objective, summarize both views, and agree a shared decision rule

SELECTION RULE

Pick the smallest behavior that can move real work

If the sprint needs a new project, special simulation, or perfect conditions, it is too far from the workflow. Use an upcoming meeting, decision, handoff, customer issue, or one-to-one.

DECISION The development target should be visible in next week's calendar, not only in a learning portal.

WEEKLY RHYTHM

Blend experience, exposure, and education

Combine work experience, other people, and structured input. The right allocation depends on the behavior, opportunity, risk, and support available.

Omie recommended weekly rhythm

- 1 **Monday: set the behavior**
Review the outcome, target behavior, quality bar, and one live opportunity to practise.
- 2 **Tuesday: observe**
Study a strong example or shadow a peer, then name the moves that made it effective.
- 3 **Wednesday: rehearse**
Run a short, low-risk repetition with one constraint and immediate feedback.
- 4 **Thursday: apply**
Use the behavior in real work and preserve the work product or observation.
- 5 **Friday: reflect**
Compare evidence, choose one adjustment, and schedule the next repetition.

CHANNEL	MANAGER MOVE	EVIDENCE
Experience	Give a stretch task with clear boundaries	Work product and result
Exposure	Pair, shadow, observe, or seek expert feedback	Observation and changed action
Education	Provide the smallest useful concept or example	Correct use in the task

Protect the rhythm

- ☐ Schedule the practice before the week fills.
- ☐ Remove or defer one competing task.
- ☐ Keep feedback about the named behavior, not the whole person.
- ☐ Record evidence in the workflow already used by the team.
- ☐ Repeat with one changed constraint rather than adding a new skill.

DECISION Development sticks to work when the manager designs the repetition and protects the time.

COACHING

Use questions to build independence

Coaching is not withholding help. It is making the person's reasoning visible before adding your perspective, then agreeing a test and evidence.

Omie recommended coaching conversation

- 1 **Outcome**
What result are you trying to create, and why does it matter now?
- 2 **Diagnosis**
What do you see happening? What evidence supports that view?
- 3 **Options**
What could you try? What are the tradeoffs and risks?
- 4 **Choice**
Which action will you own, and what support do you need?
- 5 **Evidence**
What will tell us the action worked or needs revision?
- 6 **Follow-up**
When will we review the result and choose the next repetition?

INSTEAD OF	ASK
"Here is what I would do"	"What options have you ruled out, and why?"
"Why did you make that mistake?"	"Where did your expectation diverge from the result?"
"Keep me posted"	"Which evidence will you bring to our check-in?"
"You need more confidence"	"Which decision can you make with the evidence you have?"
"Try harder"	"Which part of the workflow needs a different move?"

WORKED EXAMPLE

Missed stakeholder deadline

Ask the employee to reconstruct the decision points, identify the earliest visible signal, choose one escalation rule, and test it on the next handoff. Review the actual message and timing, not a confidence rating.

DECISION A coaching conversation is complete when the employee owns a next action and both people know what evidence they will review.

FEEDBACK

Make feedback observable, timely, and testable

Vague feedback creates interpretation work. Behavior feedback makes the event, effect, expectation, experiment, and follow-up explicit.

Behavior feedback script

- 1 **Situation**
Name the recent moment, audience, task, and relevant context.
- 2 **Behavior**
Describe what you observed without inferring motive or character.
- 3 **Impact**
Explain the effect on the work, person, customer, risk, or decision.
- 4 **Perspective**
Ask what the employee noticed, intended, and would change.
- 5 **Experiment**
Agree one next behavior, situation to test it, and support required.
- 6 **Check-back**
Schedule the evidence review while the commitment is still specific.

4×

more likely to be highly engaged with one meaningful manager conversation each week

Gallup association for meaningful manager conversations.

MGR4: Gallup, 2024

15-30 min

can be enough for a meaningful conversation

A cadence guide, not a guaranteed effect size.

MGR4: Gallup, 2024

45%

of voluntary leavers had no proactive discussion

In the three months before leaving.

MGR4: Gallup, 2024

42%

said their departure could have been prevented

Employee retrospective, not causal proof.

MGR4: Gallup, 2024

Rewrite the feedback

Vague statement you were about to use

Recent situation and observed behavior

Work impact and desired next behavior

Experiment, support, evidence, and check-back date

DECISION Feedback should reduce ambiguity and create the next repetition, not deliver a verdict on the person.

DELIBERATE PRACTICE

Build skill through small, varied repetitions

A practice task should isolate one behavior, create a realistic constraint, deliver immediate evidence, and repeat with a changed condition before transfer into work.

Practice design

- 1 **Define**
Name the behavior and quality rubric in observable language.
- 2 **Constrain**
Create a short scenario with the pressure or tradeoff that usually causes failure.
- 3 **Rehearse**
Let the learner act, produce an artifact, or make a decision.
- 4 **Feedback**
Compare evidence to the rubric immediately and choose one adjustment.
- 5 **Vary**
Repeat with one changed stakeholder, time limit, risk, or ambiguity.
- 6 **Transfer**
Use the behavior in real work and capture the next evidence sample.

SKILL	MICRO-CHALLENGE	EVIDENCE
Delegation	Write outcome, boundaries, decision rights, and checkpoint	Delegatee can restate ownership
Conflict	Summarize two positions and propose a shared decision rule	Both parties confirm accuracy
Prioritization	Cut one task and explain the tradeoff to a stakeholder	Updated plan and response
Coaching	Ask five diagnosis questions before advising	Employee-owned action
Decision-making	Predeclare assumptions and disconfirming evidence	Decision log and review

EVIDENCE NOTE

Mix development methods

DDI found organizations using five or more development approaches were 4.9 times more likely to report improved leadership capabilities. This is correlational, but it supports a blend of coaching, practice, assessment, and self-paced input.

Evidence: MGR2: DDI (2025)

DECISION Do not increase difficulty by adding more content. Change one constraint and repeat the target behavior.

TEAM LEARNING

Make the team a learning system

Skills grow faster when work evidence, peer knowledge, manager support, and short reflection loops are part of normal team routines.

RITUAL	PURPOSE	OWNER
Skill board	Make the current behavior and evidence visible	Manager maintains scope; team updates proof
Peer demonstration	Show the moves inside a strong work product	Practitioner explains decisions
Shadow and reverse-shadow	Observe, then perform with feedback	Peer and learner share notes
Stretch assignment	Apply the behavior where the outcome matters	Manager sets boundaries and support
Teach-back	Expose gaps by explaining and demonstrating	Learner leads; peer questions
After-action review	Compare intent, result, evidence, and next move	Team reviews without blame

Omie 30-day team sprint

- Week 1: align**
Choose the business outcome, target behavior, baseline, opportunities, and evidence.
- Week 2: practise**
Run safe repetitions, peer observation, and immediate feedback.
- Week 3: transfer**
Apply in live work, preserve artifacts, and remove workflow barriers.
- Week 4: decide**
Review behavior and result evidence, then continue, change, stop, or scale.

Clear responsibilities

- Manager protects scope, time, safety, feedback, and access to real work.
- Learner owns the repetition, evidence, reflection, and next adjustment.
- Peer provides examples, observation, challenge, and practical context.
- Enablement supplies a small concept, rubric, scenario, and measurement support.

DECISION Team learning works when every actor owns a different part of the evidence loop.

MEASUREMENT

Track behavior and work, not attendance

A useful manager view shows practice opportunities, demonstrated behavior, feedback, work results, and the next experiment. Completion is only a delivery signal.

FIELD	WEEKLY EVIDENCE	DECISION
Practice opportunity	Named event, task, or conversation	Was the behavior actually tested?
Behavior	Observed move against the rubric	What improved or still breaks?
Feedback	Source, specificity, and agreed change	Is another repetition clear?
Work result	Quality, time, risk, handoff, or customer signal	Did the behavior matter?
Confidence	Claim plus supporting artifact	Is confidence matched by evidence?
Next experiment	Changed constraint and review date	Continue, change, stop, or scale?

3.7×

higher intent to leave without growth opportunities

High-potential employees; association, not causation.

MGR2: DDI, 2025

2.7×

higher intent to leave with ineffective coaching

High-potential employees; association, not causation.

MGR2: DDI, 2025

40%

of stressed leaders considered leaving leadership

To improve wellbeing.

MGR2: DDI, 2025

40% / 13%

manager time on problems versus people development

Deloitte manager-role research.

MGR5: Deloitte, 2025

End-of-sprint review

Behavior evidence that improved

Work result that changed or did not change

Barrier the manager removed or failed to remove

Continue, change, stop, or scale decision and why

DECISION The final question is not “did they finish?” It is “what can they now do, and what evidence supports that?”

SOURCES AND METHOD

Named evidence, visible caveats

Every external numeric claim in this guide points to one of these 2024–2026 sources. Forecasts, self-reported surveys, associations, and illustrative examples are labelled so they are not mistaken for causal proof or universal benchmarks.

MGR1

State of the Global Workplace 2026: Global Data Summary

Gallup / 2026

2025 global engagement data published in 2026.

[gallup.com](https://www.gallup.com)

MGR4

42% of Employee Turnover Is Preventable but Often Ignored

Gallup / 2024

Voluntary-leaver sample and manager-conversation synthesis. Associations are not guarantees.

[gallup.com](https://www.gallup.com)

MGR2

Global Leadership Forecast 2025

DDI / 2025

Global HR and leader survey. Multipliers reported here are associations.

media.ddiworld.com

MGR5

Global Human Capital Trends: What's the Future of Management?

Deloitte / 2025

Global survey findings on manager role design and time allocation.

[deloitte.com](https://www.deloitte.com)

MGR3

HR Monitor 2026: A Turning Point for the People Function

McKinsey & Company / 2026

HR and employee surveys across ten countries.

[mckinsey.com](https://www.mckinsey.com)

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Use the worksheets as decision scaffolds, then replace every recommended default and illustrative value with your own verified data. Recheck time-sensitive claims before publishing them outside your organization.